COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL IDENTITY INFLUENCES ON FOUNDERS' ONLINE NETWORKS, NETWORKING ACTIONS, AND NETWORK OUTCOMES

PHD THESIS

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Declaration of Authenticity and Author's Rights

This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.

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Previously Published Works

An article loosely based on this dissertation has been published in the Journal of Business Venturing.

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ABSTRACT

Networks are known to be a critical asset for entrepreneurs. This study aims to help better understand the networks, networking actions, and network outcomes of entrepreneurs by investigating two understudied contexts: online networks and founder social identity. Two specific questions are examined: *To what extent and how are founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes different in the online context?* and *To what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviours on SNSs?* Considering these questions together presents an opportunity to examine the interplay between founders' cognitive processes, their self-concepts, and their networking actions on social network sites. This is important because founders wonder how best to leverage the affordances of social network sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to entrepreneurial advantage.

The study adopts pragmatism's ontological and epistemological lenses for its research design. Empirical data from 35 depth interviews with founders in the early stages of their ventures is analysed using inductive and abductive methods. Patterns of meaning and theoretical themes emerge from the data that help shed light on the experiences of founders networking online.

The findings and conclusions of this study highlight how the online context of networking is unique for founders, and outline how founders' social identities may influence their networking actions and cognitive networking styles. Specifically, 12 propositions and a conceptual model are developed that offer a comprehensive research agenda. The model purports that social judgment bias moderates founders' cognitive willingness to extract resources online. The study also illuminates how founder social identity acts as an antecedent to founders' online networking behaviour, and explores the influences of enacting founder social identity-salient instrumental, collaborative, or veritable networking styles. Implications for entrepreneurship theory and practice are discussed.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

And now, the end is near
And so I face the final submission
My family and friends, I'll say it clear
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain

I've followed that path and crossed the abyss
Triaging commitments to get to today
But more, much more than this
I did it my way

Regrets, I've had a few
But then again, too few to mention
I fit it all around what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption

I planned what I could so as not to miss
Each careful step along life's causeway
And more, much more than this
I did it my way

Yes, there were times, I'm sure you knew
When I bit off more than I could chew
But through it all, when there was doubt
I ate it up and spit it out
I faced it all and I stood tall
And did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed and done the basement hide
I've had my fill, and gone without
But now, as tears subside
I recall I never lost faith in what it was all about

To think I did all that
And may I say - not in a young way
Oh no, oh no, not me
I did it my way

For what is a woman, what has she got
If not herself, then she has naught
To search the things she truly feels
And not the words of one who kneels
The record shows I took the blows
And did it my way

While I did it my way, I did not do it alone…

To Professor Eleanor Shaw, by necessity this project had to be fit around my other life commitments. You let me do it "my way" and I'm incredibly grateful for your support, understanding, guidance, and mentorship through these many years.

To my sons, Ford and Reed, you made a significant sacrifice as I pursued this dream. You were uprooted from your home so we could keep our family together while I studied in Glasgow. We had a grand adventure in Scotland but I know it was not without its challenges and sacrifices. I appreciate it more than you can know. I am grateful for your patience, your immutable love, and your willingness to put your priorities second to mine when needed over the years. I hope I have modeled the essence of a life-long learner. May your journey be as rich as mine has been.

To my girlfriends, I am indebted to you for your inspiration when I needed it, for your ability to make me laugh, and most importantly, for helping me put things in perspective. Thanks for never asking, "Are you done yet?".

To my Mom and my sister, you have made innumerable sacrifices to ease my burden and help me on my way. You have given me the strength and courage to pursue this dream. You have taught me how to do it "my way". We stand on this mountain seeing new vistas together. Always. Together.

To my Dad, thanks for giving me wings and for showing me that every day matters. I hope I have made you proud. I miss you.

To my husband and partner of 31 years, Brock, you have been there for me through every measured step. I am so grateful for your steadfast belief in me, and for your unwavering love and support through the best and worst of my journey to earn my seat beside you at the academic table. None of this would have been possible without you – thank you.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Internet and the many platforms it supports is not just a site of investigation, but also a vantage point from which we are permitted to gaze upon old problems from a point of view that generates a different vista.
~ Zizi Papacharissi (2012)

1.1 Introduction

An essential quality of being human is a profound need for social connection. Regardless of whether we are extroverted or introverted, these bonds have the capacity to shape us in myriad ways, even our very physiology (Cain, 2012). As individuals, we have evolving circles of friends, acquaintances, business contacts and others with whom we share varying degrees of social relationship[1]. While the expression of our social needs remained relatively stable for centuries, the digital age has dramatically influenced how we connect with one another. Research suggests that entrepreneurs, more than most people, are motivated to connect with others in order to help their ventures succeed (e.g., Kaish & Gilad, 1991), and that the Internet has altered how these connections are formed, and strengthened (Papacharissi, 2011).

Networks are a strategically important entrepreneurial resource (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991; Jack, 2010) and networking, the process of initiating, managing, and extracting resources from networks, is a critical action of entrepreneurs (Staber & Aldrich, 1995), and both are key contributors to venture success (e.g., Casson & Giusta, 2007). Extant research indicates that network context matters in understanding entrepreneurial behaviours (Stam, Arzlanian, & Elfring, 2014; Welter, 2011). Today, most entrepreneurs have built network relations online and many use them not just for marketing or publicity purposes, but more strategically for venture-building purposes (Sigfusson & Chetty, 2013; Smith, Smith, & Shaw, 2017). However, with a few notable exceptions (e.g., Fischer & Reuber, 2011; Morse, Fowler, & Lawrence, 2007; Smith et al., 2017) extant network research has focused almost exclusively on the context of offline networks.

In response to this identified gap, this study's focus is on shedding light on entrepreneurs' networks, networking behaviours, and network outcomes within the understudied context of social network sites (SNSs). This research is important because

[1] See page 9 for the definition of social relationship.

"understanding entrepreneurial processes (like networking) is critical to understanding entrepreneurial success" (Hite, 2005, p. 115).

Early in the interview process undertaken to explore the networking actions of founders, dramatic differences were observed in how founders described their engagement with social network sites [SNSs], such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. The researcher returned to the individual difference networking literature to better understand why. Research on individual differences in entrepreneurs' networks, networking behaviors, and network outcomes is limited (e.g., Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Neergaard, 2005), and to date recommendations for entrepreneurs' networking practices have largely taken a one-size-fits all approach (e.g., Lee & Tsang, 2001; Stam & Elfring, 2008). However, identity is described in the literature as an individual difference construct known to explain other entrepreneurial behaviors such as why and how people become entrepreneurs (e.g., Hoang & Gimeno, 2010), as well as the strategic decision-making of founders (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011). Despite networking actions by founders reflecting strategic decisions (Jack, Dodd, & Anderson, 2008), the impact of founder social identity on networking behavior is not yet understood.

Recent research has uncovered three founder social identities: darwinian, communitarian and missionary (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011). What influence, if any, these have on founders' networking behaviours is not yet understood, and this research gap presents an opportunity to examine the interplay between founders' cognitive processes, their self-concept, and their actions. Consequently, as is appropriate when undertaking the exploratory process of qualitative research (Suddaby, 2006), a line of inquiry was added to the study to inductively examine what effect founders' social identities might have on their networking actions in the online context.

1.2 Relevant Research Literature

In one of the earliest studies of entrepreneurs' networks, Dubini and Aldrich (1991) state that, as a process of creating new value, "entrepreneurship is inherently a networking activity" (p. 306). More recently, networking has been found to be critical for effectuation (Read, Sarasvathy, Dew, Wiltbank, & Ohlsson, 2011), bootstrapping (Grichnik, Brinckmann, Singh, & Manigart, 2014), bricolage (Keating, Geiger, & McLoughlin, 2014), and social entrepreneurship (Dufays & Huybrechts, 2014; Shaw &

Carter, 2007). Emphasizing its importance, networking has been described as the most critical asset to entrepreneurs (Terjesen & Elam, 2009) and as "an organizing and governing mechanism to provide meaning, identity and resources" to a venture (Jack, Drakopoulou Dodd, & Anderson, 2008, p. 130).

A key motivation for networking is to gain access to resources (Shaw, 2006). It is widely accepted that "entrepreneurs need to access resources not under their control to survive and grow" (Watson, 2007, p. 852). An entrepreneur's network connects him or her[2] to needed resources more cheaply than can be attained through strictly economic market transactions; moreover, networks have the potential to provide access to resources that would not otherwise be available (Moensted, 2007; Witt, Schroeter, & Merz, 2008). In practice, successful entrepreneurs mobilize their social relationships to access a variety of resources that their ventures need but that they don't already own (Starr & MacMillan, 1990).

The process of networking is understood to "bring about the strategic thinking that synthesizes the intuition and creativity of an entrepreneur into a vision for the future" (Anderson, Drakopoulou Dodd, & Jack, 2010, p.123). Because it can deliver potential access to resources needed for firm survival, an early researcher into entrepreneurs' networks, Johannisson (1990), proclaimed that an entrepreneur's personal network is "the strategically most significant resource of the firm" (p. 41). Many other scholars support this claim (e.g. Dubini & Aldrich, 1991; Jack, 2010; Ostgaard & Birley, 1994). Thus, as critically important opportunity structures (Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998; De Carolis, Litzky, & Eddleston, 2009) founders' social networks warrant close examination. However, despite thousands of studies looking at entrepreneurs' networks offline, there has been a surprising lack of consensus on findings and, consequently, a dearth of meaningful recommendations that direct entrepreneurs to best practices.

One of the reasons offered for these mixed results is a difference in contexts. Extant network research in entrepreneurship concludes that context matters for understanding networks and networking behaviour (e.g., Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra, 2002; Lamine, Jack, Fayolle, & Chabaud, 2015; Shaw, 2006). And yet, two particular contexts have received scant attention in network studies to date: the macro level

[2] To ease readability, the reference to "him and her" or "he and she", will be shortened to "her" and "she" in the remainder of the study.

context of online networks, and the individual difference context of founders' social identity. Each is considered below.

First, as so-called nitizens, entrepreneurs are embracing the capabilities of the Internet to help them grow and manage their network of connections through SNSs such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (e.g., Fischer & Reuber, 2014). Research in Computer Mediated Communications (CMC) has found that online personal networks and networking differ from offline personal networks and networking (Subrahmanyam, Reich, Waechter, & Espinoza, 2008), even if individuals participate in both online and offline networks (Quann-Haase & Young, 2010). Some CMC researchers argue that the online context is so different that offline research findings may not apply (Ellison & boyd, 2013; Papacharissi, 2010)3. outcomes.

A growing body of research in the field of Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC) confirms that the capabilities of these platforms such as searchability and sharability can make networking easier. Other capabilities such as visibility and persistence may make it more challenging or introduce new considerations that may affect users' networking behaviours. Overall, CMC research provides evidence that our social interactions are profoundly affected by the online context (Papacharissi & Easton, 2013). However, few empirical studies in entrepreneurship have investigated this potential area of difference.

A key assumption of social network theory (e.g., Neergaard, 2005), or the social network approach (e.g., Aldrich & Zimmer, 1986), that is reflected in most of the extant entrepreneurship network literature is that networking, the process of creating, building, and managing a network of beneficial relationships with others, provides founders access to needed resources (Anderson, Dodd, & Jack, 2010). Hoang and Antoncic (2003), for example, suggest that networks are "the media through which actors gain access to a variety of resources held by other actor"' (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003, p. 116). Consistent with this assumption of network utility, the *network success hypothesis* argues that "entrepreneurs with larger and more diverse networks are expected to get more support from their networks and thus to be more successful than entrepreneurs with smaller networks or with less support from their networks" ((Witt, Schroeter, & Merz, 2008, p. 956). Many empirical studies find support for this

[3] Note that the use of the lower case is at the request of danah boyd.

hypothesis in offline networks (e.g., Ostgaard & Birley, 1996; Premaratne, 2001; Shaw, 2006) although others do not (cf. Witt et al., 2008). It is not clear to what extent the *network success hypothesis* holds in the context of SNS networks.

Networking process research in entrepreneurship also examines the behaviors undertaken by entrepreneurs to evolve their network relationships to make these relationships useful. In one key article, Vissa (2012) introduces the constructs of *network deepening* and *network broadening* behavior. Network deepening behavior refers to "the extent to which an entrepreneur strengthens ties to existing personal network contacts by time pacing interactions with them, overlaying friendships over purely business relations, and preserving existing ties" (Vissa, 2012, p. 494). Such *strong tie* relationships are well established connections that offer depth of knowledge but less diversity of knowledge (Lechner & Dowling, 2003), have more dimensions or bases for relating (Kapferer, 1969), contain more trust (Neergaard, 2005), and are considered to have more suasion in the decision-making of entrepreneurs (Granovetter, 1983). Network broadening behavior refers to "the extent to which an entrepreneur reaches out to new people and establishes interpersonal knowledge about them" (Vissa, 2012, p. 494). Such *weak tie* relationships contain little emotional intensity, intimacy, or history of reciprocal exchange but, because they often cross over social groups, can often provide entrepreneurs with greater access to [information] resources (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991). Drawing on the publication of Granovetter's (1973) influential "strength of weak ties hypothesis," a key assertion within the network literature has been that entrepreneurial ventures will benefit by being centrally located within loosely connected networks, comprising mainly weak ties; "relationships with low emotional commitment and low frequency of contact" (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991, p. 309). Many studies within the entrepreneurship literature offline support that entrepreneurs with large, weak tie networks are at an advantage because they are able to extract needed venture resources from their diverse networks. Additionally, extant theory in entrepreneurship supports a key assumption that entrepreneurs who are able to bridge across structural holes, or different inter-connected groups of relations, are able to garner more resources (Burt, 2005?). However, it is not known whether this brokering of structural holes advantage also holds true in the online context.

Consequently, it is not known whether entrepreneurs' networking behaviours and network outcomes that extant research suggests occur offline are the same as

those that occur online. There is a need for research examining entrepreneurs' online networks, networking behavior, and networking outcomes. The present study begins to address this first identified gap.

Second, there exist an array of inconclusive, conflicting, and mixed findings among the network studies noted above that make it difficult for entrepreneurs to know what to do in order to achieve their desired network outcomes. One possible explanation for such varied findings is that the vast majority of these studies do not account for individual-level differences (e.g., Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010).

Adding to the complexity of research on networks in entrepreneurship, recent conceptual discussions and empirical analyses of entrepreneurial networks have challenged the universality of recommendations based on the *network success hypothesis*, *the strength of weak-ties hypothesis* , and the *brokered structural holes assumption* mentioned above. These studies argue that contextual factors can impact the value of networks and weak ties (Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra, 2002; Witt, Schroeter, & Merz, 2008). Specifically, some studies have argued that strong tie relationships might actually be of more value to entrepreneurs (e.g., Semrau & Werner, 2014), where strong ties are defined as "relationships characterized by frequent interactions, a long duration of relationship, and a close socio-emotional bond" (Sullivan & Ford, 2014, p. 553). Overall, results and recommendations have been mixed. Some studies have concluded that strong ties are most advantageous (e.g., Lee & Tsang, 2001), others have concluded that weak ties are to be preferred (e.g., Stam & Elfring, 2008), still others have argued for a balance (e.g., Uzzi, 1996), and still others have concluded that tie strength is not material (e.g., Batjargal, 2003). Consequently, this study considers whether individual differences might shed light on these mixed findings and on network tie composition recommendations made to date.

Limited attention in entrepreneurial network research has been paid to individual differences. While personality (e.g., Lee & Tsang, 2001), gender (e.g., Neergaard, 2005), risk propensity (e.g., De Carolis, Litzky, & Eddleston, 2009), and social competency (e.g., Kreiser, Patel, & Fiet, 2013) have been considered, there is recognition that additional focus on individual differences would be fruitful (Ibarra, Kilduff, & Tsai, 2005; Vissa, 2012). This study considers the impact of the individual difference of founder social identity on founders' SNS networking behavior.

Identity is "a general, if individualized, framework for understanding oneself that is formed and sustained via social interaction" (Gioia, 1998, p. 275). Outside of entrepreneurship, research has shown that social identity emerges through network processes (Ibarra et al., 2005), that network characteristics help confer social identity (Podolny & Baron, 1997), and that social networks affect the creation, selection and retention of possible selves (Yost, Strube, & Bailey, 1992). As such it cuts across demographic and personality differences studied to date.

Fauchart and Gruber (2011) and Gruber and MacMillan (2017) introduce three distinct founder social identities: darwinians, communitarians, and missionaries whose differential focus, values, and motives (summarized in Figure 2) are understood to shape the actions of entrepreneurs. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) found that entrepreneurs act in ways that are consistent with their social identities and such an impact is expected even when the identity is not consciously held (Oyserman, 2009). Individuals' self-concepts may comprise multiple founder social identities (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011), the salience of which is triggered by particular social contexts (Miller & Breton-Miller, 2011). Researchers do not yet know to what extent or how social identity might impact entrepreneurs' networking actions and networking-related outcomes. Examining this issue is important because it may help shed light on researchers' mixed recommendations for network tie composition for entrepreneurs. No studies in entrepreneurship have empirically investigated whether a founder's darwinian, communitarian or missionary social identity impacts her network and networking behaviour. The present study undertakes to address this second identified gap.

Addressing these two identified gaps is important to scholars because network theory in entrepreneurship needs to evolve to more accurately reflect the digital lives of entrepreneurs, and their individual self-concept differences. Clarifying these context implications also offers new possibilities to founder entrepreneurs since the early stage networks of founders are critically important to the successful emergence and growth of their new ventures (Hite & Hesterly, 2001). Feeling pressure to migrate, build and/or manage their networks and networking presence online, many founders wonder if the investment in time is "worth it" and, if so, how best to proceed?

1.3 Research Questions

Driven by the substantive issues outlined above, this study undertakes the investigation of two research questions. These research questions are presented in the order in which they were approached in the field. The researcher entered the field with a protocol based on investigating the online networking actions of founders but upon completion of a number of interviews, re-examined extant literature for a possible explanation for the diversity in respondents' answers. Investigating the individual-level difference of founder social identity was then added to this study in an effort to better understand "how things work" with founders' networking behaviour and network outcomes in the online context of SNSs. In addition, the research protocol reflected that the central phenomena of interest were founders' networking actions and network outcomes. The protocol began by exploring actions and outcomes and then moved to make a determination of each respondent's founder social identity. In this way, inadvertent biases in the data collection process based on knowing a respondent's social identity were mitigated.

RQ1*: To what extent and how does the online context of digital networks influence founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes?*

RQ2: *To what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviours on social network sites?*

With its focus on these two research questions, this study answers Slotte-Kock and Coviello's (2010) call for research that seeks to better understand the variation, selection and retention of connections in entrepreneurs' networks, and the need Foss (2010) identifies for "exploring the possible existence of multiple rationalities in networking" (p. 97). It also responds to calls by Shepherd (2015), and Pryor, Webb, Ireland and Ketchen (2015) for research that considers the implications of cognitive factors on networks and networking. Jack (2010), Coviello (2005), and Hoang and Antoncic (2003) have also identified the need for more studies on both network structure and network process issues. Lamine et al. (2015) summarize the need for more process-related research succinctly when they say, "we need more analysis of the networking strategies of entrepreneurs" (p. 424). The present study helps fulfill these identified needs by offering new insights on entrepreneurs' networks and networking behaviours by investigating two previously unexplored contexts. This study also heeds Leitch and Harrison's (2016) recent statement that "more research is needed on the

nature and role of identity work in entrepreneurship" (p. 187), and Gregorie, Corbett and McMullen's (2011) call to address critical shortcomings in our understanding of entrepreneurs' cognitions and their actions. In a similar vein, this study's research questions also address Powell and Baker's (2017) call for studies that "explore the process through which the patterning of founders' identities shape early structuring processes" (p. 2406).

To summarize, entrepreneurship network theory and much of the extant research assumes that founders' networks provide access to needed resources that are gained through network broadening and deepening behavior. Research on the outcomes of entrepreneurial networks has primarily focused on updated network composition (new ties added, structural holes bridged, and tie strength evolved (e.g., Jack, 2010; Ozdemir et al., 2016), social capital (e.g., Stringfellow, Shaw, & Maclean, 2014), and networking costs (e.g., Hite, 2005). While debate remains, there is significant empirical support in the offline context for the network success hypothesis, the strength of weak ties hypothesis, and the value of brokering structural holes. Understanding how and to what extent entrepreneurs use their digital networks to acquire needed resources would help determine whether the significant time and effort required to curate online networks is 'worth it'. Beyond this, little is also known about the impact of founder social identity on these networking behaviours and network outcomes. The present study answers the varied calls identified above by investigating the networking behaviours and network outcomes of darwinian, communitarian and missionary social identity-typed founders engaged on SNSs.

1.4 Research Method Adopted

The goal of this study is to extend existing theory and to develop assertions that assist in building understanding of entrepreneurs' experiences and "how things work." Consistent with this approach, we adopt pragmatism as our philosophical stance. Pragmatism considers the starting and ending point of knowledge to be experience (Webb, 2007), and how well it informs and reflects "human actions in the world" (Watson, 2013, p. 12), which is consistent with this study's aim to understand founders' online networking behaviors and experiences. Aligning with an overarching pragmatism research paradigm frame, this study's research questions are investigated by first examining what is known about entrepreneurs' networks and networking

behaviour, drawing on CMC literature that sheds light on the online context. This study adopts a qualitative research approach which is particularly appropriate at the early stage of phenomenon investigation (Gartner & Birley, 2002) such as founders' uses of SNSs, and for investigating founders' complex networking actions (Jack, Moult, Anderson, & Dodd, 2010). The choice of qualitative methods is particularly appropriate when the goal is "to impose conceptual order on new or relatively undefined phenomena (Suddaby, Bruton, & Si, 2015, p. 2), which is the case here. Qualitative research is also preferred when tackling social phenomena such as networks (Jack, 2010), for understanding of context and entrepreneurial process (Zahra & Wright, 2011), and for theory building (Gartner & Birley, 2002). It is also consistent with pragmatism's focus on delivering substantive contributions and practical relevance (Christie & Fleischer, 2009).This theoretical and conceptual foundation informs 35 depth interviews with early stage founders. The specific research method adopted is the experiential research approach for knowledge discovery outlined by Watson (2013) and Yin (2016). This approach is deemed appropriate because it is preferred when looking for "depth insights into complex situations" (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014 p. 602), and when answering questions focused on "to what extent and how" (Deshpande, 1983).

The study undertakes an iterative process of inductive and abductive data analysis consistent with the pragmatism paradigm which creates "converging lines of inquiry" (Yin, 2016) that generate a number of new assertions, drawn together as research propositions. Key findings are used to develop an improved understanding of the online context of founders' networking behaviours. Specifically, 12 propositions and a conceptual model are developed from the findings. The propositions and model extend network theory and provide specific theoretical direction for future research on founder social identity, networking, and network outcomes in the emerging online context. Consistent with the pragmatism paradigm, this study's findings and contributions are analytically and analogously generalizable.

1.5 Key Contributions of the Study

The present study makes a number of contributions to the entrepreneurship, networks, and identity literatures. First, it empirically examines founders' uses of SNSs, an area that has received scant attention despite growing evidence that founders build and

manage their social networks using SNSs. Insights in this area are essential in order to better align network research with networking practice for entrepreneurs. Second, it provides compelling new evidence that founders may not extract resources from their online networks to the same extent that they do offline. This finding is contrary to current network theories such as the *network success hypothesis*, *the strength of weak ties hypothesis* and the *advantages of brokered structural holes assumption,* and suggests that theory extension is needed to account for the online network context. Uncovering possible theoretical implications of these findings are a crucial first step in advancing network theory in entrepreneurship to include SNSs. Third, this study is the first to explain the important role that *perceived social judgment risk* may play in the networking behaviour of founders online compared to offline. The conceptual model presented in Chapter 7 identifies how *cognitive social judgment bias* moderates the networking behaviour of entrepreneurs. Fourth, this study makes a valuable contribution by identifying the need to extend network theory to include the social cognition theory concepts of *willingness cognitions*, *cognitive heuristics* and *cognitive bias* to better understand entrepreneurs' networking behaviours online. Fifth, the present study identifies three specific founder social identity-relevant networking styles: *instrumental*, *collaborative*, and *veritable*. Specifically, social identity is found to be an important antecedent variable influencing founders' networks, networking, and network outcomes. This insight is important because it helps shed light on why studies of networks and networking in entrepreneurship may have yielded such conflicting findings to date.

Finally, a key contribution of this study is a list of 12 research propositions intended to help guide future work to extend existing network theory in entrepreneurship to include the online and social identity contexts. These propositions advance our understanding of how founders' networks, networking processes, and network outcomes likely occur online and by social identity type. They highlight for the first time a set of internal (not external as per the vast majority of studies to date) cognitive factors influencing founders' networking actions. These actions are likely to impact the decisions founders make and the firms they build.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2 begins by reviewing the networks, networking, and network outcomes literature in the offline context. This chapter focuses on defining key terms, locating the study in its theoretical home, and providing an overview of network anatomy, network process, network outcomes, and network context factors. Chapter 3 surveys key CMC literature relevant to the study of founders' networks in the online context. The final literature review section, Chapter 4, unpacks social identity in the context of entrepreneurship, and concludes with a summary of the research gaps this study aims to address. Chapter 5 offers an overview of the research philosophy framework adopted by this study, and describes the research design, including sampling, sample, protocol, data analysis, and quality assurance. This is followed in Chapter 6 with a detailed review and discussion of the study's findings. The final chapter, Chapter 7, discusses the implications for theory and practice of the research findings including the development of 12 propositions and a conceptual model. The limitations of this study, the contributions of this study, and recommendations for future research are also outlined in this chapter's conclusions.

CHAPTER 2: NETWORKS AND NETWORKING

There is a danger in network analysis of not seeing the trees for the forest. Interactions, the building blocks of networks, are too easily taken as given.
~ Salancik (1995, p. 355)

2.1 Introduction

As set out in the introduction, networks are a critical resource to entrepreneurs and their ventures (e.g., Burt & Opper, 2017; Johannisson, 1990; Perry-Smith & Mannucci, 2017). Since little is known about the online context of entrepreneurs' networking and network outcomes, it is relevant to begin with a thorough review of existing literature concerning entrepreneurs' networks offline. In particular, foundational research into networks over the last 30 years is summarized, drawing predominantly on work inside the field of entrepreneurship.

This chapter begins by defining key constructs and terms used in this study. Next, the present study's theoretical underpinnings are reviewed. The chapter then turns to summarizing relevant literature on entrepreneurs' offline networks, networking behaviours, and network outcomes. The chapter concludes by outlining important context considerations for the study of founders' networks, and framing the study's research gap related to networks, networking, and network outcomes.

2.2 Important Terms and Definitions

A major challenge in conducting research into entrepreneurs' networks is that the field is fraught with overlapping and often conflicting definitions of key terms and constructs. To understand this study's specific phenomenon of interest and level of analysis, it is critical to define key constructs and terms at the outset.

Establishing secure connections between individuals is essential to entrepreneurs yet definitions of the term *relationship* abound. Within the relatively narrow context of the study of networks, scholars have had to determine what precisely constitutes a relationship, the content building block of a network. Do we have a relationship with someone if we've known her for only a minute? What about for an hour? What if we have simply exchanged business cards or perhaps taken the same subway for a year? Within entrepreneurship studies, scholars have resolved this issue

by considering a connection between two contacts as a *social relationship* if one or both sides agree it to be such (Burt, 2005, p. 24). This study adopts this definition.

Given its pervasive use in our everyday lives, defining the word *network* should be straightforward. However, the literature reveals many different and subtle understandings of networks within entrepreneurship. For example, an entrepreneur's network has been defined as a social network (e.g., Marin & Wellman, 2011), an attribution network (Fombrun, 1982), a personal network (Stam, Arzlanian & Elfring, 2014), an extended network (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991), a formal network (Littunen, 2000), a business network (Johannisson, 2008), an effective network (Epstein, 1961), and an ego-centric network (Hite & Hesterly, 2001), to name but a few. Thus, care must be taken to ensure that the phenomenon of study and level of analysis are well-prescribed.

This study adopts Dubini and Aldrich's (1991, p. 309) well-accepted definition of a *personal network* as the network from the viewpoint of the entrepreneur (focal actor). This is distinguished from an extended network defined as the "big picture" network comprising all the personal networks of a venture overlaid upon one another.[4] Thus, for this investigation, founders' networks are studied at the individual-level of analysis with the founder as focal actor. The viewpoint taken is that of the node occupant: the founder (Fombrun, 1982). Importantly, there is general agreement within the literature that at the early stages of firm start-up, there is little distinction between the personal network of the founder and that of her venture (Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998; Hoang & Antoncic, 2003). In addition, the personal network of the entrepreneur is understood to comprise both personal and professional connections (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991; Hite & Hesterly, 2001). In this study, the term *founder network* refers to the entrepreneur's personal and business network of direct and indirect connections. Specifically, the *founder social network* construct for the present study is defined as the sum total of people with whom a founder has a direct, indirect, active, or dormant social relationship and through which support for her venture might flow.

As well, any discussion of networks[5] necessarily begs the question, "From what vantage point?" Within entrepreneurship, networks have been studied at the national,

[4] Examining the business network paradigm focused broadly in Organization Studies is outside of the scope of this review. See Slotte-Kock and Coviello (2010) for an overview.
[5] In contrast to the way in which it is used in this chapter, the term network is also used to refer to a form of organizing (an organizing framework or mechanism). This use considers that it is the actual early network of the firm that forms

regional and industry level (macro), the firm or team level (meso), and the founder or individual entrepreneur level (micro). "Entrepreneurial networks" can be taken as, for example, the individual relationships that an entrepreneur has with others, the collective relationships of a whole founding team, or the sum of the relationships owned by a whole firm (Uzzi, 1996). Jack (2010) considers that networks can be studied from the perspective of the entrepreneur (Ptolemaic view) or from the perspective of an entrepreneur's place within a larger network context (Copernican view). Complicating matters further, our observations about networks can be viewed from a structural order, categorical order, or personal order perspective (Mitchell, 1969). These latter distinctions are important because "these are not three different types of actual behaviour, they are rather three different ways of making abstractions from the same actual behaviour to achieve different types of understanding and explanation" (Mitchell, 1969, p. 10). In entrepreneurship research, most studies focus on the personal order perspective that considers the social network of one or more individuals or firms. This study continues in this tradition by adopting the micro level of analysis, with a personal order/Ptolemaic view perspective.

Even at an individual founder level of analysis, it is important to consider precisely which aspects of networks and/or network relationships are being studied (Jack et al., 2008). Some studies have simply determined whether there is or is not a connection (yes/no)(e.g., De Carolis et al., 2009), while others have examined the context of the connection (government, business, personal, volunteer…)(e.g., Zhao, Frese, & Giardini, 2010). Other researchers have sought to evaluate the strength of the connection (tie quality) (e.g., Hite, 2005), and still others have considered the resource content of the connection (node content) (Shaw, 2006). These latter types of studies aim to define what is going on "in" the connection.

The present study considers not just the connections but also what goes on within a founder's social network connections in terms of relational content and resources. However, in considering the content of a founder's network connections, additional problems with conflated levels of analyses are possible and require clarification.

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the basis for its organizational structure. A network organization is contrasted with a transaction cost, market, or hierarchy one (Larson & Starr, 1993).

A review of the literature indicates that despite making little or no up-front distinction, most studies that have examined relational content in entrepreneurs' networks have looked at one of three levels of abstraction within the micro-level of analysis. Understanding these differences in abstraction is important for interpreting previous studies' findings and for framing this study. Below, Table1 offers the first known summary of these differences.

Table 1: Levels of Network Abstraction

Level of Network Abstraction	Conditions	Example	Studies
Simple micro network	The entrepreneur's network is viewed whole (in its entirety) and as the sum of her relationship connections to all others. Each alter is discrete in the entrepreneur's network, and holds only one place and one relational value.	Martin was found to have a strong tie network.	Jack & Anderson (2002); Bruderl & Preisendorfer (1998)
Complex micro network	The entrepreneur's network is viewed whole - her relationship connections to all others. Each alter is discrete in the entrepreneur's network and holds only one place. However, the relational content of each dyadic tie is viewed as complex or multi-dimensional. For example, emotional content, economic content or kinship content are considered discrete.	Martin was found to have many isolated ties in his network.	Hite (2005); Khayesi, George, & Antonakis (2014)
Complex nano network	The entrepreneur's network is viewed not as a whole but as a series of sub-networks (partial networks). Each alter could hold multiple places in multiple sub-networks. Thus, the relational content can differ by alter, according to individual sub-networks.	Martin has a strong advice network and a weak financial network.	Lechner & Dowling (2003); Steier & Greenwood (2000) (financial network); Casson & Della Giusta (2007); Rossinson, & Stubberud, (2014) (advice network).

While valuable information has been learned through examining networks from the simple micro, complex micro, and complex nano viewpoints, it is clear that these are very different lenses. Knowing through which lens a network is considered is important for understanding a study's conclusions. This study considers founders' networks from a complex micro perspective in order to capture the subtle differences in flows between dyads. Each dyad connection is considered to have only one type of

relationship since founders generally view them as such (teasing out partial networks is not intuitive for network owners).

Additionally, networks can effect and be affected by the entrepreneur and her venture (for a thorough review of the network process literature see Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010). For this study, networks are examined as an outcome of founder behaviour and self-concept. The key entrepreneurial behaviour considered is *networking*: the process aspect of building and managing a network of relationships. As an act of 'doing', networking should be distinguished from network structure (Shaw, 1997; Vissa, 2012). Every effort is made in this study to distinguish between the two. As such, the implications of this study's research findings will adopt a "bifocal" lens of structure and process interactions (Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010, p. 49). Networks are understood to effect networking, and networking impacts networks.

Additional network-related constructs and definitions[6] relevant to this study must also be clarified in order to avoid the chronic inconsistencies commonly found in the literature that affect the specificity and use of key terms. Table 2 (network structure) and Table 3 (network process) capture the terms most often used within the entrepreneurship literature with relevance to this study; the definitions improve the precision of this study's analysis and discussion. These tables represent a contribution of this study since this "sorting out" of terms is not available elsewhere. This author found multiple definitions of some terms in the literature and these tables are a valuable source of clarity. Where meanings collide, those in italics represent the definition adopted for this study.

Table 2: Network Structure Terms Defined

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Ego*	An individual focal actor – person, organization, group, or other discreet entity	Hanneman & Riddel (2011, p. 356)
Alter*	*The focal actor to whom ego is connected* Or	Hanneman & Riddel (2011, p. 356)

[6] Where possible definitions have been drawn from within the entrepreneurship literature. Where no such definitions were found by the author, they have been drawn from the Handbook of Social Network Analysis (2011) and identified with an *.

	Network contacts	Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra (2002, p. 119)
Dyad*	A social relationship between two actors	Hanneman & Riddel (2011, p. 356)
Network size	*The number of direct connections an actor has to others* Or All first-order contacts, regardless of type of interaction	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 171) Greve & Salaff (2003, p. 3)
Network diversity	The extent to which actors can gain access to new resources through ties that lie outside of their immediate cluster of contacts Or *Characteristics of a network indicating variation in social characteristics among members*	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 171) Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8)
Network centrality	The extent to which actors can reach other actors through intermediaries in their network	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 171)
Network density	The number of connections between partners in relation to the number of maximum possible connections Or A measure of the interconnectedness of network members Or *The extensiveness of ties between persons or organizations, measured by comparing the total number of ties present to the potential number that would occur if every unit in the network were connected to every other unit* Or The average strength of connection between contacts. It is a measure of closure	Witt (2004, p. 392) Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra (2002, p. 119) Dubini & Aldrich (1991, p. 310) Burt (2000, p. 374)
Network cohesion	Characteristics of a network indicating strong social relations among its members	Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8)
Network closure	*Characteristics of a network indicating that all members are strongly and almost exclusively connected to each other* Or The degree to which third party ties connect two people	Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8) Burt (2005, p. 98)
Bridge	A strong or weak relationship for which there is no effective indirect connection via third parties. A bridge is a relationship that spans a structural hole. Useful for creating information variation	Burt, (2005, p. 24)
Bond	A strong relationship between dyads. Useful for eliminating information variation	Burt (2005, p. 24)
Broker	*A person who creates a link between two parties not otherwise connected to each other*	Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8)

	Or People or firms who link units having complementary interests, transferring information or resources, or otherwise facilitating the interests of those not directly connected to one another	Dubini & Aldrich (1991, p. 310)
Structural Hole	The absence of ties between actors Or Created when persons to whom entrepreneurs are linked are not themselves connected to one another Or The gap existing between non-redundant contacts Or *A place in a network where brokerage could create value. It exists between two people or groups when either party is unaware of the value available if they were to coordinate in some point. Thus, structural holes can be high-value or low-value*	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 171) Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8) Burt (2005, p. 26) Stam et al. (2014, p. 154)

Table 3: Network Process Terms Defined

TERM	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Networking behaviour	A system by which entrepreneurs can tap resources that are external to them by the use of all personal relationships	Jarillo (1989, p. 133)
Networking ability	An individual-level skill, defined as the ability to develop friendships and/or build strong, beneficial relationships	Sigmund, Semrau, Thorsten, & Wegner (2015, p. 266)
Network deepening	The extent to which an entrepreneur strengthens ties to existing personal network contacts by time pacing interactions with them, overlaying friendships over purely business relations, and preserving existing ties	Vissa (2012, p. 494)
Network broadening	The extent to which an entrepreneur reaches out to new people and establishes interpersonal knowledge about them	Vissa (2012, p. 494)
Strong ties	Relations of trust Or Relationships with high emotional commitment and high frequency of contact, usually among socially homogeneous individuals Or	Dubini & Aldrich (1991, p. 309) Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8) Sullivan & Ford (2014, p. 553)

	Network relationships characterized by frequent interactions, a long duration of relationship, and a close socio-emotional bond	
Weak ties	Casual acquaintances Or *Relationships with low emotional commitment and low frequency of contact* Or Network relationships characterized by infrequent interactions, a short duration of relationship, and a lack of a close socio-emotional bond	Dubini & Aldrich (1991, p. 309) Martinez & Aldrich (2011 p. 8) Sullivan & Ford (2014 p. 553)
Multiplex tie	Strong relationship containing elements of normative, information, advice, economic and/or bartering exchanges Or For an individual dyad, the degree to which a relationship has an affective, social and instrumental basis Or *Ties that have several layers of different content or types of relationships. They may play numerous roles in the entrepreneur's support group*	Shaw (2006, p. 18) Larson (1992, p. 99) Greve & Salaff (2003, p. 3)
Uniplex tie	*A tie that contains only one type of content* Or A network link which contains only one focus of interaction	Shaw (2006, p. 18) Mitchell (1969, p. 22)
Calculative tie	A tie motivated primarily by expected economic benefit	Hite & Hesterly (2001, p. 277)
Relationally embedded tie	A tie embedded within a social relationship and which influences the firm's economic decision-making	Hite (2005 p. 113)
Bridging tie	A tie that spans a structural hole	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 171)
Opportunistic tie	New ties that are opportunistically evaluated and incorporated into the network	Larson & Starr (1993, p. 6)
Latent tie	No connection but there is the potential for one to be realized	Jack (2005, p. 1234)
Tie symmetry	The extent to which reciprocity between dyadic partners is balanced either consistently or at a given point in time	Hite (2003, p. 30)
New contact	A new person (or entity) with whom the entrepreneur interacted and wishes to remain connected	Vissa (2012, p. 500)

Brokerage	The act of creating value by bridging a structural hole. It involves indirectly linking two nodes where it would be valuable but risky for them to trust one another directly	Burt (2005, p. 97)
Tie frequency	A measure of how often a dyad interacts	Hite (2003, p. 27)
Tie reciprocity*	The extent to which there is the presence of a distinct process of reciprocity in the tie	Rossins (2011, p. 486)
Network intensity	*The frequency with which owners access their networks or relationships* Or The extent to which individuals linked by some network relationship are prepared to honour obligations stemming from it, or conversely, feel free to exercise the rights implied by that relationship	Watson (2007, p. 856) Mitchell (1974, p. 287)
Tie intensity	The frequency of interaction among dyadic partners over a specific period of time, particularly when confronting deadlines or time pressures	Hite (2003, p. 27)
Compositional quality	The extent to which a single tie can provide needed resources, such as expertise, financing or legitimacy	Hite & Hesterly (2001, p. 280)
Embedded Relationships	Relationships that, although economic in nature, contain additional personal elements such as loyalty and sympathy	Martinez & Aldrich (2011, p. 8)
Relational embeddedness	The extent to which a dyad interacts frequently over a long period of time, developing a multifaceted relationship in the process	Newburt & Tornikoski (2013, p. 249)
Structural embeddededness	The extent to which a dyad's relationship is grounded in social attachments and whose mutual ties are connected to one another Or *The extent to which a dyad's mutual contacts are connected to one another*	Newburt & Tornikoski (2013, p. 250) Granovetter (1992, p. 35)

2.2 Theoretical Home

Leonhard Euler is among the 18th century mathematicians credited with laying down the first proofs for what was to become social network theory[7/8]: the graphing of relations between discrete objects (Shields, 2012). But it wasn't until the late 19th century that early researchers in the fields of sociology and social psychology began to seriously study the importance of our social connections. These studies departed from

[7] Note that this is not the same "Network Theory" (or approach) used by some entrepreneurship scholars to denote firm structures that arise from networked activities, and contrasts to those arising based on the Transaction Cost Theory (or approach) of firm structure (Johanson & Mattson, 1987). The key distinction is that the former are based on mutual trust and personal relationships (Witt, 2004).

[8] For a thorough discussion of the merits of labeling it a theory see Wellman (1988).

mathematical formalist theories and considered networks from a structuralist view. Durkenheim (1893), Tönnies (1897), and Simmel (1908) are among those credited with early scholarship in this area. By the mid-20th century, researchers began to explore the implications of networks in, and to, organizations (Weiss & Jacobson, 1955). In the mid-1980s, researchers turned to the implications of networks within the field of entrepreneurship, with seminal works by Howard Aldrich and his research group (e.g., Staber & Aldrich, 1995; Zimmer & Aldrich, 1987). Since then, a rich foundation – more than 50,000 articles – of research has been published concerning networks and networking within the context of entrepreneurs and their ventures.

Today, most research into entrepreneurship and networks draws on a handful of theories. However, inconsistencies in the definition and application of these theories plague the literature in this domain. Thus, further clarifications for the purposes of the present study are necessary.

All entrepreneur-network literature falls broadly within the *socio-economic paradigm* which recognizes that while our social transactions can be governed by rational, economic logics they can also be influenced by variables such as our cognitive limits, social pressures, emotional assessments, and moral commitments (Etzioni, 1988). Addressing networks specifically, the *network approach* falls within this paradigm and argues that social connections are relevant to the study of firms because these relationships impact how firms, and the individuals within them, behave (Parkhe, Wasserman & Ralston, 2006). A foundational theory at the core of the socio-economic paradigm and the network approach in entrepreneurship is the *theory of structural embeddedness* (e.g., Granovetter, 1985). This theory argues that our personal connections, the connections of our connections (structural factors), and the nature of the actual relationships we have with these people (relational factors) can profoundly alter our economically-driven actions. As such, "network structure and a firm's or person's network position are considered to be both opportunities and constraints" to a firm (Lechner, Dowling & Welpe, 2006, p. 519). This is important because it highlights that networks and networking may be leveraged by entrepreneurs to seek advantage. This theory has also been intermittently called the *network paradigm* within the entrepreneurship literature (e.g., Johannisson, 1986).

An additional foundational theory of the socio-economic paradigm is *social exchange theory*. This theory concerns the relational ties between people and is

premised on the rational actor. It considers self-interest and interdependency in our social relationships as important explanatory mechanisms for how we manage our social connections with others: we are affected by the trust, obligation and expectations that infuse our interdependent relationships, and norms of reciprocity shape actors' actions (Blau, 1964). It suggests that relationships are developed through stages of increasing commitment and reward, according to the "success" of prior social exchanges (Larson & Starr, 1993).

Aldrich & Zimmer (1985) were the first to use the term *the (social) network approach to entrepreneurship* that leverages social network theory, and it has since become widely adopted. This approach focuses on entrepreneurship as embedded in a social context and entrepreneurs as able to change and leverage their network positions to strategic advantage (Aldrich & Zimmer, 1985, p. 14). Under this approach, founders are believed to proactively "use their personal network of private and business contacts to acquire resources and information they would not (or not as cheaply) be able to acquire on the markets" (Witt et al., 2008, p. 956). It argues that both the network itself and networking behaviours generally are important in determining entrepreneurs' network outcomes (Neergaard, Shaw & Carter, 2005). Much of the research on entrepreneurs' networks in the last three decades has adopted, and empirically supported, this theoretical perspective. Intermittently, studies have even described this approach as the *social network theory* in entrepreneurship (e.g., Birley & Cromie, 1988; Neergaard et al., 2005; Ostgaard & Birley, 1996).

Arising from the network approach to entrepreneurship, Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) proposed the *network success hypothesis*[9]. After 20 years of research, it remains a much-debated hypothesis within entrepreneurship. The hypothesis argues that the success of a venture can be attributed in part to the networking activities of the founder or founding team and that "network resources, network activities, and network support are heavily used to establish successful new firms" (Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998, p. 213). A key assumption of the network success hypothesis is that "entrepreneurs with larger and more diverse networks are expected to get more support from their network and thus to be more successful than entrepreneurs with smaller networks or less support from their network" (Witt, 2008,

[9] In their original article, Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) drew a distinction between the Network Founding Hypothesis and the Network Success Hypothesis. The former concerns only the actual founding process. This distinction has largely been dropped in the literature today.

p. 956). Bruderl and Preisendorfer (1998) found support for their network success hypothesis, as have numerous other empirical studies over the last two decades (e.g., Chell & Baines, 2000; Ostgaard & Birley, 1996; Premaratne, 2001; Shaw & Conway, 2000).

Other empirical studies, however, have found no correlation between network use and firm success and argue against the merits of the network success hypothesis (e.g., Ahuja, 2000; Johannisson, 1996; Johannisson, 1995; Littunen, 2000; Reese & Aldrich, 1995; Steier & Greenwood, 2000). As the debate continues concerning the relationship between networks, networking, and firm success, some have dubbed this latter position the *network failure hypothesis* (Quan & Motoyama, 2010).

The present study adopts the network approach to entrepreneurship within the socio-economic paradigm, and views founders as embedded in a network of relational connections prescribed by the theory of social embeddedness and driven by the mechanisms described in social exchange theory. The network success hypothesis is taken as valid: founders' networks and networking behaviours are assumed to positively influence their ventures' successes.

In adopting the theoretical frame outlined above, this study also adopts a number of assertions or principals as key theoretical underpinnings. Importantly, these assertions guide the theoretical interpretation of the empirical evidence in this study. Making these clear is important for studies within the pragmatism paradigm. These assertions have been drawn from studies in entrepreneurship that have applied the same or a similar theoretical frame, and this collection represents one of this study's contributions. Key assertions are captured in Table 4 below.

The discussion above establishes the theoretical underpinnings for this study while Table 4 specifies the key assertions that it adopts. Next, the chapter examines what specifically is known about networks studied offline that applies to the research question: *To what extent and how are founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes different in the online context?*

2.3 Network Overview

The prominent organizing framework in network literature in entrepreneurship comes from Lechner and colleagues (2006) who divide networks into three strands: network

structure, network governance, and network content. However, these divisions are suggested as a means to organize how networks might affect a firm's organization. Below, an overview of the network literature in entrepreneurship is divided into a logic more compatible to the research questions for this study. Specifically, this section organizes the relevant network literature into the following categories: network anatomy, network process, network outcomes, and context considerations.

Table 4: Assertions of Network Theories

Assertion	Source
Economic action, including entrepreneurial behaviour, is embedded in interpersonal social networks	Staber & Aldrich (1995, p. 442)
Entrepreneurs' network behaviours should not be considered atomistic – they are not agents of discrete transactions but are shaped by their social context	Larson & Starr (1993, p. 7)
Networks are enacted by entrepreneurs and their alters	Dubini & Aldrich, 1991:301
Entrepreneur networks are not uni-dimensional and should not be considered as an overlapping set of networks of different transactional content	Fombrun (1982, p. 280)
Entrepreneurs put considerable time into both developing and maintaining their social relations to get information and resources to build a successful business	Greve & Salaff (2003, p.5)
Networks are more than a set of dyadic ties, they are a web of ties	Larson & Starr (1993, p.5)
A network exists as potentials, all interconnected but also inter-dependent	Jack (2010, p. 130)
Ties function as pipes (through which resources can flow) vs. girders (a platform for activity)	Bogatti & Foster (2003, p. 1005)
Differential network positioning can have an important impact on resource flows	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 116)
As they entertain, plan for, and actually set up [and run] a firm, entrepreneurs call on family and others in their networks for different kinds of help and support	Greve & Salaff (2003, p. 2)
Entrepreneurial processes involve gathering scarce resources from the environment, most often through an entrepreneur's personal network	Ostgaard & Birley (1996, p. 37)

Network relationships can be maintained both consciously and unconsciously	Jack (2010, p. 130)
Network structure matters: differential network structure can impact access to and acquisition of needed resources	Hoang & Antoncic (2003, p. 66)
Generally, the higher the investment an entrepreneur makes in growing her network, the larger and more diverse it will be. However, networking abilities and cultural differences can impact this relationship	Dubini & Aldrich (1991); ability/culture: Witt et al. (2008); Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra (2002)
Actual networks are fluid, flexible and constantly changing	Jack (2010, p. 130)
Network governance processes shape, and are shaped by, network structures	Downing (2005, p. 197)
As actors, entrepreneurs proactively manage (effect) the degree of their relational embeddedness with individual ties	Hite (2005, p. 135)
Through a process of expanding and culling the network, an entrepreneur identifies a set of relationships that merit continued development and future investment for the firm	Larson & Starr (1993, p. 6)
The more relationally embedded a tie, the more likely that tie will engage in relational exchanges vs. market exchanges	Hite (2005, p. 136)
Context (such as industry, company, country) is directly relevant to network structure and process	Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra, (2002); Gulati & Higgins (2003)

2.3.1. Network Anatomy

The earliest studies of entrepreneurs' networks were concerned with understanding their composition (e.g., Dubini & Aldrich, 1991). Today, many studies continue to focus on two fundamental areas: (1) network structural content: those with whom the entrepreneur is connected and the nature of these bonds, whether direct, indirect, across structural holes, and so forth; and/or (2) network relational content: the particular characteristics of the relationship between entrepreneur and a given alter, whether strong, weak, embedded, etc.

Studies within entrepreneurship have considered the *structural* components of entrepreneurs' networks as the '"opportunity structure" (Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998, p. 216) that maps the action possibilities for the entrepreneur (Johanson & Matsson, 1987). A review of this literature suggests that the structural characteristics most frequently studied are size, density, closure, and/or brokerage. While a detailed review of related findings is beyond the scope of the present study, it is worth noting

that overall, there is little agreement concerning the value of specific network structure characteristics for entrepreneurs. For example, a number of studies have found large networks to be important for firm success (e.g., Baum, Calabrese, & Sliverman, 2000; Hansen, 1995; Raz & Gloor, 2007); others, however, have found no such relationship (e.g., Batjargal, 2003, 2005; Johannison, 1996). Recently, Semrau & Werner (2014) determined a curvilinear relationship between network size and access to key resources such as financial support, information, and additional contacts among nascent entrepreneurs. They suggest that at some point, network redundancy occurs such that adding more nodes likely duplicates resources already available. They argue for a "sweet spot" for an entrepreneur's network size that maximizes access while keeping costs of network activities down. Qian & Kemelgor (2013) note similar findings. Studies have also highlighted other advantageous structural characteristics of an entrepreneur's network such as high closure (Hansen, 1995), density (Semrau & Werner, 2014), position (Zaheer & Bell, 2005), and brokerage (Batjargal, 2010).

Relational content is also an important component of network anatomy. When we connect to others we create relationships. Social scientists have long been concerned with these relationships and have called them *ties*. The vast majority of network and networking studies within the entrepreneurship literature have examined tie strength, tie embeddedness, tie composition and/or trust, all of which are key dimensions of relationships between entrepreneurs and their network connections. As a term, network relational content has three broad meanings that are sometimes conflated in the entrepreneurship literature (see Shaw (2006) for a notable exception). Kapferer (1969) refers to relational content as exchange content defined as, "the overt elements of the transactions between individuals in a situation which constitute their interaction" (p. 212). Where there are multiple contents, the relationship is said to be multiplexed. In contrast, Wheeldon (1969) defines relational content according to strands such that, "if the situations in which people habitually see one another are clearly distinguished it is possible to separate, very crudely, the strands which contribute to their relationship" (p. 132). Mitchell (1969) views relational content simply as "normative content." These distinctions are often not made clear by researchers considering entrepreneurs' networks.

For the purposes of clarity, the present study considers relational content as both the tangible and intangible aspects of a dyadic relationship. Also, whereas some

studies use the term *tie* to refer simply to a connection between two people (structural measure), this study uses the term more precisely to refer to the relationship between two people (relational measure). The specific elements of relational content - ties strength, tie embeddedness/tie composition and trust - are considered below.

Tie Strength: Granovetter (1973) described the strength of a direct tie as "a (possibly linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize a tie" (p. 1361). There are two types of direct ties, strong ties and weak ties. As defined in Table 3, strong ties are "network relationships characterized by frequent interactions, a long duration of relationship, and a close socio-emotional bond" (Sullivan & Ford, 2014, p. 553), and they are most often thought to arise from family and close friend relationships. Strong tie relationships are understood to be based on high levels of sociality, or time spent together, and are considered more available because these nodes are motivated to assist the entrepreneur (Granovetter, 1985, p. 209; Newbert & Tornikoski, 2013). Given their high degree of familiarity, and frequent similarity, strong tie relationships are considered to offer "a greater depth of knowledge but little diversity of knowledge" to the entrepreneur (Lechner & Dowling, 2003, p. 3).

Strong tie nodes have been associated with problem solving help (Ulhoi, 2005), and are also thought to have multiple bases for relating (Kapferer, 1969, p. 213). Strong ties are considered effective for exploitative learning in new ventures (Soetanto, 2017). They are also viewed as having more suasion in the decision-making of entrepreneurs (Granovetter, 1985, p. 219), and are thought to contain more trust, with well-established norms of reciprocity (Neergaard, 2005). Strong ties have also been found to be a critical support at founding for venture success (Burt & Opper, 2017). Many studies assert that strong ties should be preferred over weak ties in founder networks (e.g., Steier & Greenwood, 2000). However, strong ties do come with a disadvantage in that they are more costly to develop because of the time and energy they require (e.g., Ozdemir, Moran, Zhong, & Bliemel, 2016).

Direct ties are described as "weak" if they contain little emotional intensity, intimacy, or history of reciprocal exchange (Martinez & Aldrich, 2011). Weak tie connections are seen as providing entrepreneurs with "access to information resources beyond those available in their own social circle" (Granovetter, 1985 p. 209) because they are more likely to cross over social groups. These tie nodes are thought to be

helpful with idea generation (Ulhoi, 2005) and explorative learning in new ventures (Soetanto, 2017). Weak tie relationships are seen as important because of the access to novel resources that they can provide (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991, p. 309).

Since the emotional and reciprocal cost of maintaining weak ties is so much less than for strong ties, it is easier to keep more weak ties in a network which, in turn, can lead to greater diversity in an entrepreneur's connections (Semrau & Werner, 2014). These diverse relationships are understood to provide greater variety in the information available from alters, as well as "weaker pressures for conformity, which fosters innovation" (Martinez & Aldrich, 2011 p. 24). The *strength of weak ties hypothesis* proposed by Granovetter (1973) and widely accepted within entrepreneurship is premised on the access to novel resources that weak ties can offer. Weak tie connections are also thought to hold less trust and are more prone to opportunistic behaviour as they usually possess less mutual commitment (Neergaard, 2005). This tie type offers a cost advantage over strong ties for they take less time and energy to maintain (e.g., Oxdemir, Moran, Zhong, & Bliemel, 2016).

Many studies have mapped the composition of direct ties within entrepreneurs' networks and evaluated the merits of having predominantly strong or weak tie connections (e.g., Martinez & Aldrich, 2011). While some studies conclude that strong ties are most advantageous (e.g., Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Semrau & Werner, 2014), others suggest that weak ties should be a priority for founders (e.g., Batjargal, 2003; Stam & Elfring, 2008). Still others observe no relationship at all (e.g., Batjargal 2003, 2005; Johannison, 1996). Uzzi (1996) argued that a balanced network of both strong and weak ties might be best but much subsequent research such as Rasmussen, Mosey and Wright (2015) has failed to answer this question definitively. Perry-Smith and Mannucci (2017) argue that weak ties are important for idea generation, while strong ties support idea elaboration. An analysis of the hundreds of studies investigating the merits of strong or weak tie relationships for entrepreneurs is beyond the scope of this review but the debate clearly remains open since conflicting findings are prevalent.

Tie Embeddedness/Composition: The extent to which an entrepreneur and her dyad connection share a stable and vested social relationship has been studied as a relational content measure called relational tie embeddedness. This differs from structural embeddedness which concerns an entrepreneur's position in a larger network

(Newbert & Tornikoski, 2013). Embedded tie nodes are thought to be more valuable because these connections are more likely to trust each other, show reciprocal instead of profit-maximizing behaviour, and take a long-term perspective on the relation (Shaw, Wilson, & Pret, 2017; Witt, 2004). Embeddedness is important because relationally-embedded connections are thought to facilitate an entrepreneur's ability "to acquire external resources needed for successful emergence and performance" (Hite and Hesterly, 2001, p.11). It is also considered important in building legitimacy for a firm (Shaw et al., 2017).

Hite (2003) added nuance to the field's understanding of entrepreneurs' network tie relationships by proposing seven kinds of relationally embedded ties based on the type and intensity of embeddedness: (1) *personal tie*: the social relationship component is purely personal in nature, such as personal knowledge of the connection, emotional content in the connection, and/or some interpersonal exchange; (2) *competency tie*: the social relationship component is based only on a dyadic economic interaction; (3) *hollow tie*: the only social relationship component is based on obligation or resource extraction and usually introduced by a third party (described as social capital[10] by Hite); (4) *functional tie*: the social relationship has both economic and resource extraction components; (5) *isolated tie*: the social relationship has both personal and economic social components); (6) *latent tie*: the social relationship has both personal and resource extraction components; and (7) *full tie:* the social relationship has personal, economic, and resource extraction components. Hite argues that full ties are the most valuable to the entrepreneur.

The above has provided an overview of network anatomy, specifically structural content, and relational content (including tie strength and tie embeddedness). However, founders' networks are in constant flux as the very process of networking creates and evolves a founder's network. What is understood about the process of networking by entrepreneurs is discussed in the following section. This is important because differences in networking behaviour by entrepreneurs may lead to, and help explain, differences in observed network anatomy and content.

[10] Hite's social capital construct includes obligation, resource accessibility, brokering, and structural embeddedness. This definition of social capital differs from that generally used in the entrepreneurship literature (e.g., Naphiet and Ghoshal, 1998).

2.4 Networking Process

Network structure and relational content change through the process of networking: thus, by their very nature, networks are dynamic as entrepreneurs constantly add, evolve, and drop social connections (Vissa & Bhagavatula, 2012). Many studies have tackled the challenge of capturing the networking processes of entrepreneurs: Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Jack et al., 2008; Lamine et al., 2015; Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010. While these have produced a number of explanations of possible processes, there is support to suggest that these processes can be combined (Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010) to offer a more streamlined perspective appropriate for this review. At the most basic level, entrepreneurs' network building activity is thought to progress through three stages proposed by Larson & Starr[11] (1993): focusing on essential dyadic ties; converting dyadic ties to socio-economic ties; and, layering exchanges with multiple exchange processes. This model reflects moving from personal tie relationships to more calculative tie relationships. This model is thought to be "the most complete piece of theorizing about network processes in the entrepreneurial context" (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003, p. 179).

Hite (2003, 2005) extends and modifies Larson and Starr's thesis by suggesting that nodes can come into an entrepreneur's network from a personal connection, from an economic connection, or from a brokered resource extraction connection but that the tie can then evolve to incorporate personal, economic and resource extraction elements over time. According to her model, the extent to which there is sociality, affect, intentional brokering, and ease in the interaction, affects if and how an entrepreneur's particular connection evolves into a multi-dimensional and/or a fully embedded tie. The present study adopts the generally accepted view that when a founder adds a new node to her network it can be based on an initial personal, economic or brokered resource extraction relationship, and that, over time, she may choose to evolve the tie relationship by adding additional dimensions. However, this study does not accept Greve and Salaff's (2003) premise that this *possible* tie evolution becomes increasingly *calculative* as the venture matures.

[11] It is important not to overlook the context in which their model was proposed. Their study examined the effect that networking has on the organizational structure of a firm as it emerges and grows. The distinction has largely been lost over the years. The model remains relevant in this study's context as it has been argued elsewhere that at the early stage of firms, founders' networks are not distinguished from firm-level networks.

Given that RQ1 for this study requires considering the resource value extracted by entrepreneurs from their networks, it is also important to consider what is known about the outcomes of the networking process. This chapter now turns to consider this literature.

2.5 Network Outcomes

There is little dispute in the literature that networks are "the media through which actors gain access to a variety of resources held by other actors" (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003, p.166). A key focus of this study is to understand founders' network outcomes online. As such, it is important to understand what the literature says about the outputs and, more broadly, outcomes of face-to-face networks and networking for entrepreneurs. The online context will be addressed in the following chapter.

Tangible and intangible resources have been measured as outcomes of networking across venture stages. Recently, Semrau and Werner (2014) have shown that there are likely significant differences in the ease with which different resources can be extracted from any given network. There are no accepted categorizations in the extant literature to encompass all of the different networking outcomes that have been empirically determined. Extant findings have been grouped by this author into three higher-order categories: instrumental resources, symbolic resources, and governance resources. Each is considered below.

2.5.1. Instrumental Resource Outcomes

A review of studies on entrepreneurs' network outcomes reveals that networks provide many practical, tangible, and intangible resources to a venture (e.g., Semrau & Werner, 2014). Tichy (1981) identify four resources available to organizations from networking: information; goods and services; expressions of affect or emotional support; and, political influence. Barney (1996) also identifies resources in four different categories: financial capital, physical capital, human capital and organizational capital. Shaw (2006) identifies the content of networks as having information, advice, economic transactions, bartering exchange, and normative expression. Witt et al. (2008) classifies resources available into personal contacts, experience and knowledge, physical resources, and financial resources. Taken together, these and other research findings produce a key list of possible resources that an entrepreneur might extract

from her network as: emotional support; financial support; labour support; material support; market support; and, technology support (e.g., Anderson & Jack, 2002; Anderson et al., 2010; Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998; Lechner et al., 2006; Starr & MacMillan, 1990; Witt et al., 2008).

Additionally, information value such as market and technical support is consistently identified as an important outcome of networking. Specifically, it can include: knowledge; advice; expertise; political intelligence; problem solving; uncertainty reduction; and, opportunity identification (e.g., Anderson & Jack, 2002; Anderson et al., 2010; Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998; Lechner et al., 2006; Starr & MacMillan, 1990; Witt et al., 2008). These lists represent a broad, but by no means exhaustive, summary of the possible kinds of resources that could be available to an entrepreneur through her network. The following chapter will outline the final list of network outcome resources investigated in this study after also presenting the SNS context for resource extraction from networks online.

2.5.2. Symbolic Resource Outcomes

A number of studies have also demonstrated that the networking outcomes for entrepreneurs can be symbolic (e.g., Stringfellow, Shaw, & Maclean, 2014). In a high closure network, people are often motivated to adjust their behaviour in order to protect their reputation – that is, "the behaviour expected of [us]" – in the group (Burt, 2005, p. 101). A review of the literature suggests that both positive and negative networking outcomes are possible regarding reputation, legitimacy, endorsement, backing, and approval (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010; Shaw & Carter, 2007; Shaw et al., 2017; Zott & Huy, 2007). Positive perceptions based on a founder's network linkages are also thought to lead to subsequent beneficial resource exchanges (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003). It is beyond the scope of this study to consider all possible symbolic networking outcomes. Instead, this study limits consideration to one of the key networking outcomes associated with building reputation, legitimacy, and approval for a venture: advocacy. Advocacy is concerned with endorsement, backing, and approval-related outcomes that build reputation and legitimacy (Fischer & Reuber, 2007). Advocacy is defined as "the act of supporting an idea, need, person or group". It is understood to be an outcome of social interactions including networking (London, 2010). It is an important network outcome to be investigated in this study, as described in the following chapter, Chapter 3.

2.5.3. Governance Resource Outcomes

As discussed previously, a key tenet of social exchange theory is that trust and norms of reciprocity underpin social exchange processes. Trust is typically built through multiple exchanges over time that, in turn, builds reciprocity. Blau (1968) outlines that "the process of social exchange leads to the trust required for it in a self-governing fashion" (p. 99).

The extent to which and how much trust, reciprocity, obligation, or gratitude exist between connections are understood to influence the outcomes of networking.[12] Fear of reprisal is also a governance-related outcome since "networking involves expanding one's circle of trust" (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991, p. 309). As a result, an important outcome of exchange is change in the governance variables in a relationship. This allows weak ties to evolve into strong ties and strong ties to wither or develop across more complex dimensions, becoming more embedded. As early as 1957, Bott observed governance implications for predominantly weak tie networks when he stated, "when most of the people a person knows do not interact with one another, that is, when his network is loosely-knit, more variation on norms is likely to develop in the network and social control and mutual assistance will be more fragmented and less consistent" (p. 60). This suggests that an important outcome of networking is changes in dimensions that affect the norms and expectations embedded in the relations between connections (Lee & Jones, 2008). Extant research suggests trust, reciprocity, power, influence, norms, risk, shared understanding, obligations, expectations, and commitment are governance variables that may increase or decrease as an outcome of entrepreneurs' networking behaviours (e.g., Halon & Saunders, 2007; Hite, 2005; Krackhardt, 1990; Lee & Jones, 2008; Molm, 2010; Reuf, Aldrich, & Carter, 2003).

While the above analysis has focused on the positive outcomes of networking, there is also a darker side. The costs of networks and networking are reviewed below.

2.5.4. Network and Networking Costs

Positive outcomes of networks and networking abound but there may also be downsides for entrepreneurs. A founder is "embedded in a context that both constrains and liberates" (Fombrun 1982, p. 281). Johannisson (1996) suggests that there are

[12] Trust and norms of reciprocity are also considered as core components of social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998) or Alder & Kwon (2002)).

direct costs and opportunity costs for time invested in managing a network of connections.

Under the norms of reciprocity governing social exchange, an entrepreneur "cannot only ask network partners for information and access to cheap resources, she needs to contribute to the network as well" (Witt, 2004, p. 401). However, when the cost to do so exceeds the cost for these resources bought on the open market, any advantage may be lost. "Strong ties require high levels of reciprocity, which means that entrepreneurs need to offer some sort of repayment, either economic or emotional or both, for the help that they receive" (Martinez & Aldrich, 2011, p. 24).

As a tie becomes embedded across more and more dimensions, it may become more important to the entrepreneur to maintain the social connection than to avoid a bad economic exchange inside her network (Hite, 2005). Over-embeddedness and multiplex tie development can have unanticipated costs to the entrepreneur (Newbert & Tornikoski, 2013; Uzzi, 1999).

Complicating the matter, there are costs to a large weak tie-focused network too. Some studies have found that relationships that require less time and effort to maintain may offer significantly lower quality resources to the entrepreneur (e.g., Hanlon & Saunders, 2007). As well, there is evidence that as an entrepreneur's network grows in size, "the degree of redundant information and resources increases and the opportunity costs of acquiring and maintaining a new link rise" (Witt et al., 2008, p. 956). Courting new connections can be time-consuming and costly if they prove to offer few resource outcomes (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991). A reliance on weak ties and their inherent lower governance factors can also lead to opportunistic behaviour by weak tie acquaintances (Neergaard, 2005). This led Hanlon and Saunders (2007) to conclude, "trust may be a more expensive governance mechanism than a formal contract in the long run." This suggests entrepreneurs need to be cognizant of the opportunity costs associated with adding more ties and evolving weak ties to strong ties in their networks (Semrau & Werner, 2014).

Having looked at the outcomes of networks and networking, the chapter now considers important context factors that are relevant to the present investigation of entrepreneurs' networks.

2.6 Network Context

As the above broad review of the network and networking literature reveals, over three decades of network research in entrepreneurship has returned mixed and sometimes conflicting findings. While there is wide acceptance among scholars that entrepreneurs' networks contain certain structural and relational elements and that these are effected by their networking behaviour over time, there is much less agreement about the ideal network structure and content that entrepreneurs should be "networking" to achieve. Of note, these studies' practical recommendations consistently adopt the position that all entrepreneurs should have one kind of network, the prescribed network. For example, considering the tie composition of networks over time, some studies argue that entrepreneurs' should evolve their networks from strong tie-based to weak tie-based (e.g., Jack et al, 2008), and from small networks to large networks (Raz & Gloor, 2007). Others suggest the opposite (e.g., Burt & Opper, 2017). For example, Greve and Salaff (2003) suggest that entrepreneurs should evolve their networks from weak tie-based to strong tie-based while cutting down on both their network size and time committed to network maintenance over time. As the study of networks and networking in entrepreneurship matures, one would anticipate that researchers would be building consensus on some of the key best practice tenets such as tie composition over stages of firm, the value of embeddedness, and the specific impact of context conditions. However, this is not the case (compare for example, Hite & Hesterly, 2001 with Jack et al., 2008). Few studies have investigated differences between entrepreneurs, their firms, and their environments that could impact "blanket prescription" recommendations, rendering them at best, shallow.

Recently, researchers have turned to context to help explain these differences in findings (e.g., Lamine et al., 2015). A meta-analysis of over 60 studies of networks and firm performance concluded that context is an important consideration when studying networks and networking (Stam et al., 2014). Shaw (2006) reiterates that "because [the entrepreneurs] are embedded within fluctuating networks of social relationships, it is unlikely that they will take decisions about their firms in isolation from this environment"(p. 6). A growing body of research has begun investigating context explanations to shed light on why there have been such mixed findings in the literature. An overview of these context-centred network studies are considered below and are divided into macro-level, firm-level, and individual-level differences.

2.6.1. Macro-level Context

At the macro-level, studies have generally considered environmental and cultural context differences. The environmental contexts of industry, sector, geography, and local environments are understood to effect entrepreneurs' networks (e.g., Jack et al., 2008; Lechner et al., 2006; Rossinson & Stubberud, 2010). There is also empirical evidence suggesting that institutional environments impact network form and function for entrepreneurs (De Clercq, Lim, & Oh, 2013; Stam et al., 2014). For example, networks created in socially deprived local regions look very different from those developed in more affluent areas because entrepreneurs are required to rely on friends and family (Batjargal, 2003). Rural entrepreneurs are also found to connect with different contacts than urban entrepreneurs (Korsgaard, Ferguson, & Gaddefors, 2015). Beyond noted geographic differences, recently Qian and Kemelgor (2013) showed that the regional munificence of resources may effect networks. Hite and Hesterly (2001) also note that differences in the availability, accessibility, and uncertainty of resources in different environments can impact networks and networking. As well, environmental hostility has been shown to shrink networks and cause entrepreneurs to rely more on strong tie connections (Johannison, 1996).

At the macro-level, culture is also recognized as a highly relevant context factor for networks. While some studies have shown a degree of homogeneity amongst entrepreneurs' networks across different countries, many studies indicate that cultural differences are also present (e.g., Drakopoulou Dodd & Patra, 2002; Foley & O'Connor, 2013; Kwon & Arenius, 2010). At the level of minority culture, Klyver and Foley (2012) have also found differences that influence networks, including views of networks, the role of the family, diversity, and the activation of relationships. As an example of the networking implications of culture at the national level, Greve and Salaff (2003) found differences in the size of discussion networks, and the actual time spent networking. Many studies have also noted differences in tie strength composition amongst entrepreneurs from different countries (e.g., Aldrich & Yang, 2012; Deakins, Ishaq, Smallbone, Wittham, & Wyper, 2007; Premaratne, 2001).

A macro-context difference that has received very little attention in the entrepreneurship network literature to date is the online context. Recent studies suggest that the online context may differ significantly from the face-to-face context. These differences may have implications for how entrepreneurs interact socially and

therefore impact the relational and structural content of their networks (Lee & Jones, 2008). Investigating this context difference is core to this study's research questions and will be explored further in the following chapter.

2.6.2. Firm-level Context

The most prevalent firm-level context condition that has been investigated is stage of firm. Larson and Starr (2003) have suggested that entrepreneurs engage in four distinct and iterative stages of networking as their ventures grow: exploration (tapping friends, current business contacts and family); screening (considering what connections the venture needs to access needed resources and then making connections); selective use of dyads (accessing resources based on appropriate dyad content); and, network assessment of the effectiveness of the overall network for future ventures. Note that these stages assume that entrepreneurs' actions are highly purpose-driven. A host of other studies have also highlighted the importance of stage-of-firm in understanding networking behaviour (e.g., Anderson et al., 2010; Jack et al., 2008).

2.6.3. Individual-level Context

Beyond the field of entrepreneurship, there is widespread support for the notion that individual psychological predispositions effect networks and their contents (e.g., Burt, Jannotta, & Mahoney, 1998; Kalish & Rossins, 2006; Kadushin, 2002; Klein, Lim, Saltz, & Mayer, 2004; Mehra, Kilduff & Brass, 2001). A few recent venture-focused studies have considered the possible effects of individual psychological differences on network structure. There is some recognition that psychological traits or predispositions can impact networking behaviour that, in turn, can influence network structure and content (e.g., Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Parkhe et al., 2006). De Carolis et al. (2009) support this position and conclude that "new venture creation is the result of the interplay of entrepreneurs' social networks and cognitive biases" (p. 528). Neergaard (2005) notes "networking is associated with… the individual's ability and inclination to form ties" (p. 258).

Although a detailed review of the possible impact of individual differences on networks overall is beyond the scope of this study, some differences observed within entrepreneurship studies are noteworthy. Network effects have been identified for the personality-related traits of achievement, internal locus of control, self-reliance,

extroversion (Lee & Tsang, 2001), risk propensity and illusion of control (De Carolis et al., 2009), confidence (Cooper, Folta, & Woo, 1999), and entrepreneurial intensity and social competency (Kreiser, Patel, & Fiet, 2013; Lans, Blok, & Gulikers, 2015). Evidence also suggests that the degree of homophily in an entrepreneur's network may be personality-related (for a review see McPerson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). These studies point to personality traits as having a very high likelihood of influencing entrepreneurs' networks and networking behaviour. Overall, however, findings on the effects of individual-level personality differences have been mixed (Rosserts, Wilson, Fedurek, & Dunbar, 2008).

As with personality, network-related studies considering gender, a component of the self-concept, have had mixed results. For example, Aldrich, Elam & Reese (1997), Greve and Salaff (2003), and Watson (2011) found no significant differences between the networks of entrepreneurs based on gender. However, this finding has been countered by others who found that men and women have different kinds of network content (e.g., Neergaard et al., 2005; Rossinson & Stubberud , 2009).

The impact of age, education, social class, and experience on entrepreneurs' networks has also been studied with equally mixed results (e.g., Anderson & Miller, 2003; Cooper et al., 1995; Lee & Tsang, 2001; Lee & Tuselman, 2013; Rossinson & Stubberud, 2014).

Another element of individual-level networker difference is social identity, a key focus of this study (see Chapter 4 for a definition and detailed review). Social identity is an important self-concept difference that cuts across demographic and personality differences studied to date. Kwon and Alder (2014) argue that cognitions may make "actors who occupy objectively similar places in a social network… perceive their social ties differently and, thus, may not see the same structure of constraints and opportunities " (p. 414). Research indicates that identity, a cognitive frame, likely emerges through network processes (Ibarra, Kilduff, & Tsai, 2005), and that network characteristics affect the variation in the creation, selection and retention of possible selves (Vostel, 1992). Taken together, this evidence suggests that while networks may effect identity, similarly, identity may effect networks.

It is outside the scope of this study to investigate how networks might impact social identity but a few studies in particular are worth noting. Podolny and Baron

(1997) suggest that networks confer social identity by drawing people together with common characteristics, and that these group members become social referents to one another. Ibarra, Kilduff and Tsai (2005) suggest that "as reflections of social identity, networks serve as a signal to others about the current status or probable future of an individual…[this] in turn, affects an individual's ability to attract influential actors to his or her network circle" (p. 365). The number and diversity of models of possible selves, emotional closeness of relationships, and salient social and personal characteristics are thought to be important in this regard (see Ibarra et al., 2005 for a more detailed review). These studies suggest that identity is relevant for networks, and that networking is an important individual-level difference that warrants further investigation.

No studies have considered what effect an entrepreneur's social identity might have on her network and networking behaviour. Addressing this gap is a focus of this study. Specifically, this study considers what effect a founder's social identity might have on her online social networks and networking behaviour.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

This study examines the personal and business networks of founders comprising people whom the founder has a direct, indirect, active or dormant social relationship with and through which support for her venture might flow, and does so from the perspective of the founder herself. It also described that the study is situated within social network theory and specifically adopts the *social network approach to entrepreneurship*.

This chapter undertook to review key literature on networks, networking and network outcomes. The *network success hypothesis, the strength of weak ties hypothesis* and the *assumption of advantages of brokering structural holes* were discussed, and their key assumptions were uncovered. A core insight gained from this analysis is the understanding that underlying these approaches is an assumption that, in the offline context, entrepreneurs benefit from a large network of weak ties for garnering the resources needed to build and grow their ventures. However, additional review also revealed that there is considerable debate within the literature concerning the value and advantages of weak or strong tie networks for delivering resources to

entrepreneurs and, therefore, conflicting evidence prescribing what kind of tie-type networks are best for entrepreneurs to build. Some studies have found that strong-tie networks are best, some have found that weak-tie networks are best, and still others have found that a network balanced with both is best. Currently, there is no widely accepted explanation for why these differences in empirical studies have been found and this is a key gap that the present study addresses.

Concerning networking, entrepreneurs often bring new relationships into their networks using network broadening behaviors, and also strengthen their existing relationships using network deepening behaviours. Moreover, entrepreneurs are able to increase the embeddedness of the ties within their network by adding new dimensions to their relationships. These dimensions can include a personal component, an economic component, and a resource or obligation component. Extant literature suggests that ties with more dimensions of embeddedness are more likely to provide needed resources to an entrepreneur. These resource outcomes can comprise instrumental outcomes such as material resources and information, symbolic resources such as legitimacy, or governance resources such as trust or reciprocity. The extent to which these same resource outcomes are achieved in founders' digital networks is not known and represents a key gap in the literature that the present study addresses.

This chapter also examined relevant literature on the known influences of context on networks, networking and network outcomes. At the macro-level, some studies were found that suggest that context factors like geography, industry, institutional conditions, economic prosperity, and resource munificence can impact entrepreneurs' networks. One macro-level condition that has not been investigated is the online context. This gap is a key focus of the present study.

Finally, a number of studies have empirically shown that individual-level differences can influence entrepreneurs' networks. Studies investigating individual-level differences including gender, age, personality traits, social class, and experience have returned mixed results concerning the role that they may play in the kinds of networks that entrepreneurs create. One individual-level difference that has not been investigated in the context of networking is founder social identity, a dimension of the self-concept. It is not known what influence founders' social identities might have on their networks, networking actions, and network outcomes. This gap is a key focus of the present study.

With these identified gaps in mind, the following chapter introduces the online context of networks and networking. This is followed in Chapter 4 with a review of the social identity literature.

CHAPTER 3: THE ONLINE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

These technologies carry the promise of bringing people together,
but also bear the danger of spinning them in different directions.
~ Zizi Papacharissi

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed extant network theory and what is understood about entrepreneurs' networks, networking, and network outcomes in the offline context. As there is a paucity of research within the entrepreneurship domain that has considered the online context for these issues, a review of key Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC) literature is necessary. This chapter reviews the online context for networks, and specifically, online social network sites (SNSs). It begins with a brief overview of the development of the Internet and of SNSs, to place them in their historical context. Next, the chapter describes the specific ways in which the online context for networks and networking should be considered distinct, before concluding with an examination of the outcomes that may result from networking on SNSs. In doing so, it identifies an important gap in our understanding of network theory and specifically, in comprehending entrepreneurs' networks, networking behaviour, and networking outcomes in the online context.

3.2 Establishing an Internet Technology Context

While the *World Wide Web* or, as it is more commonly referred to, *the Internet*, is now ubiquitous, including having drawn significant research attention from scholars spanning engineering, science, humanities, and business fields, studies of how entrepreneurs engage with and use the Internet are rare (e.g., Fisher & Reuber, 2014; Sigfusson & Chetty, 2013). To understand the current online technological context of SNSs, it is valuable to have a basic understanding of the history of the Internet since it represents "a paradigm shift in the way we do business" (Stafford, Stafford, & Schkade, 2004, p. 259). What follows is a brief overview of the online digital foundations on which SNSs have been built.

When the Internet was first conceived in 1969 by the US Department of Defence (and separately in the UK in 1970), no one anticipated that this new capability, designed to manage military information, would evolve into a data network of connected computers serving almost 4 billion users by 2017 (Internetworldstats). Within four years of its introduction, the Internet's network of data communication systems enabled the creation of email. By the early 1980s, Usenet newsgroups were allowing geographically dispersed, asynchronous group communication at record speed. While these early platforms were text-only, in the 1990s a group of physicists at CERN extended the Internet's capacity to include multimedia communication – the rise of the World Wide Web – and inter-connected websites, blogs, and other resources took off.

Whether the early 2000s simply marked a huge increase in the opportunity to interact online or heralded the introduction of Web 2.0 is under debate. The Web's inventor, Tim Berners-Lee, has openly stated that the Web was always envisioned as "a collaborative space where people can interact" and that Web 2.0 is simply a "piece of jargon" (DeveloperWorks Interview, 2006). Others have framed Web 2.0 as distinctly one-to-many, highlighting its emphasis on participation over simple computer connections and information access (e.g., Darwish & Lakhtaria, 2011). It is generally accepted that the introduction of Web 2.0 is distinguished by its user-generated content (Baym, 2010) and, building on this, many researchers are already working towards a more powerful Web 3.0. Some have suggested this advancement will lead to the "Semantic Web": a web of data that can be processed directly and indirectly by machines (Bernstein, Hendler, & Noy, 2016). Others have stated that the Web is posed to become a "Metaverse": virtually-enhanced physical reality is fused with physically persistent virtual space (Smart, Cascio, & Paffendorf, 2007). Still others argue that Web 3.0 entails the "Internet of Things": all everyday devices are connected to the Internet (Burgess, 2017)). An important general distinction when discussing online phenomena is that the Internet is understood to be the networks of networks (the hardware), while *the Web* is understood to represent the content on these digital hardware networks (the software). This distinction is maintained in the present study.

Internet adoption rates have grown exponentially since the early 1990s with over 88 per cent of North American homes currently reporting Internet access (Internetworldstats, 2017). In North America, most users are spending approximately

six hours a day on the Internet (Wearesocial, 2017). Lash's (2002) prediction that "the information order is inescapable" is becoming a reality. In the not too distant future there may be "no longer an outside place to stand" (Lash, 2002, xii, in Beer, 2008, p. 521). Today, there remains little scholarly debate that the Internet has changed our social world (e.g., Donath, 2004).

A number of studies have highlighted that the Internet is unlike previous new technology media such as TV and radio. The functional equivalency model considered in studies of new technology adoption has not been found to fit the Internet experience (e.g., DeMaggio, Harigatti, Neuman, & Rossinson 2001; Kestnbaum, Rossinson, Neustadtl, & Alvarez, 2002). Thus, researchers cannot simply look to other technological innovations to map an understanding of Internet use. The interactive nature of the Internet is the most often cited reason that previous patterns of technology adoption have not been proven to hold true for this newer medium.

The field of *Computer-Mediated Communication* (CMC) arose to address the unique properties of online communications. CMC is defined as "a process of human communication via computers, involving people, situated in particular contexts, engaging in processes to shape media for a variety of purposes" (Papacharissi, 2005, p. 217). Much of the work aimed at understanding the human-computer interface for communications and networking has come out of this field.

Over the past decade, scholars have hotly debated whether the Internet is destroying, displacing, substituting, or creating new forms of social activity. In the early days of the Internet's expansion into North American society (1995-2000), research often portrayed the Internet as the harbinger of the decline of communities' and society's social capital as a whole (Putnam, 1995, 2000; Quan-Haase et al., 2002). Studies even suggested that the Internet's social interactivity threatened the psychological wellbeing of individuals (Kraut et al., 1998). As early as 1995, Mitchell offered the alarming prediction that the networked technology of the Internet actually threatened to harm the very architecture of our everyday lives.

More recent studies, however, have tempered this pessimistic view of the Internet's impact. Reversing their previous findings, Kraut et al. (2002) found that as more and more friends and family joined together online, the negative social-psychological effects related to Internet use largely disappeared. Evidence now

suggests that Internet use is not affecting the time we spend with friends and family but rather drawing us away from other, more traditional media (e.g., Provonost, 2002; Qiu, Pudrovska, & Bianchi, 2002). A number of studies also point to an increase in community involvement, trust, socio-psychological wellbeing, and relationship maintenance associated with Internet and SNS use (Bargh & McKenna, 2004; Huang, 2017; Spears, Postmes, Lea, & Wolbert, 2002; Valkenburg, Koutamanis, & Vossen, 2017; Vergeer & Pelzer, 2009). In fact, a growing body of research suggests that social connections can be developed, maintained, and strengthened through the Internet (e.g., Manago, Taylor, & Greenfield, 2012; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017; Sajuria, Hudson, Dasandi, & Teocharis, 2015).

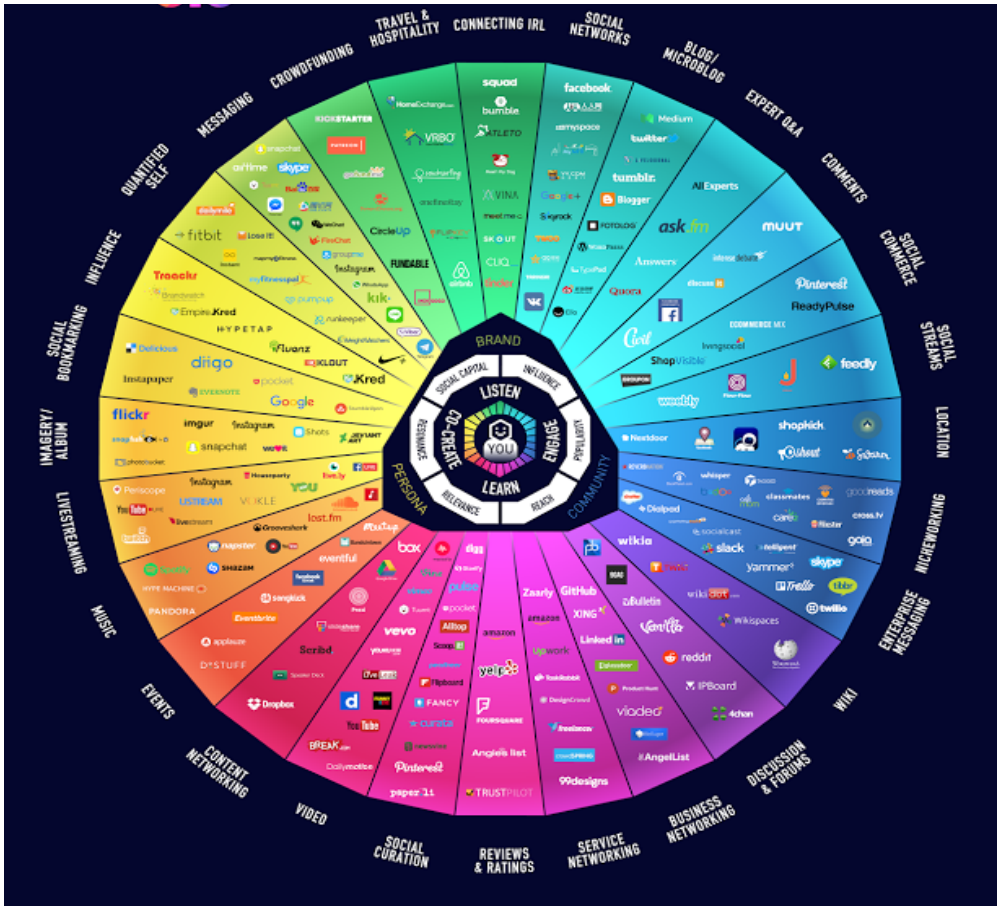
3.3 Establishing a Social Media Context

"Accessing the Internet" has become a commonplace phrase that can mean anything from checking out the latest health information, to purchasing a new sofa, subscribing to an online newsletter, playing a digital game with acquaintances in another country, or calling a loved one. Some of these activities are defined by social interaction and others are not. While early researchers tended to view the Internet monolithically, recent studies suggest that different types of Internet use can play a role in how users make use of their online social resources (Burke, Kraut, & Marlow, 2011). Arguably the most powerful online social interaction platforms available today are contained within a subset of the Web 2.0 called *social media*. Social media are generally defined as employing "mobile and web-based technology to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities, share, co-create, discuss and modify user-generated content" (Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011, p. 241). Importantly, SNSs fall within this social media constellation.

In 2018, there are an estimated 2.8 billion active social media users across the globe, up by 482 million in just two years (Wearsocial, 2018). In North America, more than 60 percent of the population are active users of social media (Wearsocial, 2018). The average time spent per day on social media by a user in the USA and Canada is two hours (Wearsocial, 2018). The generally accepted characteristics of social media include: a rich user interface; user participation; dynamic content; meta data; adherence to a set of Web standards: and, scalability (Best, 2006). The domain of social media has been categorized into six broad areas: collaborative projects (wikis); blogs

and microblogs (InstaPaper); content communities (YouTube); virtual game worlds (Everquest); virtual social worlds (Second Life); and social network sites (Facebook) (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). These categories form the foundation for the generally accepted social media landscape as depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: The Social Media Landscape in 2017



Source: Mashable.com

In all cases, social media are distinguished from other Internet-based platforms through the sharing of user-generated content. Social sharing online emphasizes *sociality* defined as, "the sum of social behaviours that permit the individual to traverse from the state of individuality to that of sociality and fellowship" (Papacharissi, 2011a, p.316). Moreover, social media support a specific kind of sociability: *networked sociability*. Networked sociability refers to the potential that social media have to facilitate the social connecting behaviours of sociality (Papacharissi, 2011a: p. 316). One of the ways that social connecting is facilitated on social media is through "shared

objects" that connect users, such as photos, ideas, videos, opinions, texts, links, information, locations, and music (Engestrom, 2005). Recent Facebook statistics reveal that its users share over 900 million objects of sociability a day (Facebook).

As described above, SNSs are a distinct form of social media and the focus of this study. The historical background on SNSs, a discussion of their prevalence, and their specific attributes are broken down in the section that follows to provide details on this online context.

3.4 Historical Context and Defining Social Network Sites

The earliest precursors to today's SNSs arose in the mid 1990s, on the heels of the transition to the Web 2.0, with the introduction of ICQ (I Seek You) and America Online (AOL) Instant Messenger services. In 1997, the first SNSs, Classmates and Six Degrees, appeared which allowed for primitive versions of contact lists and synchronous communication. These initial platforms were followed by more advanced sites that offered more and more powerful features. While there are over 500 SNSs around the globe (Knowem.com), the eight most active sites today are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Baidu Tieba (China), QZone (China), Sina Weibo (China), Instagram, and Pinterest.[13] The largest SNS in the world is Facebook with over 1.8 billion active users (Wearsocial), 50 percent of whom log on every day (Wearsocial). Eighty percent of Facebook users are outside of the USA, and Facebook is translated into 70 languages (Facebook). Twitter has over 300 million users worldwide and LinkedIn has over 100 million users (Wearsocial). Internationally, there are many sites that have captured significant within-country or geographically concentrated user loyalty including Cyword (Korea), Vkontakte (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan), Orkut (Brazil), LunarStorm (Sweden), Arto (Denmark), and HiF (Spanish-speaking countries) (Skeels, Meredith & Grundin, 2009; Baym, 2010). In North America, in 2018, the most popular SNSs are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Pinterest, and LinkedIn (Wearsocial).

While a few studies have investigated entrepreneurs' uses of SNSs (e.g., Fisher & Reuber, 2014), the extent to which entrepreneurs are engaged with SNSs is not known. The geographic focus of this study, Canada, has broadband services available in

[13] Note that accurately determining these rankings is difficult because many lists include social media sites that do not meet the definition of SNS. Only sites that meet the stated definition of SNS have been considered here.

over 91 percent of homes (Media Digest). A majority of these Internet users can be classified as "*netizens*" – people who for more than three years have been accessing the Internet daily from their homes (Howard, Rainie, & Jones, 2001). Globally, fully 30 percent of 16 to 64 year old users' time on the Internet is estimated to be engaged with SNSs (Global Web Index).[14] Given the number of people engaged with SNSs, and the amount of time they appear to spend there, it is unlikely that 'netizen' entrepreneurs have eschewed this new opportunity to digitally expand their social worlds.

Every day, hundreds of millions of users visit SNSs to build, maintain, and employ their social networks in support of a wide variety of uses, interests, and practices. SNSs "allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks and establish or maintain connections with others" (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe 2007, p. 1143). As a specific domain of social media, a widely-accepted definition of *SNSs* is that they are, "web-based services that allow individuals to: (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and transverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (boyd[15] & Ellison, 2007, p. 2). In both the popular press and scholarly papers, SNSs and social media are often used interchangeably. To ensure clarity, the present study categorizes SNSs as one specific type of social media that, following boyd and Ellison's (2007) widely-adopted practice, are referred to as social *network* sites as opposed to social *networking* sites. By extension, this distinction reflects that "networking" may or may not be occurring on these sites at any given time.

The rapid pace of change on the SNS landscape has ensured that both established and new entrants vie for membership amid fierce competition to keep users engaged. Within this competitive frame, different SNS platforms offer distinct constellations of feature-related building blocks (Keitzmann et al., 2011). Thus, many SNS users are drawn to more than one SNS platform and many users engage with many (e.g., O'Riordan, Feller, & Nagle, 2016; Phau, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

This summary firmly situates SNSs within the constellation of social media, and outlines the features that distinguish them from other social media forms. Next, this

[14] Note that question asked in survey specifically related to engaging with/connecting to SNS.
[15] danah boyd has officially changed her name to drop the capitalization and asks that all citations do the same.

chapter examines how the online context differs for networking, and why the implications of these differences for entrepreneurs merit further study.

3.5 Social Network Sites as a Unique Context for Networking

As discussed above, SNSs can be considered ubiquitous today: if Facebook were a country it would be the third largest in the world (Facebook). As early as 1992, scholars were predicting the value of Internet technologies to facilitate relationships (e.g., Walther, 1992). More than simply a technology that contributes to our social interactions, growing evidence suggests that interacting on the Internet through social media, and specifically SNSs, may differ substantively from face-to-face interactions. Baym (2010) identifies seven core concepts that are believed to shape digitally-mediated social interaction, distinguishing it from face-to-face communications: interactivity, temporal structure, social cues, replicability, storability, reachability, and mobility. Taken together, they point to why users interface with the online social environment in a way that is different from face-to-face encounters. These seven concepts and their impact on networking online are described below.

Interactivity refers to social interactivity, which is "the ability of a medium to enable social interaction between groups or individuals" (Fornas, Klein, Ladendorf, Suden, & Sveningsson, 2002, p.23). Liu & Shrum (2002) also define it as "the degree to which two or more communication parties can act on each other, on the communication medium, and on the messages and the degree to which such influences are synchronized" (p. 54). SNS platforms have been designed specifically to promote interactivity by making connecting with others easy and efficient.

Temporal structure connotes the extent to which communications are synchronous or asynchronous. The strengths of synchronous communications on SNSs are its ability to collapse geographic distances and to foster almost instantaneous responses. Conversely, asynchronous communications on SNSs trade immediacy for the ability to allow large groups or individuals to interact efficiently – for example, according to their schedules or time zones. In contrast to face-to-face communication, asynchronicity also provides individuals opportunities to reflect on their contributions before sending them, and to manage their self-presentation more strategically (Baym, 2010).

The third of Baym's categories is *social cues*. Face-to-face or, as Fortunati (2005) refines it, body-to-body, communications is rich in visual, audio, and contextual cues. Moving online, these cues are diminished. Having fewer verbal and non-verbal cues to rely on in social interactions doubtlessly shapes users' digital social interactivity as they struggle to be understood as intended (Walther et al., 2005).

In addition to Baym, a number of other scholars point to the *replicability* or enduring nature of our online sociality that enables interactions to be captured and sent to intended – or unintended – others as a key differentiating feature of digital communications (Donath & boyd, 2004; Papacharissi, 2011).

The *storability* (and retrievability) of online activities also contrasts sharply with the ephemeral quality of face-to-face communications and is redefining how individuals view public and private spheres (Beer, 2008; Ellison, Hancock, & Toma, 2012; Papacharissi, 2011).

Baym also identifies that the *reachability*, or size of the audience that can be linked online, can be very large. In contrast to face-to-face communications, online interactions are not limited to the number of individuals who can actually gather in a physical space. This is because "digital discourse travels quickly, but it also travels widely" (Gurak, 2001, p. 30).

Mobility is the final of Baym's core concepts that make the online space distinct. It refers to the extent to which the online medium is portable. This quality has become increasingly important as improved technology allows users to stay socially connected through mobile devices. The "connected anywhere" opportunity of new mobile media likely affects users' autonomy and accountability, through location tagging, for example. This, in turn, likely shapes social interactions (Schegloff, 2002). Unlike geographically limited face-to-face connections, mobile Internet-connected devices now enable users' social networks to never be more than a few keystrokes way. Facebook statistics reveal that over 350 million users access Facebook through 475 mobile service operators (Facebook).

In contrast to digital communications, face-to-face communications are synchronous, loaded with social cues, have limited reach, and offer no storage capability, replicability, or mobility. While Baym's core concepts apply to Internet use in general, they also apply to the specific case of SNS use. SNSs offer users various

combinations of interactivity, temporal structure, broadcasting reach, storage, replicability, and mobility. These features likely make entrepreneurs' SNS interactions inherently different from face-to-face meetings/ encounters/ conversations and from other traditional modes of communication, such as telephones. It follows then that SNSs pose a distinct context for studying entrepreneurs' networks.

Understanding the unique online context of SNSs also requires pinpointing the behaviour-influencing features and affordances of SNSs with greater precision. Kane, Alavi, Labianca, & Borgatti's (2014, p. 280) widely-accepted typology of SNS features integrates many previous typologies found in the CMC literature and identifies four core features as distinct for SNSs: (1) *digital user profiles:* the platform provides a unique user profile that is constructed by the user, by members of their network, and by the platform; (2) *digital search*: allows users to search through billions of digital profile and networking activity information to find someone or something in particular; (3) *digital relations*: allows users to manage their network of connections; (4) *network transparency*: allows users to see their own and others' networks of connections and interactions.

These distinct features give rise to a set of affordances for SNSs. The term *affordances* within CMC has a specific meaning and while there exists some debate within the field (e.g., Evans, Pearce, Vitak, & Treem, 2017; Norman, 1999), there is growing support among scholars to view affordances as "the multi-faceted relational structure between an object/technology and the user that enables or constrains potential behavioural outcomes in a particular context" (Evans et al., 2017, p. 36). Within the SNS context specifically, the term *affordances* has been defined more succinctly as, "those actions, uses, or capabilities enabled, or made possible, by technology" (Smith et al., 2017, p. 21). In the past decade, many CMC researchers have identified affordances for SNSs (e.g., boyd, 2010; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Wohn, Lampe, Vitak, & Ellison, 2011). Recently, a comprehensive list of affordances for SNSs was introduced by Smith et al. (2017) that links directly to Kane's (2014) four SNS features. Table 5 below defines the 16 affordances identified as being directly related to the use of SNSs: sharability, editability, viewability, replicability, signaling, searchability, retrievability, asynchronicity, persistence, reviewability, social interactivity, scalability, interoperability, visibility, association, and traversability.

Taken together, these affordances argue strongly for an omnibus context shift (Johns, 2006) for networks and networking on SNSs vs. offline. The 16 affordances detailed in Table 5 make a persuasive case for not assuming that our understanding of founders' networks and networking offline - as highlighted in Chapter 2 - will apply equally online.

Table 5: The Affordances of Social Network Sites

SNS Features	Affordance	Affordance Definition
Digital User Profiles	Shareability	Ability to cost-effectively interact with many others online (Papacharissi, 2010)
	Editability	Ability to reconsider and recraft content before sharing it (Treem and Leonardi, 2012)
	Viewability	Ability to view aspects of otherwise restricted content (Mansour et al. (2013)
	Replicability	Ability to easily duplicate and/or modify content that looks original (boyd, 2010)
	Signalling	Ability to convey intended and unintended information from user profiles (Donath, 2007)
Digital Search	Searchability	Ability to efficiently search all manner of SNS content (boyd, 2010)
	Retrievability	Ability to scan vast networks to capture specific information (Baym, 2010)
	Asynchronicity	Ability to overcome temporal limitations and to extract content from one-way ties (Baym, 2010)
	Persistence	Ability to see archived information (boyd, 2010)
	Reviewability	Ability to review for consistency in posts over time (Faraj et al., 2011)
Digital Relations	Social interactivity	Ability to efficiently connect to networked others (Baym, 2010)
	Scalability	Ability to send and receive information on a large scale (boyd, 2010)
	Interoperability	Ability to easily share content across multiple distinct platforms (Kane et al., 2014)
Network Transparency	Visibility	Ability to make all network connections visible to the network owner or others (Leonardi, 2014)
	Association	Ability to know that a network connection exists (Treem and Leonardi, 2012)
	Transversability	Ability to navigate to and through your own and others' networks (boyd and Ellison, 2007)

Source: Smith, Smith & Shaw, 2017

Research within the CMC field on affordances supports the notion put forward by Resnick (2001) that an interplay exists between technical features and social processes, and many scholars agree with this *social shaping* perspective (e.g., Baym, 2010; Ellison, Gibbs, & Weber, 2015). A social shaping process perspective holds that "the consequences of technologies arise from a mix of affordances … and the unexpected and emergent ways that people make use of those affordances" (Baym 2010, p. 44). Evolving technology innovations shape our social interactions but as users, we also affect the nature of the technologies we adopt into our lives. For example, Kraut, Kiesler, Boneva, Cummings, Helgeson, and Crawford (2002) have shown that SNSs support relational development in very specific ways: conveying social information about others through readily available social cues (e.g., "likes", "endorsements"); encouraging sustained and repeated opportunities for interaction; and helping ensure that commonalities among individuals are surfaced. Not

surprisingly then, not only do most CMC researchers today subscribe to the social shaping perspective on the interplay between technology (structure) and users (agency) but there is widespread acceptance that influence can flow in either direction (e.g., Wohn et al., 2011). Given its consistency with this study's pragmatism research philosophy, the social shaping perspective on the interplay between users and SNS technology has also been adopted for the present study.

A key research question in this study is "*To what extent and how are founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes different in the online context?*" The review presented above demonstrates that the context for networks and networking on SNSs is different than offline. Recognizing this, the following section discusses whether founders should be able to garner the same kind of networking outcomes online as offline.

It is clear that over a billion people around the globe have chosen to accept the affordances of SNSs and that they are likely deriving benefits from them (Curran & Lennon, 2011). What is less clear are the specific outcomes of SNS use. There is no generally accepted categorization or typology for the uses, benefits, or value of SNSs within the existing literature. Despite this, CMC scholars have suggested a number of different benefits and uses from SNSs that deliver functional (purpose-driven) and hedonic (pleasure-seeking) gratifications (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002). This section undertakes a review of relevant work in this area in an effort to determine whether it is possible that entrepreneurs can gain venture-relevant benefits from SNSs. The results of this review shed light on whether it can be anticipated that the networking uses and outcomes entrepreneurs have derived offline can be expected to be similar online.

3.6 Networking Outcomes on Social Network Sites

Specifically looking at SNS use among adult Americans, Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2011a) identify three types of social uses: initiating connections; maintaining connections and social information-seeking. Burke, Kraut and Marlow (2011) identify that SNSs are used for: directed communication; undirected communication in the form of passive consumption; and undirected communication in the form of broadcasting to many others. For Facebook, uses have been identified as: (1) *social surveillance*: tracking the actions, interests, beliefs of network members; (2) *social searching*:

checking up on or checking out existing contacts; (3) *social browsing:* finding new connections (Joinson, 2008; Lampe, Ellison, & Steinfield, 2006). O'Riordan, Feller, & Nagle (2016) identify that users engage on SNSs in profile building, social connectivity, social interactivity, content discovery, content sharing and content aggregation.

Within a business or workplace context, only a few studies inform our understanding of SNS use. Skeels and Grundin (2009) offer some insights from their study of Facebook use among employees at a multinational. They investigate workplace Facebook use and conclude that the SNS was being used for: reconnecting; maintaining awareness; keeping in touch; and building social capital. In their study of users in a multinational organization, DiMicco, Millen, Geyer, Dugan, Brownholtz, and Muller (2008) find that employees use SNSs to: connect on a personal level with co-workers; advance in the company; and campaign for their own projects. As in the Skeels and Grundin study, DiMicco et al. (2008) find that a key use of SNSs by employees is to build stronger ties from weak ones. These studies provide important evidence that entrepreneurs are likely to be able to activate their online networks for the same uses as their offline networks – to build, maintain, and strengthen ties.

A number of studies have also examined what specific value can be extracted from SNSs. While many of these studies apply key terms and constructs inconsistently, many apply a consistent theoretical lens: the Uses and Gratification approach. *Uses and Gratifications* (U&G) is described as a communications research paradigm (or alternatively as a psychological communication perspective or theoretical framework) applied to the study of how mass media meet individual wants or needs (Chen, 2011; Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2011; Smock, Ellison, Lampe, Wohn, 2011; Stafford et al., 2004). *Gratifications* are defined as "some aspect of satisfaction reported by users, related to the active use of the medium in question" (Stafford et al., 2004, p. 267). The U&G approach is helpful because of its emphasis on understanding networking outcomes. The majority of U&G studies focus on the general adult population or on college students in the USA. Since no studies have looked specifically at SNS networking outcomes for entrepreneurs, these studies can, at a minimum, help point to possible founder-specific network outcomes.

Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Pearo (2004) identify five networking gratifications from SNS use: getting and providing information; self-discovery; maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity; social enhancement; and, entertainment. *Social*

information has also been identified as a key outcome of SNS use. It is defined as, "how people employ their social networks to satisfy a range of information-related goals" (Wohn et al., 2011, p.1). Another study looking at U&G on Facebook found information exchange, social maintenance and garnering new connections as key outcomes (Orchard, Fullwood, Galbraith, & Morris, 2014).

Donath (2007) concludes that people use information strategically and as a result of networking on SNS they: bolster their status; strengthen ties; and/or show their esoteric knowledge. Papacharissi and Mendelson (2011) applied the U&G approach to college students using Facebook. They determined nine possible SNS networking outcomes: relaxing entertainment; expressive information sharing; escapism; participation in a cool and new trend; companionship; professional advancement; social interaction; habitual time passing; and, to meet new people. Not surprisingly given their sample population, they found that habitual pass time and relaxing entertainment were the most common outcomes for college students and that professional advancement was the least.

Vitak, Ellison and Steinfield's (2011) study can also help inform discussions about what network outcomes SNSs can offer. They apply the Weiss (1974) typology of *social provisions*, or the benefits that primary relationships deliver. They identify five social provision outcomes that SNSs can deliver: (1) *attachment*: provides a sense of security and place, or emotional intimacy (2) *social integration*: creates a sense of belonging and community; *opportunity nurturance*: fosters the parent-child relationship where one person is directly responsible for the wellbeing of another; (3) *reassurance of worth:* provides acknowledgment of an individual's competence in a given role; (4) *reliable alliance*: provides reciprocity support where a person can always count on assistance regardless of the situation, including availability of someone to provide tangible assistance; (5) *guidance*: provides advice during stressful times.

In an American/Korean cross-cultural study applying the U&G lens, Kim, Sohn, and Choi (2011) find that meeting new friends, social support, entertainment, and information are the most prominent outcomes of SNS use by university students. However, they find that the relative weight of these differed between countries. Cross-culturally, status (Lin, 2011), and encouragement as a form of social support (Kwon & Wen, 2010) are also found to be outcomes of SNS use. Importantly, these studies all

looked beyond just student users and all are international in nature (Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea).

While there is a growing body of research concerning the outcomes of SNSs, to date no scholarly work has attempted a meta-analysis of SNS networking outcomes or created an accepted list of key SNS network outcomes. The overall scope of work in this area, however, does suggest that there is compelling evidence that networking on SNSs can deliver networking outcomes that have been found to be important for entrepreneurs in the offline context: information (collected and/or shared); advice (collected and/or shared); emotional support (given or received); tangible resources (given and/or received); social support, such as advocacy (given and/or received); and, weak and/or strong tie network development. Importantly, this suggests that the same broad networking outcomes that entrepreneurs have achieved through networking offline can be anticipated to be available to them online.

Taking into consideration the previous literature review of network outcomes offline (see pages 27 to 30 in Chapter 2) and online, the list of networking outcomes considered in the present study comprises: information, advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources. This represents four instrumental outcomes and one symbolic outcome (advocacy). These five resources have been chosen for this study because they: roll up a number of the outcomes revealed in studies to date (online and offline); are easily understood by respondents; offer a reasonably-sized list to limit respondent fatigue; and, are deemed interesting and compelling for their contribution to firm success.

Importantly, this chapter offers conceptual evidence that the online context is likely distinct for the study of entrepreneurs' networks and networking behaviours. In doing so, it identifies an important research gap in our understanding of network theory; specifically in understanding entrepreneurs' networks, networking behaviour, and networking outcomes in the online context.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

Social network sites are part of a large constellation of social media. SNSs' specific characteristics were examined in this chapter, and their sociability and sociality implications were reviewed. Specifically, it was noted that interactions on online social

networks are characterized as having asynchronous communications, diminished social cues, and expansive reach, storage capacity and replicability. This compares to face-to-face network interactions that offer synchronous communications, expansive social cues, limited reach and little or no storage, replicability or mobility. Beyond these differences, key affordances of SNSs such as sharability, viewability, searchability, visibility and transversability may also influence networking behaviour. Taken together, these distinct differences between online and offline networked interactions offer compelling grounds to suggest that the online context for networking by founders is likely to be significantly different from the offline context. Very few studies to date have considered the online networking behaviours of founders and the resulting network outcomes. It is not known whether the online context for networking by founders might be different from what extant literature in the offline context would predict. This is a key gap in our understanding of founders' networks that the present study begins to address.

This chapter also highlights that extant research in CMC reveals many social and instrumental outcomes from networking on SNSs. While there are many studies that have considered these outcomes, there is no accepted list of key SNS network outcomes within the literature. However, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the resources that entrepreneurs have garnered through networking offline can be anticipated to also be available to them online. To date, no studies have determined what resources founders garner from their online networks. The present study undertakes to address this gap in the literature.

Having established in the previous chapter the theoretical framework for understanding networks, networking, and network outcomes offline, and provided in this chapter an overview of why and how the SNS context can be expected to be different, this study now turns to a review of another key construct important for answering RQ2: *To what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviour?* This construct is social identity and the following chapter, Chapter 4, turns to review relevant literature.

CHAPTER 4: SOCIAL IDENTITY

Identity matters because it influences what actions people take and how they make sense of the world.
~ Oyserman (2009, p. 258)

4.1 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 2, there is clear empirical evidence that networking is a critical entrepreneurial behaviour. There is also conceptual support that entrepreneurial behaviours, including networking, are influenced by identity (e.g., Gruber & MacMillian, 2017). A number of empirical studies in entrepreneurship have shown that "an entrepreneur with a particular frame of reference related to his/her identity will use the same frame of reference in the entrepreneurial decision-making process related to entrepreneurial behaviour" (Alsos, Hoyvarde, Hytti, & Solvoll, 2016, p. 238). Evidence outside the field of entrepreneurship suggests that, as an individual-level context difference, identity may impact our understanding and use of social networks (e.g., Stryker & Burke, 2000).

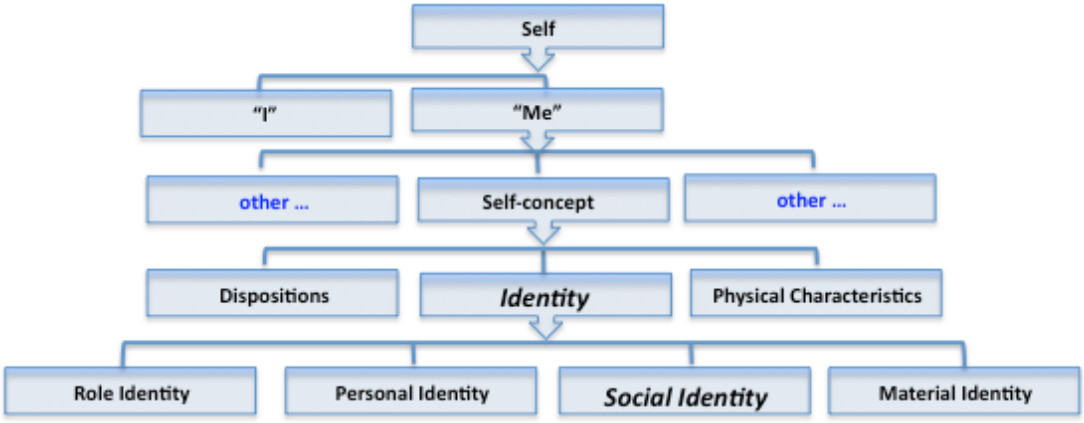
But what is identity? A review of identity studies within entrepreneurship reveals that identity can be considered at the macro level (e.g., industry, collective, culture – e.g., Wry, Lounsbury, & Glynn, 2011; Rao, Monin, & Durand, 2003), at the firm level (e.g., Alvesson, Lee Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008), and at the individual level (e.g., Leitch & Harrison, 2016). In keeping with this study's research questions, the present chapter reviews the literature pertaining to identity at its most basic level of analysis: an entrepreneur's individual identity.

Research on identity both within and outside of entrepreneurship has been encumbered by a lack of rigor in specifying the term under investigation (see Brubacker & Cooper, 2000, for a detailed review). To avoid such problems it is important that any study investigating identity establishes a clear definition of the construct and situates it in the appropriate theoretical home. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, to clearly set out the social identity construct under investigation. Second, to provide background on the typology of founder social identities used to investigate this study's second research question: *to what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviour on SNSs?*

4.2 Identity as a Nested Construct

In their efforts to advance work on entrepreneurs' cognitions, Kwon and Adler (2014) observe that psychological factors may influence networking actions. They argue that there are likely significant venture-related implications for these cognitive differences such that "actors who occupy objectively similar places in a social network… perceive their social ties differently and, thus, may not see the same structure of constraints and opportunities" (p. 414). One of the psychological factors that may exert this influence is identity. Why identity has the potential to be a powerful influence on actors' behaviours becomes evident when it is understood as a key building block of *self*. Below, Figure 2 visually depicts identity's foundational place within the *self,* in addition to being part of an individual's *self-concept*. It also illustrates that the identity construct comprises four sub-categorizations: role identity, personal identity, material identity and social identity.

Figure 2: Identity as a Nested Construct of Self



In order to clearly define the constructs of identity and social identity, this section begins by briefly reviewing the constructs of the *self* and *self-concept*. An overview of the *identity* construct, and the source of some of the confusion in the literature follows. The remainder of the chapter presents a review of the literature specifically related to each of the four identity sub-categories, with special emphasis on social identity, this study's focus.

4.2.1. The Self

As shown in Figure 2, identity is a core building block of our sense of self (Markus & Ruvolo, 1989). The *self* can generally be framed by answering the ageless question, "Who am I?" While one's *self* has been conceived as arising from a combination of internal, introspective, and dynamic processes set apart from social interaction (Cattell, 1950; Freud, 1923), or alternatively as developing in response to interactions with generalized outside influences (Sarbin,1952; Skinner, 1953), most contemporary work on identity conceptualizes it as socially-situated and the result of interactions within our social world (Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934). Under this conceptualization, the *self* comprises both *I* – the subjective knower associated with cognitive process – and *me* – the objective doer representative of cognitive structure (Mead, 1934). Together, these two elements yield a *self* defined as "a phenomenon of the human mind born out of reflective action, stemming primarily from a person's interactions with others" (Owens, Rossinson & Smith-Lovin, 2010, p. 478).

4.2.2. The Self-concept

Identity research is concerned with *me,* and with the primary component of *me*, an individual's *self-concept*. A widely accepted definition of *self-concept* is as "the totality of a specific person's thoughts and feelings towards him or herself as an object of reflection" (Rosenberg, 1979, p. 15). Under this conceptualization, *self-concept* is viewed as comprising: (1) *self-referring dispositions*: the collection of attitudes, traits, values, abilities, etc… gained from daily life that helps to distinguish oneself from others[16]; (2) *physical characteristics*: how we see ourselves physically; and, (3) *identities* (Rosenberg, 1979). Together, these elements form the unique self-concept that each of us brings to our understanding of *me.* Importantly, these conceptualizations argue strongly for the pivotal role that social connections play in the formation of each entrepreneur's sense of *self*. Considered in relation to the network literature reviewed in Chapter 2, this understanding of self suggests the existence of a venture-relevant recursive loop: that our social connections affect our self-concept and our self-concept, in turn, impacts our actions, including networking actions.

[16] To add to the confusion, this component is referred to as *individual identity* by Thoits and Virshup (1997) and should not be mistaken with *person identity* discussed later.

4.2.3. The Identity Construct

A core aspect of self-concept is an individual's *identity*. Individual *identity* is defined as "a general, if individualized, framework for understanding oneself that is formed and sustained via social interaction" (Gioia, 1998, p. 275). Identities represent a frame of reference for interpreting social situations and actions (Alsos et al., 2016), and are constructed through conscious and unconscious processes (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). Research on identity helps scholars explain the influence that society, through social comparisons, plays in shaping individuals, moving away from individualism to an appreciation of collective effects on our individual cognitions, affect, and behaviour.

Efforts in the 1970s to better understand the identity construct led to the development of a number of disparate theories. In 1979, Rosenberg proposed a means by which these theories could be viewed collectively, and generally this view has endured. Rosenberg defined identity as having four sources of characterization: (1) *personal or individual identity*: based on social classification of self into a category of one and derived from unique personal experiences; (2) *role-based identity*: based on a social position that a person holds within a social structure; (3) *category-based identity*: based on perceived membership in a socially-meaningful category; and, (4) *group membership identity*: based on actual membership in a bounded, interconnected social group.

More recently, the *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* describes four forms of identity comprising the self: individual, relational, collective and material. *Individual identity* refers to personal level aspects; *relational identity* refers to the roles we adopt relative to other people; *collective identity* incorporates our identification with groups and social categories to which we do and/or do not have membership; and, *material identity* refers to the artifacts that we view and often treat as part of our identity (Vignoles et al., 2011). Contemporary conceptualizations of identity accept that each type of identity can co-exist as a component part of our overall self-concept, and that even aspirational identities can impact behaviour (e.g., Alsos et al., 2016). At present, this broad view of identity has yet to be reflected in identity studies within entrepreneurship.

Within the entrepreneurship literature, the identity construct has been variously labelled and often weakly specified. Many entrepreneurship studies consider identity as a single, loosely defined construct and empirically investigate a single facet (e.g., Bjursell & Melin, 2008; Down & Reveley, 2004; Down & Warren, 2008; Jones, Latham, & Betta, 2007; Watson, 2009). This has made it challenging to compare findings and draw broad-based conclusions. An additional challenge is that more terms for identity have been introduced specifically into the entrepreneurship literature, and these have been applied inconsistently. For example, the terms *entrepreneurial identity* and *founder identity* are widely used within the literature but often to connote different constructs: understandably, this has created confusion. *Entrepreneurial identity* has been used to variously describe: a combination of individual, firm, and market characteristics (Navis & Glenn, 2011); a combined personal and role identity (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009); a personal identity (Chasserio, Pailot, & Poroli, 2014); a role identity (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, & Drnovsek, 2009; Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007); a combined role and social identity (Werthes, Mauer, & Brettel, 2018); a group alignment identity (Alsos et al., 2016); one's overall self-concept (Down & Warren, 2008); and a combination of personal, role, and social identity (Orser, Elliot, & Leck, 2011). While each conceptualization of the term provides distinct perspectives on the identity construct, it severely constrains scholars' abilities to build on one another's work.

Of the identity studies in entrepreneurship that do clarify their authors' conceptualizations of the construct, most choose to highlight one of three sub-categorizations: (1) role identity[17], (2) personal identity, or (3) collective identity/ group alignment identity. It should be noted that no studies within entrepreneurship have considered material identity. The present study focuses on *collective/group alignment identity* that is most commonly referred to as *social identity*. In order to establish the distinctiveness of the social identity construct, it is useful to first briefly review the two other identity constructs: role identity and personal identity. Each is considered briefly, in turn.

[17] Identity theory should not be confused with role identity theory proposed by McCall and Simmons (1966) that has been largely superseded by Stryker's (e.g., 2000) identity theory.

4.3 Role Identity

The construct of role identity stems from Stryker's work (1968; 1980; 1987) mapping an identity theory: a sociological theory that holds that, as social actors, we identify other people (and ourselves) as role-holders within the social structure and that we have set expectations as to what the behavioural standards for these roles are (Stryker, 1980). A *role identity* is defined as "the internalization of role expectations attached to positions in social networks" (Serpe & Stryker, 2011, p. 240). These meanings and expectations are thought to "form a set of standards that guide behaviour" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 226). Most individuals have numerous role identities and, taken together, these help establish a single, unique self-concept based on a particular constellation of social roles (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1985). Role identities are important because they influence cognitions, affect, and behaviour through a process of dissonance-reduction. We modify how we think, feel, or act in order to bring these into alignment with what we believe a given role identity standard specifies (Burke, 1991).

Within the field of entrepreneurship, most identity-related studies invoke *identity theory* and consider roles. For example, Leung (2011) focuses on housewife and entrepreneur roles, while Jain, George, and Maltarich (2009) focus on entrepreneur and scientist roles. More recently, Mathias and Williams (2017) focus on entrepreneur, manager, and investor roles. Studies have also considered different role identities within entrepreneurship, including inventor, founder, or developer roles (Cardon et al., 2009), and economic, social, or mixed roles (Wry & York, 2017). Hoang and Gimeno (2010) introduce the construct of *founder identity* that they define as, "encompassing perceived prescriptions for behaviour, thoughts and feelings about oneself in a future founder role" (p. 44). However, their article provides scant discussion of the identity-based theoretical underpinnings of their theorizing. Repeated references to role definition would suggest that the study's theoretical home lies in the sociological literature of identity theory. However, other theoretical inconsistencies in the study make a definitive assessment difficult. In order to avoid possible confusion with Hoang and Gimeno's (2010) conception of *founder identity*, every effort is made to clearly label this study's construct of interest as *founder social identity,* recognizing that *founder role identity* is not investigated.

4.4 Personal Identity

The second construct of identity is *personal identity*. Unfortunately, since there is no formal theory of *personal identity*, this construct suffers from significant inconsistencies in its definition. While multiple conceptualizations exist in the literature, this construct is generally held to comprise "those supposedly idiosyncratic aspects of an individual's experiences, temperament, and development … the history, experiences, orientations, and behavioral intentions that characterize them like no other individuals" (Hitlin, 2011, p. 521). This view of the construct considers that while we may actually hold a trait of "generous", our personal identity would only contain the "generous" characteristic if, in comparing our thoughts, feelings and actions to a perceived standard of how someone who is "generous" would think, feel or act, we find congruence. If we "pass" the comparison test, then we will adopt the trait into our personal identity. Recently, scholars have begun to view personal identity as that aspect of the self that brings the other identities (role and social) together into a whole that is internally consistent (Hitlin, 2003).

Few studies have considered personal identity among entrepreneurs. Those that have focus on key characteristics present as part of an entrepreneur's (unspecified) identity (Dobrev & Barnett, 2005; Milton, 2009). Shepherd and Haynie (2009) refer to personal identity in their study of strategies to manage conflicting identities among entrepreneurs but do not offer a specific definition of the construct. Effectuation theory has included identity as a factor in the selection of an effectuated process for venture creation or growth. While not specified, it would appear that the authors' reference is to the personal identity of the entrepreneur (e.g., Sarasvathy & Dew, 2005). In one of two widely-cited studies of personal identity and role identity, Conger, York, & Wry (2012) find a link between personal identity and the propensity to become a social entrepreneur. Wry and York (2017) have also theorized that role and personal identities in different salience patterns (single, balanced, mixed) can influence the success of social entrepreneurs.

This brief review frames the basic premises of role and personal identity categorizations and captures some key findings in entrepreneurship. This is important because role, personal, and social identity have regularly been conflated in the literature. Social identity, the subject of the remainder of this chapter, is a distinct

identity categorization. This chapter now turns to consider the construct of social identity as a focus of the present study.

4.5 Social Identity

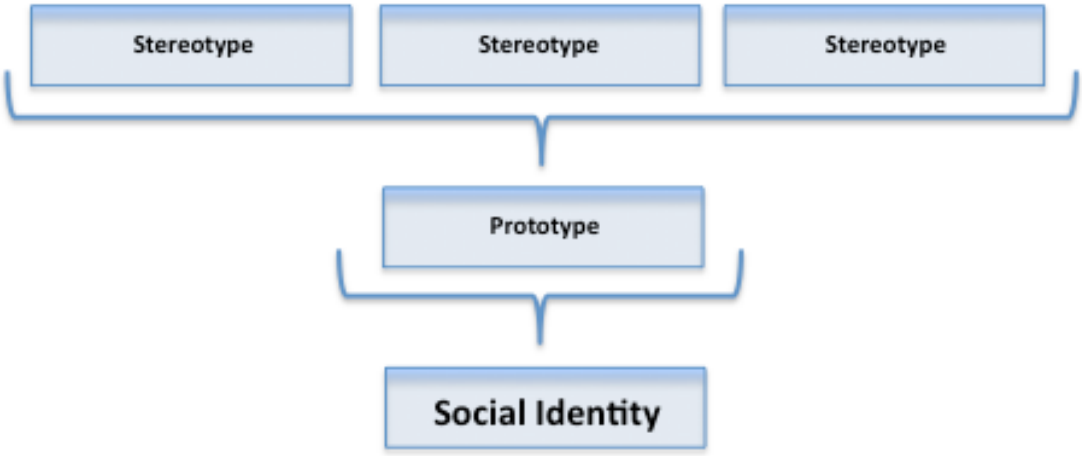
In contrast to (role) identity theory's micro-sociological home, *social identity* derives from a social psychological one. Tajfel (1978; 1982) developed the basics of *social identity theory* to "directly address the psychological processes involved in translating social categories into human groups, in creating a psychological reality from a social reality" (Hogg & Abram, 1988 p. 17). *Social identity* is defined as an "individual's knowledge that he [or she] belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him [or her] of this group membership" (Tajfel, 1972, p. 292 in Sieger, Gruber, Fauchart, & Zellweger, 2016). Social identity is formed through the comparisons we make to *social groups*, defined as, "a set of individuals who hold a common social identification or view of themselves as members of the same social category" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 225). Groups can be based on internal criteria: I think/feel I belong to this group. Groups can also be based on external criteria: I have hard evidence supporting my membership in this group (Hogg & Abram, 1988). In order to identify with a group using internal criteria, we must sense our membership (cognitive component), and make some value judgment about that membership (evaluative component). These components are often accompanied by an emotional investment in the awareness and evaluation of the group (affective component) (Tajfel, 1982).

Social identities are important in entrepreneurship because "individuals strive to behave in ways that are consistent with their social identities… by examining an individual's social identity, scholars are able to understand and predict behavioural choices and actions" (Sieger et al., 2016). These actions may extend to networking behaviours. An important additional consideration for the context of entrepreneurship is that social group comparisons can be to psychological rather than physical entities (Hogg & Abram, 1988). Specifically, entrepreneurs can make behaviour-altering social comparisons to groups that are not visible to outside others (Vignoles et al., 2011).

Social identity theory argues that we subsume other aspects of our self-concept in order to align how we think, feel, and act with the in-group to which we have actual

or perceived membership (Hogg & Terry, 2000). The theory specifies that how we think, feel and act is driven by our wanting to be more like how stereotypical people think, feel and act inside the target group and less like those outside it. These *stereotypes* are defined as, "generalizations about people based on category membership" (Hogg & Abram, 1988, p. 65). As depicted in Figure 3, a set of stereotyped attitudes, beliefs, values, affective reactions, and behavioural norms attributed to the in-group is labelled the group *prototype*. Over time, it is thought that we act more like our member group prototype and groups act more like their members (Korte, 2007). This behaviour-influencing *prototype* is defined as "a subjective representation of the defining attributes (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, behaviours) of a social category which is actively constructed from relevant social information in the immediate or more enduring interactive context" (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995, p. 261).

Figure 3: The Building Blocks of Social Identity



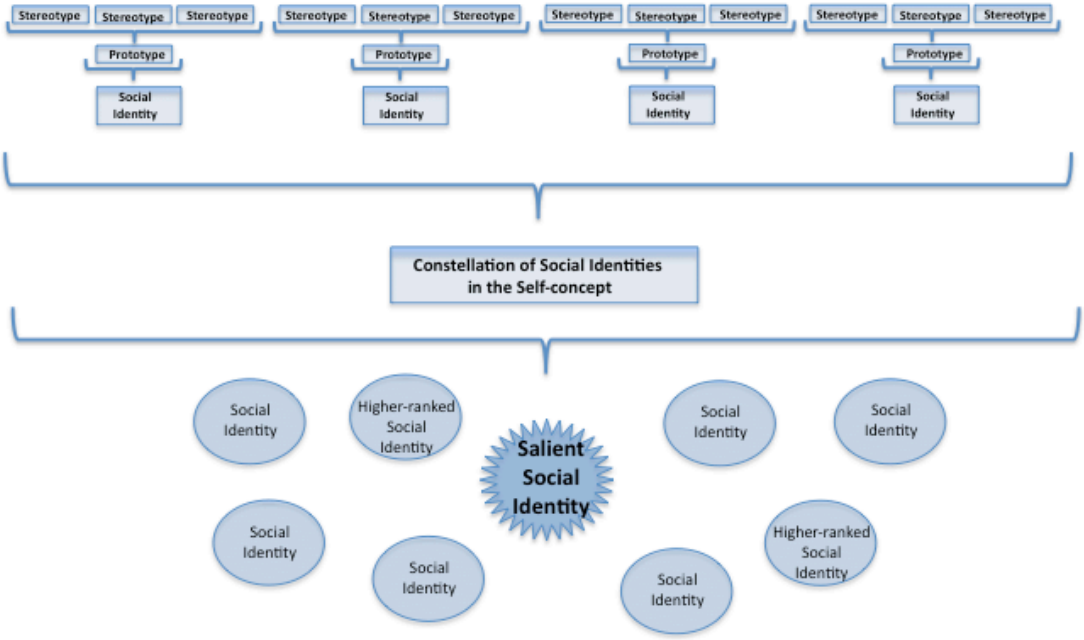
We validate a social identity by acting like others in the adopted in-group (Hogg, et al., 1995). As visually presented in Figure 4 below, each adopted group membership becomes a social identity and each of us hosts a unique set of social identities as part of our self-concept. As has been found with role identities, individuals can have a constellation of social identities that may influence their actions.

Social identity theory, as outlined above, has been combined in contemporary social identity research with *self-categorization theory* into the *social identity approach*. Self-categorization theory was developed by Turner (1985), a former grad student of

Tajfel, as an extension of social identity theory, and expands on specific processes by which social identities are constructed and prioritized for expression. *Self-categorization* is defined as "the basic cognitive process that sharpens in-group boundaries; by producing group distinctive stereotypical and normative perceptions (based on subjectively meaningful social and non-social stimuli) and actions, and, assigns people, including themselves, to the contextually-relevant category (Hogg & Turner, 1985, p. 260). Thus, the *social identity approach* describes a process of social categorization and social identity activation in which how we think, feel, and act is based on how we believe our adopted in-group will think, feel, and act, as opposed to how we might individually respond. Important for efforts to understand networking behaviour, this process of self-stereotyping to the prototype (Turner, 1999) can exert influence even when the stereotypes and prototype are not consciously held (Oyserman, 2009).

As noted above, one's self-concept may comprise many social identities that can overlap, compliment, or conflict (e.g., Chasserio et al., 2014). The expression or suppression of these social identities is understood to be governed by *salience*, a key process-related term in the *social identity approach*. *Salience* refers to the extent to which one particular social identity will be activated over another from within our social identity set (Stets & Burke, 2000). Salient identities have the strongest influence on how we think, feel, and act (Hoggs & Abram 1988). The lower portion of Figure 4 highlights how, through salience activation, we generate a hierarchy of inclusiveness for our multiple social identities. These are ranked, with the rankings fluid and contextual (Turner et al., 1987). Klein, Spears and Reicher (2007) have taken the notion of identity activation even further and suggested that we can be strategic in determining which identity becomes salient. They term this *identity performance*, defined as "the purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviours relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity" (p. 30). This performance is distinguished from automatic or habitual group behaviour (Spears, Gordijin, Dijksterhuis, & Staples, 2004).

Figure 4: Constellation of Identities and Salience Activation



4.6 Social Identity in the Entrepreneurship Literature

Within the field of entrepreneurship, few studies have applied a social identity theory lens. Where social group membership is considered, it is usually limited to examining how individual social identity affects entrepreneurial behaviour (e.g., Swail & Marlow, 2018 (gender-based social identity); Essers & Benschop, 2009 (gender and religion-based social identities); Gallagher & Lawrence, 2012 (ethnicity-based social identity). A study by Obschonka, Goethner, Silbereisen, & Cantner (2012) showed that membership in a peer group of entrepreneurs can have a positive effect on entrepreneurial behaviour.

Recently, Powell and Baker (2014) looked at both the role and social identities of founders. Powell and Baker's findings suggest founders are constantly managing their role and social identities and that these identities affect their business decisions. While these authors' work is practically compelling, it is theoretically confusing in that they suggest that social and role identities can be combined into an overall identity: "For example, we observed a "domestic manufacturer" role identity intertwined seamlessly with a "patriot" social identity, effectively making this one integrated identity." (Powell & Baker, 2014, p. 1413). Although this may be practically expedient, their theoretical argument for doing so is weak and unconvincing. This author could find no theoretical

mechanism that would permit the sociological construct of role identity to be combined with the psychological construct of social identity. Importantly, however, Powell and Baker's work does highlight that role and social identities impact founders' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours and, therefore, their firms.

In their most recent study, Powell and Baker (2017) are careful not to conflate role and social identities in their theoretical model of identity processes and organizing in multi-founder nascent ventures. They observe that social identity is relevant to the success of nascent ventures founded by teams. They find that founders make different decisions based on their identity frame of reference and that these decisions, in turn, affect their success. This conclusion offers further evidence that social identity has relevant behavioural implications for entrepreneurs. The present study adopts this theoretical view and the recent work of Gruber and MacMillian (2017), reviewed below. Specifically, this study adopts the view that social identity and role identity are distinct constructs and takes the position that they cannot be combined into a single identity. It also assumes that one or both identity types can be salient and that both can impact entrepreneurial behaviour.

To summarize, the present study views identity as an individual-level construct, grounded in social identity theory that is concerned with the collective-based identity of founders. The term *founder social identity* is used consistently throughout this study to distinguish it from *founder identity* that, among other applications, has been used to refer to one of three role identity types (Cardon et al. (2009). In addition, the term *entrepreneurial identity* is deliberately eschewed in this study in an effort to minimize further confusion related to the many available definitions of this term. Entrepreneurs' perceived founder-based social in-group and out-group memberships are examined in this study as are their associated prototypes relating to entrepreneurs' networking activity and, specifically, their use of SNSs.

Of special significance to this study, Fauchart and Gruber (2011) offer the most influential empirical investigation of social identity in entrepreneurship. Their study identifies a typology of three distinct founder social identities: darwinian, communitarian and missionary. The following section reviews this material as the basis for the founder social identity investigation undertaken in the present study.

4.7 Darwinians, Communitarians and Missionaries

In their study of founders in sports-related ventures in Switzerland, Fauchart and Gruber (2011) categorize differences in "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255). They label these darwinian, communitarian and missionary founder social identities. They also spoke with some founders who shared more than one founder identity type; these they designate *hybrid-identity* founders. Fauchart and Gruber mapped variance in the specific characteristics (prototypes) that distinguish each identity-type along key dimensions of social meaning specific to entrepreneurial behaviour, as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Key Dimensions of Difference for Founder Social Identity Types

Dimension	**Founder Social Identity**	**Prototype**
Overarching Loci	Darwinian	I – "self"
	Communitarian	We – "personal others"
	Missionary	We - "impersonal others"
Motivation	Darwinian	Primarily economic – profit and personal (current/future) wealth
	Communitarian	To serve the needs of a specific interest group or community - helping others to enhance their performance or satisfaction or achieve their goals
	Missionary	To advance a particular cause – prove the viability of different approaches/thinking
Strive for (basis for self-evaluation)	Darwinian	To be professional in managing their venture
	Communitarian	To address the needs of fellow community members
	Missionary	To make the world, or some part of it, a better place

What value most	Darwinian	Being professional - utilizing entrepreneurial competencies and solid business principles
	Communitarian	Being supported - gaining support from other community members or being recognized by peers for their community contribution
	Missionary	Being responsible – identifying a problem and doing something about it
Central to entrepreneurial process	Darwinian	Being distinct from other firms
	Communitarian	Offering goods or services that support a particular community of like-minded people
	Missionary	Leading social change by example
Opportunity focus	Darwinian	Clear competitive advantage
	Communitarian	Strong niche, customer-oriented
	Missionary	Enhance the well-being of society

Fauchart and Gruber (2011) offer empirical evidence that founder social identity is salience for key venture decisions. They find differences between the three identity types (darwinian, communitarian, missionary) in choosing market segments, meeting customer needs, and deploying their resources and capabilities. However, the study indicates that, "identity will affect only those strategic decisions that are identity-relevant along the dimensions of the meanings that the individual associates with being a founder" (Fauchart & Gruber 2011, p. 949). Importantly, this suggests, "a founder's social identity establishes an important restrictive corridor, because only some behaviours and actions are considered appropriate in entrepreneurship and not others" (p. 952). Fauchart and Gruber (2011) conclude by suggesting "future studies may revisit some of the earlier findings on decision-making in entrepreneurship from this [founder social identity] perspective" (p. 952).

One of these unexplored areas of entrepreneurial behaviour is the use of

networks by entrepreneurs. To date, no studies have considered how founder social identity might shape the networking actions of entrepreneurs, nor the resulting differences in their social networks. Addressing this gap is the focus of this study's second research question: *to what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviour on SNSs?* New insights in this regard have the potential to move the network literature beyond simple "economic rationality" explanations for founders' networking behaviours (Alsos et al., 2016).

Recently, scholars have applied the darwinian, communitarian and missionary typology to investigate other venture-decision contexts. Alsos et al., (2016) examine the impact of founder social identity on venture strategy and find that darwinians and missionaries are more likely to engage in causal behaviours and communitarians in effectual behaviours in startup. While their theorizing on explanatory mechanisms is weak, Stewart and Hoell (2016) demonstrate that whether social identity or role identity is salient impacts hiring decisions.

Finally, Gruber and MacMillian (2017) offer a model that places founder social identities at the core of entrepreneurial behaviour explanations. They argue that darwinian, communitarian and missionary identities can explain entrepreneurial behaviour, and that role identities can be layered onto this to better predict and understand entrepreneurs' behaviours. They state that social identity is expected to have the most significant explanatory power; a "social identity perspective allows us to illuminate the core differences that exist between entrepreneurs who launch ventures" (Gruber & MacMillian, 2017, p. 276). The present study adopts this emerging view of the relationship between role and founder social identity for entrepreneurs.

It is worthwhile noting that all of the studies empirically investigated darwinian, communitarian, and missionary identities have found many entrepreneurs to have *hybrid founder social identities* that reflect more than one in-group alignment (e.g., Alsos et al., 2016). However, little is known about hybrid founder social identity-types. In their original study, Fauchart and Gruber (2011) dropped from most of their analysis hybrid founders "to provide a clean illustration of our findings" (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011, p. 949). These founder types represented 23 percent of their sample and the darwinian-communitarian hybrids made up most of this group. Of note, they also state about hybrids, "it seems that such individuals may be fairly common in most industry settings and that they may be becoming more prevalent in coming years" (p. 951). This

prediction of the incidence of hybrid founders was confirmed by Sieger et al. (2016) who reported hybrid founders to outnumber pure-identity types in eight of twelve international regions sampled, and consistently found D-C, D-M, C-M, and D-C-M hybrid-types. In the study by Alsos et al. (2016) the three founder social identities are treated as three independent constructs with no categorization of those who are pure or hybrid types. However, the correlation data suggests that most of their sample were hybrids. Taken together, this suggests that if the Fauchart & Gruber (2011) typology of founder social identities is to be of value to researchers moving forward, the majority "hybrid identity" catch-all needs to be unpacked.

This chapter has reviewed the identity literature to distinguish the construct of social identity from other identity constructs. It also introduces the founder social identity typology of darwinian, communitarian and missionary founders employed in this study. A gap has also been identified in the literature: no studies to date have investigated to what extent and how *pure* and *hybrid* founder social identities might impact the networks and networking behaviours of entrepreneurs. The present study addresses this gap. Specifically, this study investigates the networking behaviours of founders and the possible influence that their founder social identity may have on their networks, networking, and network outcomes.

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

The present chapter offers a comprehensive overview of identity as a nested self-concept construct of the *self.* Within entrepreneurship, identity is an individual-level difference between founders that has received some research attention. Individual identity can be further broken down into three specific constructs that have been considered in the context of entrepreneurship: role identity, personal identity, and social identity. This chapter considered each in turn to locate them in their appropriate theory home and to clarify key terms. One key term that was clarified is that of *founder identity*. Founder identity has been variously applied to refer to both role and social identities. For this reason, the term founder identity has been eschewed in the present study in favour of the more accurate term *founder social identity*.

Social identity theory and the self-categorization approach specific the key characteristics of social identity. In particular, this chapter noted that social identity is

established based on a conscious or unconscious comparison made by an individual to a group. These in-group or out-group membership determinations affect an individual's attitudes, beliefs, values, affective responses, and behavior. With these determinations, individuals make social group comparisons and strive to behave in ways that are consistent with how their adopted in-group thinks, feels, and acts. Individuals resolve conflicts between differences in how various ingroups to which they feel membership think, feel, and act based on an assessment of which social identity is most important, relevant, or urgent to them in a given situation or context.

Few studies within entrepreneurship have considered social identity and fewer still examine founder social identity. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) put forward three distinct, or pure, founder social identities: darwinian, communitarian, and missionary. Each of these founder social identities has a distinct locus, motivation, basis for self-evaluation, value-base, approach to entrepreneurial process, and opportunity focus.

The chapter also introduced the concept of hybrid founder social identities. Hybrid identities are characterized as having salient founder social identity dimensions similar to one or more pure identity-types. Early studies on founder social identity suggest that hybrid identity-types are more common than pure identity-types, but there are currently no generally accepted guidelines in place to make hybrid identity determinations.

While studies have shown that social identity and founder social identity can influence the behaviours of founders, no studies to date have considered to what extent and how founders' pure or hybrid social identities might influence their networks, networking actions, and network outcomes. Addressing this gap is a key undertaking of the present study.

4.9 Literature Summary and Conceptual Framework

In the preceding sections, Chapters 2 and 3 offered a comprehensive overview of the relevant literature regarding entrepreneurs' networks, networking, and network outcomes within both offline and online contexts. Chapter 4 provided insights on the individual-level difference of founder social identity, a key focus of this study.

By way of summary, the literature examined in the preceding chapters can be summarized into a succinct focus for investigation. This summary is offered to highlight the bases of the investigation into RQ1 and RQ2 below.

With respect to RQ1, extant literature suggests the following:

- Networks are a critical success factor to entrepreneurs in building and growing their ventures

- Three key networking behaviours are widely assumed in the majority of offline network research in entrepreneurship:
    - the *network success hypothesis* suggests that entrepreneurs garner needed venture resources and relationships from their networks,
    - the *strength of weak ties hypothesis* suggests that entrepreneurs successfully garner scarce resources from their weak-tie connections, and that the larger their weak tie networks the more resources entrepreneurs are able to tap
    - the assumption of the advantage of brokering structural holes in networks suggests that entrepreneurs who reach across diverse groups of connections successfully secure needed resources for their ventures

- Research confirms that users are able to extract resources from their networks online

- The affordances of searchability, reachability, visibility, editability and transparency, among others, inherent in online social network sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter impact how users might use their networks

- **It is not known to what extent the online context of social network sites might impact the networking actions and outcomes of founder entrepreneurs**

With respect to RQ2, extant literature suggests the following:

- While there is wide acceptance that entrepreneurs' networks comprise weak ties and strong ties, there remains much debate about whether entrepreneurs are more successful in using their strong ties or weak ties for securing needed resources

- These conflicting findings have been attributed to a variety of differences that may impact entrepreneurs' networking actions including geography, industry, environmental hostility, resource availability, and firm stage. These studies, however, have returned mixed results.

- Individual-level differences have also been found to impact entrepreneurs' networking actions, including gender, achievement, locus-of-control, age, social class, and social competency. These studies, however, have also returned mixed results.

- Founder social identity is an individual level difference that has not been studied in the context of founders' networking behaviours.

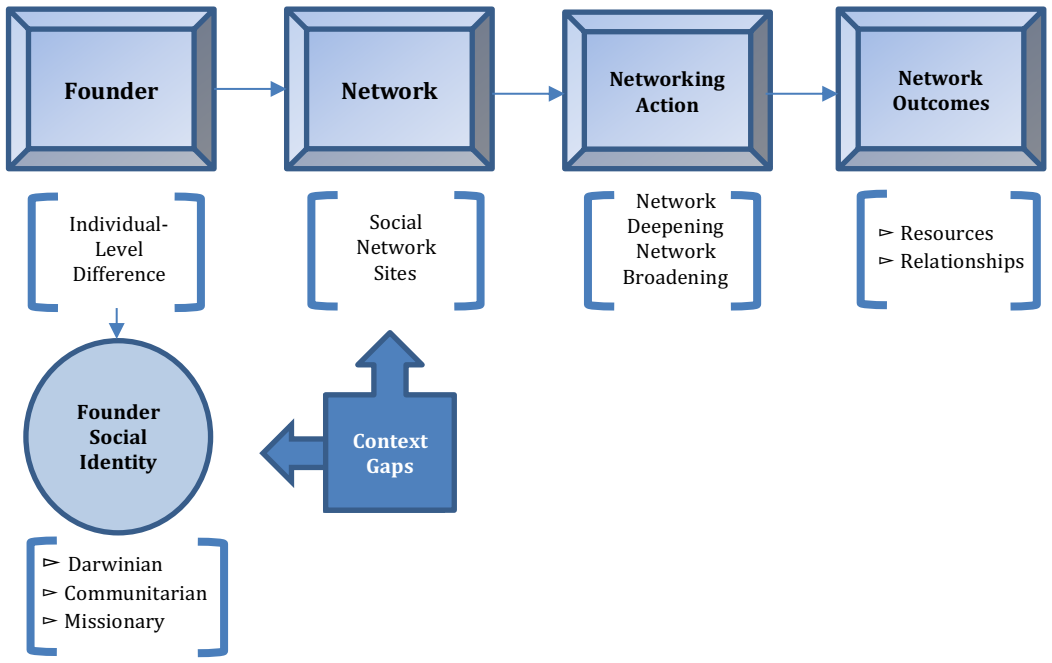
- Unpacking the influence of social identity on networking behavior may help to explain why the results of studies on founders' networking behaviours have been so mixed.

- **It is not known to what extent founder social identity exerts an influence on the networking actions and network outcomes of founder entrepreneurs' networks.**

The present study seeks to address these two gaps in extant research on the networks, networking actions, and network outcomes of founders.

Below, Figure 5 highlights these key areas of interest for this study and the context gaps that exist in the literature - the online context of SNSs, and the individual-level difference context of founder social identity.

Figure 5: Conceptual Framework of the Present Study



The comprehensive literature review comprising Chapters 2, 3 and 4 also informs the research method adopted for this study. The following chapter now turns to outlining the present study's research framework before Chapter 6 discusses the findings of the investigation undertaken.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research most of all involves studying the meaning of people's lives, as experienced under real-world conditions
~ Robert Yin, 2016, p. 9

5.1 Introduction

All research necessitates that researchers make a number of important decisions that frame the collection, analyses, and interpretation of data. As Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight (2001) note, "different kinds of research approaches produce different kinds of knowledge about the phenomena under study" (p. 59). The purpose of this chapter is to make these decisions transparent and to defend their appropriateness given the research setting and aims of the present investigation. The chapter begins by considering the philosophical framework underpinning the research design for this study and the role of the researcher. Next, the sampling method, sample, and protocol are discussed. This is followed by an explanation of the data analysis and theory-building process. The final section discusses the steps undertaken to build quality standards into each step of the research process.

5.2 Philosophical Framework

A research paradigm frames the social reality lens adopted by any researcher. This study adopts Yin's (2016) recommendation that "unless you must adhere to one of the two extremes as a critical ideological commitment for doing qualitative research, you may assume a worldview in the middle ground" (p. 23). Drawing on the works of Dewey (1859-1914) and Peirce (1839-1914), Yin (2016) advocates that for social science researchers, this middle ground is pragmatism.

Recall that the research questions for this study are:

RQ1- *To what extent and how are founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes different in the online context?*

RQ2: *To what extend and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviour on SNSs?*

This study was undertaken from a pragmatism research philosophy framework that focuses on "the ways in which human beings deal with the situations in which they find themselves" (Watson, 2013 (a), p. 24). Pragmatism's focus is on experience, defined as "the transactions of living organisms and their environments" (Biesta, 2010, p. 200). For this study, the experience focus is on founders' networking behaviours on SNSs. Within entrepreneurship, pragmatism is a well-accepted paradigm choice. It has been used to focus on the practice perspective and the experiences of entrepreneurs (e.g., Burg & Romme, 2014; Johannisson, 2011; Randerson, 2016). Since pragmatist social science attempts to identify the logic underlying both agency and structure through understanding action (Watson, 2013b) it offers an appropriate paradigm from which to approach research questions related to networks, networking, resources, and social identity (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014).

Adopting a pragmatism lens for this research implies adopting particular ontological and epistemological perspectives which, in turn, have implications for the knowledge contributions of this study. Before moving on to the more practical aspects of the research method undertaken for this study, it is important to make transparent these ontological and epistemological underpinnings. Doing so builds credibility for the study's findings (Kuckartz, 2014).

5.2.1. Ontological Frame Adopted for this Study

Pragmatism's founding fathers Dewey and Peirce generally eschew dualistic distinctions in favour of a transactional view (e.g., Biesta, 2010; Green & Hall, 2010; Watson, 2013a). However, it is widely accepted that pragmatism's ontological position is objective – "a world existing independently of any person or any person's thoughts" (Webb, 2007, p. 1068). In this conception, the knower is deemed separate from the known (Biesta, 2010). The paradigm considers that there are real elements in the social world within which individuals, including entrepreneurs, operate. Reality is viewed as independent of the incomplete cognitions, perceptions, and interpretations of individuals (Van de Ven, 2007).

However, unlike other objective frames such as positivism, the pragmatic worldview accepts that these "truths" concerning reality are not possible to perceive or comprehend in their entirety. Social scientists within the pragmatism paradigm aim to uncover explanations and insights that shed light on these realities that help explain how the social world actually works. In contrast to positivism, pragmatism's view of

reality is always understood as contextual and related to action (Biesta, 2010). This is consistent with an action-based view of entrepreneurship (Randerson, 2016). Contrasting with interpretivism or constructivism paradigms, this ontological frame considers that how we understand context, discourse, perspectives, and narratives *shapes* reality but does not *constitute* it (Watson, 2013a). Pragmatism's recognition of the importance of situation, action and context (Steyaert, 2007) is especially appropriate given the socially-situated context of this study - the online environment of founders' social networks.

Aligning with interpretivism and constructivism, however, the pragmatism paradigm accepts that there is no "correct" theory of any aspect of life. In the context of entrepreneurship, this distinction is effectively conveyed by Watson (2013a) that, "a complete understanding of any aspect of the world is impossible; reality is far too complicated for this to be possible. Knowledge about entrepreneurship, or any other aspect of the social world, is therefore to be developed to provide us with knowledge which is better than rival pieces of knowledge or is better than what existed previously – in terms of how effectively it can guide human actors as they strive to deal with the realities of the world" (p. 21). Thus, the ontological view at the centre of this research focuses on understanding the reality of founders' networking actions on SNSs by offering insights and possibilities rather than certainties.

5.2.2. Epistemological Frame Adopted for this Study

A paradigm's epistemology considers how we develop and evaluate the knowledge we collect about the social world (Burg & Romme, 2014). Pragmatism considers the starting and ending point of knowledge to be experience (Webb, 2007). Thus, this study adopts a subjective epistemic stance in which knowledge is viewed as a human construction seen through a social transaction lens. Knowledge acquisition is "concerned with grasping the relationship between our actions and their consequences" (Biesta, 2010, p. 106). This pragmatist view is in sharp contrast to a positivist one. Writing in German, Max Weber (1864-1920) and George Simmel (1858-1918) referred to the positivist view as focused on *eklaren*; that is, to make known or to specify. In contrast, they suggested pragmatism, interpretivism, and constructivism focus on *verstehen*; in other words, to understand. Thus, the purpose of inquiry for this study is not simply to *explain* in causal or correlation terms but to profoundly

understand founders' networking experiences and the possible reasons for their actions so that their network structures, processes, and outcomes may be better understood.

Whereas interpretivism and constructivism view the research process as meaning-*driven*, under pragmatism, it is meaning-*guided* (Biesta, 2010). Pragmatism adopts the view that our interpretive systems shroud reality and that, in effect, it is "mediated by limited sense organs, habits, intellectual constructs, perspectives and purposes of observation" (Webb, 2007, p. 1067). Unlike other frames, pragmatism "encourages us to take heed of interpretive and hermeneutic processes without making them the defining features of our analysis" (Watson, 2013(a), p. 18). More so than interpretivist or constructivist epistemological frames, pragmatism recognizes the role that social structures, institutions, and cultures play on the actions of entrepreneurs (Luckmann, 1983). In adopting the pragmatism lens, knowledge is always viewed as mediated: that context and situation are important considerations to knowledge building, and that inquiry is an ongoing process (Webb, 2012). These considerations make pragmatism a suitable lens through which to investigate the social construction of entrepreneurs' networks online and of their social identities, both understudied social contexts.

This study adopts the epistemic view that "scientific knowledge should be evaluated not in scientistic terms of how accurately it tells us 'what is the case' in the world but, instead, in terms of how well it informs human actions in the world" (Watson, 2013(a), p. 21). This aligns well with the present study's aim to understand the experiences of founders engaged on SNSs. It also fits well with understanding social identity and how it impacts entrepreneurs' networking experiences. Specifically, pragmatism's epistemic view supports the present study's focus on questions of "how" and "to what extent".

5.2.3. Data Collection Method, Analytic Processes, and Values Stance for this Study

From a combined ontological and epistemological perspective, this study's worldview sees entrepreneurs as having an active influence on their environment and it aligns appropriately with this study's aim to uncover the influence of social identity on networks. Consistent with this study's research questions, this worldview also accepts that interactions with others help define entrepreneurs' behaviours (Blumer, 1969). These pragmatism perspectives necessitate getting close to the focal interest studied in order to "learn the ropes" (Watson, 2013a), suggesting a qualitative data collection

method. This is also appropriate since investigating the research questions for this study requires "depth insights into complex situations" (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014, p. 602) where founders are required to consider their online networking behaviour as distinct from their offline networking behaviour and also as distinct from their marketing-related networking behaviour.

Adopting the pragmatism paradigm also has implications for how readers might interpret the contributions of this study. Propositions put forward from pragmatic studies are intended to put meaning into action (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). One of the goals of pragmatism-based research is to be able to use the findings to "plan intelligently and direct our actions and experiences" (Biesta, 2010, p. 108). Green and Hall's (2010) observation that, "the results of pragmatic inquiry are viewed as assertions that become warranted in terms of their transferability in different situations" (p. 133) is relevant for the present study.

Another element of the research philosophy frame is the analytic process that brings meaning to the data. Clearly communicating the analytic process undertaken for this study is important to achieve the goal of research transparency. Aligning with pragmatism's worldview that "beliefs well warranted by previous inquiry provide the means of furthering other inquiry" (Webb, 2007, p. 1069), the researcher approached the field having canvassed relevant literature (see Chapters 2, 3, 4). Thus, the analytic procedures adopted for this study are consistent with recent studies exploring entrepreneurs' experiences (Watson, 2013b; Yin, 2016), rather than the procedures of *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Adopting the approach advocated by Suddaby (2006), the design and research are undertaken within a specific set of theory *presuppositions* outlined in the comprehensive literature review found in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. As a basis for analysis, the literature review allows for deeper understanding, and helps the researcher grasp "the current understanding of how things work", before entering the field (Watson, 2013b).

Following the pragmatism frame also "requires inquirers to work back and forth between specific results and general implications " (Green & Hall, 2010, p. 132). The analytic process undertaken for this study consists of an iterative process that includes revision and reformulation through controlled reflective inquiry (Webb, 2007). The researcher moved between the data, extant theory, and analytical and conceptual thinking, applying "converging lines of inquiry" (Yin, 2016, p. 87), as is

appropriate for the pragmatism paradigm. While the pragmatic worldview supports a "bottom-up" or iterative overall approach to data analysis, it also supports abductive and deductive turns to lead to new concepts and insights (e.g., Watson, 2013a; Yin, 2016). These approaches were applied in the data analysis phase of this study with the goal of unpacking the experiences and practices of founders, making inferences, revealing patters of meaning, and developing propositions and models to understand "how things work".

To further support the goal of transparency, it is important to address the axiology base for this study. This requires that the researcher describe and acknowledge her value position in undertaking her study. As the researcher involved, my epistemic view focused on the actual practices and experiences of founders as these were conveyed through depth interviews. The social realities and experiences discussed by founders were taken at face value, accepting they were context-specific and socially-constructed. This is consistent with the axiology of pragmatism which is value-bound: in other words, values are imbued in the inquiry process itself (Green & Hall, 2010). As such, I confronted my own role in the research process and accepted that there is no value-free knowledge (Leitch, Hill, & Harrison, 2010).

In collecting and interpreting the data for this study, as the researcher, I accepted that my understanding of the founders' expressed experiences would be shaped by my own values and understanding of social reality, a phenomenon often referred to as the *researcher lens*. The researcher lens is described as, "an implicit filter present in all qualitative research, reflected by the researcher's choices about the design and analysis of their studies, as well as in their reporting of the field-based data that will be used in the studies" (Yin, 2016, p. 339). Acknowledging my researcher lens from the outset helped to ensure that I remained conscious of the implications of my own perceptions and conceptions when collecting and analyzing data for this study (Watson, 2013a). I repeatedly challenged myself to actively listen to what founders said in each face-to-face interaction and to ensure that possible biases in the analysis phase were identified and examined. As such, it is important that I include a personal statement outlining key aspects of myself that may have impacted this study's research design and data analysis. My reflexive statement reads as follows:

I am a middle-aged, middle-class, white female who has worked and lived primarily in North America and predominantly on the Canadian West Coast. I have been

employed in for-profit, public, and not-for-profit firms. I currently own my own business. Having consulted with hundreds of firms over the past 25 years, I am very much at ease interacting with both male and female entrepreneurs and especially with founders. While I have a working knowledge of all social network sites explored in this study, some founders will have spent more time engaged on SNSs and have much more experience using these sites than I do. My motivation to enter the field is one of simple curiosity having heard founders speak of their SNS uses for many years. After considerable thought and reflection, I can discern no personal preconceived/ distorting perspective or notions that would impact the outcome of the data collection or analysis processes related to RQ1 or RQ2 for this study.

Another important consideration in the pragmatist frame that should be made transparent is the implication of the researcher entering the field. Specifically, researcher authenticity is a marker of quality research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yarrow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). One measure of this authenticity is the extent to which participant and researcher learn from one another (Hlady-Rispal & Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). Pragmatism aims to have those participating in the research gain from their involvement. Through the interview process for this study, founders often experienced unexpected personal or business insights. For example, Founder Keith reflected, *"You've given me a lot to think about. I guess I just get busy and forget to think deeply about some of this social media stuff."* Other founder comments suggested that such insights may influence future behaviour. For example, Chris stated there were, *"a lot of things I had not really thought about. I'm like, "Wow! Now we need to start thinking about these things"… It's good. It's helpful".* Similarly, Marty's reflections suggest how new insights were gleaned from the discussion:

> *"You know, it has been really interesting talking to you about this, because you asked questions that I don't really think that much about. I just do it, and it is interesting to kind of step back and look at it from above and think, "I wonder why I do it this way." So I think you've already asked a lot more insightful questions than I would ever think to create."*

In all cases, founders indicated that the implications of the interview process were entirely positive or helpful to their ventures. These outcomes were deemed to be morally and ethically within the bounds of the University of Strathclyde's code requirements.

5.3 Research Design

In crafting a strong research design, the choice to employ either qualitative or quantitative methods is generally accepted as a question of the nature of the data to be collected, and more specifically, the type of data needed to answer the research questions posed in the study (e.g., Gorand, 2010). The present study adopts a qualitative methods approach which is viewed as especially appropriate when the goal is "to impose conceptual order on new or relatively undefined phenomena" (Suddaby, Bruton & Si, 2015, p. 2). Since this study is among the first to investigate founders' SNS use, and to apply the founder social identity typology to networking, a qualitative approach supports an examination of the nuances of founder impressions and experiences. At present, founder behaviour is not well understood and rich contextual data is needed to begin to identify and understand key constructs, and the relationships between them. A qualitative research design is also appropriate as the aim is to understand actors' perceptions and assessments of their relationship to a network (Hollstein, 2011).

A stated goal of this study is to build or extend theories of entrepreneurial behaviour and this orientation is well-served by qualitative methods (Edmonson & McManus, 2007; Gartner & Birley 2002). Qualitative methods also fit the specific nature of RQ1 and RQ2 referred to in Chapter 1, questions that focus on "to what extent and how" in the complex, mixed-motivation context of online networks (Deshpande, 1983). Given that the research questions focus on the detailed networking actions of founders engaged in growing and managing their social networks online as they manage their fledging ventures, the level of analysis for this qualitative study is set at the individual micro-process level.

The appropriateness of qualitative inquiry for studying network theory and founders' networks is reinforced by Jack et al. (2010) who indicate that "there is broad consensus that when tackling social phenomena such as networks, rich detail is so essential to the research process that qualitative studies are to be preferred…" (p. 320). The present study follows many within the network literature, and specifically within entrepreneurship, that have adopted qualitative methods to study network phenomena (e.g., Jack et al., 2008; McKeever, Anderson & Jack, 2014; Shaw, 2006). Zahra and Wright (2011) also suggest that studies wishing to deliver a more fine-grained view of context and a better understanding of entrepreneurial processes should consider

qualitative methods. This study's choice of qualitative methods also aligns with Shepherd's (2015) call for research that is immersed in entrepreneurial practice. Qualitative inquiry is also endorsed to deliver substantive contributions and practical relevance important for quality research within this study's pragmatism paradigm (Christie & Fleischer, 2009).

The choice of qualitative methods was also deemed important because of the anticipated complexity in delineating a founder's use of SNSs for marketing versus non-marketing purposes. The former has received significant attention in the literature and was not the focus of this study. Engaging in lengthy conversations with founders permitted the researcher to seek clarification and explore answers in more depth to untangle the distinction between their marketing efforts and general venture-related entrepreneurial networking actions, and resource acquisition efforts.

The data for this study was drawn primarily from depth face-to-face interviews. Additional sources included: (1) reviews of respondents' public SNS profiles and activities; (2) document checking of firm websites; and (3) publicly-posted pages on the startup websites of founders. These later sources were reviewed to glean additional information about founders and their ventures to augment and validate basic data. These approaches are consistent with other entrepreneurship studies investigating SNS use such as Fischer and Reuber, (2014), and studies of founder social identity such as Fauchart and Gruber (2011). These steps helped ensure data source triangulation, a feature of quality research (Yin, 2016).

Interviews with founders were between 90 minutes and 120 minutes long. All but five interviews were conducted in a neutral setting such as a restaurant or café: the remaining five interviews occurred at the founder's place of work. The choice of venue was a mindful decision that helped ensure founders were able to focus on the conversation, uninterrupted by work demands. Payment of food or drinks was handled on a case-by-case basis to reduce the possibility of power or obligation-related biases seeping into the context of the interview. At no time did this hinder the process of establishing rapport with the respondents.

The following sections outline key research design decisions for this study including the sampling method, the sample, the protocol, and the data analysis approach.

5.3.1. Sampling Method

Some of the acknowledged challenges of sampling entrepreneurs, and especially founders, are that populations are not easily identified, populations tend to be small, and obtaining access to this population can be difficult (Neergaard, 2007). The sampling method adopted for this study was theory-driven and purposive. Respondents were selected on the basis that they were likely to "yield the most relevant and plentiful data" (Yin, 2016, p. 93) and offer "richness and relevance to the study's research questions" (p. 339). This sampling choice is appropriate for early-stage research (Shaw, 1999) in which a substantial commitment of time is required by respondents, both positive and negative experiences need to be shared, and the interaction occurs face-to-face (Ashforth et al., 2007). Following accepted practice, respondents were identified through personal connections, peer introductions, and then snowballing techniques (Neergaard, 2007). The snowballing process helped to identify respondents who could offer further relevant information, rich experiences, divergent perspectives, and plentiful data (Fischer & Reuber, 2014).

Throughout the sampling process, every effort was made to address the breadth – or diversity - of the sample in terms of founders' networking behaviours and experiences (Patton, 1990). Consistent with Fischer & Reuber's (2014) study of SNSs and founders, diversity was sought in the respondent characteristics of age, gender, venturing experience, and technical competency. As well, diversity was sought regarding the age of firm, type of firm (consumer versus business to business, and online versus offline). Only those founders who had "directly experienced the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 1990, p. 104), namely, SNS use related to their venture, were selected into the sample. This study focuses on online networks and networking and as a further refinement, only founders with one or more active SNS account(s) were included.

5.3.2. The Sample

For reasons of cost, the geographic scope of the sample was defined as the cities of Victoria (population of 368,000) and Vancouver (population of 2.5 million), British Columbia, Canada, a combined area of roughly 3,400 sq km. Both cities enjoy diversified, multicultural economies with strong technology ecosystems; a strong cultural and economic connection exists between the two locales. From a startup's

perspective, the institutional conditions within each municipality are equivalent. Thus, no geographic distinctions were drawn between founders operating from either city.

The sample comprises founders operating for-profit ventures under five years of age. Early-stage firms were selected to increase the likelihood that founders were still integrally involved in their firms' strategic decisions, particularly as they concerned their firms' SNS activity. This early firm stage was also deemed appropriate because the network literature suggests that at this point entrepreneurs' personal and venture networks overlap (e.g., Brüderl & Preisendörfer, 1998). Consistent with other studies in entrepreneurship, founder respondents were understood "to possess detailed information about the activities of all aspects of their ventures" (Delmar & Shane, 2004, p. 394). This early venture phase is also a time when firms have diverse resource needs that networking actions can help to secure (Hanlon & Saunders, 2007). Only for-profit ventures were selected to narrow the scope of the study to founders with growth and profit motivations. These latter choices are also consistent with the conditions set in Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) original founder social identity study. Before entering the field, approval from the Ethics Review Board was sought and granted.

There are no hard rules for determining sample size in qualitative studies (Patton, 2002, p. 244). The approach undertaken for this study was to continue to sample until a clearly delineated point of redundancy was reached (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse, 1991). Through the use of field notes, it was easy to identify the point at which the researcher's notations moved away from "this is new information", "great stuff here", and "I've not heard this before" to "nothing new here", and "shared the same sentiment as Founder *x*". Two interviews were conducted beyond the point at which no novelty in responses was identified to ensure that founder characteristics, as described above, were adequately represented in the sample.

In total, the sample for this study comprises 35 founders. Details on the demographic and venture-related characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 7 below.

In total the sample included 23 males and 12 females, a division typical amongst founders in North America (OECD Gender Data Portal). A wide range among respondent ages helped ensure that potential age-related attitudes and behaviours

concerning SNSs were captured; most, but not all, interviewees were between 25 – 44 years of age. The distribution between online and offline businesses was almost equal, while the age of ventures ranged from less than 12 months to five years. The majority of startups in this sample were between one and three years old. About half of the respondents identified themselves as serial entrepreneurs, having started at least one other venture. Given the social media context of this study, it was prudent to capture respondents' self-assessed technical competency online; the majority felt very competent using SNSs, with just two interviewees describing their online technical competency as low.

Table 7: Sample Respondent Characteristics

Entrepreneur[18]	Gender	Age	Venture Type	Online/ Offline[19]	Age of Venture	Serial Experience	Tech Comp[20]
Ross	M	43	B2C service	Online	4	Yes, 2	7
Sam	M	34	B2C product	Online	2.5	0	5
Josh	M	25-34	B2C service	Online	< 1	0	6
Keith	M	39	B2C product	Offline	1	Yes, 1	5
Margie	F	34	B2C product	Offline	4	0	4
Shawna	F	36	B2B product	Offline	2	0	5
Cliff	M	29	B2B service	Online	2	0	5
Jack	M	36	B2C service	Online	2	Yes, 1	6.5

[18] Entrepreneurs are not listed in alphabetical order. Instead, they are grouped by their founder social identity-type for later reference.
[19] Online/Offline – describes whether the venture is operated primarily online or offline.
[20] Tech Comp - describes a founder's self-assessed technical competency using SNSs, on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high).

Jin	M	28	B2C service	Online	1.5	Yes, 1	6
Jordon	M	52	B2B service	Offline	1.5	Yes, 3	6
Kora	F	45+	B2C product	Offline	2	Yes, 1	6
Joan	F	25	B2B service	Offline	2	Yes, 2	5
Boris	M	63	B2C product	Offline	3	Yes, 1	7
Brody	M	57	B2C product	Offline	1	0	7
Chris	F	26	B2C service	Online	< 1	0	5
Natalie	F	38	B2B service	Online	3	0	6
Ross	M	25	B2C service	Offline	1	Yes, 1	7
Tina	F	25-34	B2C service	Online	1.5	0	5
Alejandra	F	25-34	B2C service	Online	< 1	Yes, 1	5
Max	M	35-45	B2C product	Offline	1	Yes, 1	5
Nole	M	25-34	B2C product	Offline	4	0	6
Anna	F	26	B2B product	Offline	1	0	7
Bart	M	35-45	B2B service	Online	2	0	6
Javiar	M	25-34	B2C service	Online	2.5	Yes, 2	7
Maxine	F	60	B2B product	Offline	4	0	5
Marty	M	51	B2B product	Online	3	Yes, 4	7

Nivin	M	25-34	B2C product	Offline	1.5	Yes, 3	7
Rohan	M	25-34	B2C service	Online	< 1	Yes, 2	7
Abigail	F	25-34	B2C service	Online	4	Yes, 1	3
Martin	M	29	B2C product	Online	5	0	5
Roscoe	M	53	B2C product	Offline	4	0	4
Spencer	M	26	B2B service	Offline	1.5	0	7
Tess	F	25-34	B2C product	Offline	3.2	0	4
Ashton	M	24	B2B service	Offline	< 1	0	3

5.3.3. The Protocol

A research protocol represents the "broad line of inquiry that [one intends] to undertake" (Lin, 2016, p. 108). Given the breadth of this study's scope, a research protocol was deemed appropriate. The protocol comprised two elements: a depth interview guide, and a set of questions aimed at assessing founder social identity. Decisions were also required on the process to assess each respondent's founder social identity. These elements are discussed below in detail.

Depth Interview Guide: Consistent with the need to collect rich detail and situated insights, an open-ended discussion guide was used (Hjorth, Jones, & Gartner, 2008). The interview guide was not shown to the respondents but was used as an aid by the researcher to ensure that all areas under investigation were probed (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Prior to commencing each interview, respondents signed a consent form outlining the broad purpose of the study, and the researcher's commitment to anonymity and confidentiality. To establish an informal tone and set the founder at ease, the strategy of beginning each interview with two *grand tour questions* was employed (Yin, 2016). The first question asked respondents to briefly outline their founding story and served as a means to gather information on the context of each

venture. The second question was intended to focus the conversation and normally took the form of, "Please tell me about your personal and your firm's SNS use." This ensured that the study's scope was not narrowed prematurely but set the stage for narrowing the conversation to non-marketing SNS uses. Follow-up questions were not asked verbatim but were seamlessly integrated into conversations as a positive rapport was established. The researcher never felt constrained to move beyond the questions outlined in the discussion guide to explore unexpected or unanticipated lines of inquiry (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey, 2005). This also facilitated specific triangulation of founders' comments to ensure that meaning was understood by the researcher.

Emerging lines of evidence were probed insofar as they maintained a direct relation to the broad scope of study. Clarifying questions were asked both to distinguish marketing-related activities and to identify experiences and practices related to personal vs. venture-related SNS networking behaviour. The interview guide allowed micro-level data to be collected in order to "produce rich data through which respondents' experiences, perceptions, and beliefs [were] accessed, thus adding significantly to the understanding of entrepreneurial behaviour" (Leitch et al., 2010, p. 80). The guide was an effective means of ensuring that each respondent was asked a detailed series of questions concerning her network outcomes. The researcher ended each interview with an open-ended question inviting participants to share any additional insights, experiences, or practices related to the topics discussed. This ensured that all possible connections to the areas under investigation were invited into the conversation (Sobh & Perry, 2006).

The interview guide was initially implemented with just six respondents. Based on the ensuing findings, the guide was refined by improving each question and enhancing natural transitions between the foci of discussions. As well, respondent fatigue was revealed as an important concern. Consequently, two questions related to self-discovery and self-improvement uses of SNSs were removed since they were peripheral to the study's main focus on venture-related resources (as discussed in Chapter 3).

Consistent with implementing high-quality qualitative methods (Yin, 2016), a number of subtle techniques were integrated into interviews to facilitate information-gathering. Lines of inquiry were not tightly scripted, a conversational tone was

maintained throughout interactions, the interviewer was non-directive, and in particular, explicit reference was made to the goal of understanding each respondent's unique practices and experiences.

The interview guide specifically directed the researcher to inquire about each of the key SNS networking outcomes of interest in the present study: information, advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources. Additionally, network broadening and network deepening activities on SNSs were probed. At the conclusion of each interview, respondents were asked a number of demographic and personal self-concept questions if these had not been covered through prior discussions. Some respondents asked for clarification on various concepts; these were defined for founders as summarised in Table 8 below. The full interview discussion guide is presented in Appendix 1.

Table 8: Descriptions of Three Self-concept Items

Self-concept Item in Protocol	Clarification offered to answer question
Technical Competency	The extent to which you are comfortable using SNSs from a technical perspective. You feel like you understand the technology part of it well enough to do what you want to do whenever you are on [specific SNS founder is using]. (7 = very confident).
Privacy Preference	The extent to which you prefer to keep your personal life private. You have a desire to share details about your personal life only with people you know well. (1 = very private).
Personal/Business Network Distinction	The extent to which you make a conscious effort to keep your personal use separate from your venture-related SNS use. You try to keep your personal network connections and/or posting separate from your business network connections and/or postings. (distinct vs. same).

Social Identity Assessment: As outlined in Chapter 1, investigating the founder social identity typology was an iterative step in the research process. Early fieldwork revealed considerable variety in founders' networking actions. Confronting the literature with this, the researcher came across Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) typology of founder social identity. Since it offered a plausible, and as yet unexplored

explanation for the variation uncovered in founders' experiences networking on SNSs, a series of five typology-related questions designed to assess founder social identity were added at the end of the interview guide.[21] This placement was deemed important so that each founder's social identity remained unknown to the researcher for the discussion of their networks, networking actions, and network outcomes. The identity-assessment questions were based on two of Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) key contributions: (1) their classification of three "*pure*" founder identities, namely darwinian, communitarian, and missionary; and (2) their identification of three dimensions of a founder's social identity: basic social motivation, basis for self-evaluation, and primary frame of reference.

In their original study, Fauchart and Gruber (2011) dropped from most of their analysis founders who were not "purely" aligned to one motivation, basis of self-evaluation, or frame of reference "to provide a clean illustration of our findings" (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011, p. 949). In their global quantitative study, Sieger et al., (2016) employed a seven point likert scale and determined founders to be "pure" identity types if they answered "strongly agree", "agree", or "somewhat agree" to five questions aimed at determining founder social identity. These five questions align with the five questions used in the present study to assess each founder social identity prototype (see Table 9). Sieger et al. (2016) designated "hybrids" as those who answered "somewhat" agree or higher to two or more identity-type responses across the five dimensions, but suggest that testing alternative thresholds for the designation of hybrids could be fruitful (p. 568). While Sieger et al.'s scale survey questions only allowed founders to indicate preferences as "strongly agree", "agree", or "somewhat agree", through conversations with founders it was possible in the present study to explore founders' answers, and the meanings behind these answers, in significantly more depth. Taking advantage of the qualitative data gathering frame of this study, the researcher asked founders each question in a conversational manner. Occasionally, a darwinian, communitarian, or missionary distinction was not obvious from a founder's initial response. In these cases, respondents were reread the questions and response choices verbatim and were then asked to choose which answer best fit their experience or entrepreneurial approach.

[21] Note: Each of the first six interviewees was re-contacted and completed the social identity questions.

Table 9: Founder Social Identity Questions Included in the Interview Guide

Question	S.I. Dimension	Wording of Question	Response Options D= Darwinian, C= Communitarian, M= Missionary social identity
Q1	Basic social motivation	Entrepreneurs create ventures for lots of different reasons. What was your primary motivation for starting your most recent venture?	**D**: primarily financial: making money, creating personal wealth, and/or building a business that will be inherited by the next generation **C:** primarily to serve the needs of a specific interest group or community: helping others enhance their performance or satisfaction and/or helping others achieve their goals or attain their desired outcomes **M:** primarily to advance a particular cause: I have a mission to demonstrate to others or to prove the viability of different approaches or thinking
Q2	Basis for self-evaluation - strive	Which of the following best fits what you most strive for in running your venture?	**D:** I strive to be professional in managing my organization **C:** I strive to address the needs of fellow community members **M:** I strive to make the world, or some part of it, a better place
Q3	Basis for self-evaluation: value	Which of the following do you most value in running your venture?	**D:** being professional: demonstrating entrepreneurial competencies and solid business principals **C**: being supported: having other community members help move my venture forward or recognize me for my community contribution **M:** being responsible: identifying a problem and doing something about it
Q4	Primary frame of reference: central process	Which of the following do you believe is most central to the entrepreneurial process?	**D**: being distinct from other firms **C:** offering products (goods or services) that support a particular community of like-minded people **M**: leading broad social change, by example

Q5	Primary frame of reference – opportunity focus	If you were to start another venture, which of the following best describes what kind of venture it would be?	**D:** it could be anything with a clear competitive advantage **C:** it would have a strong niche, customer-oriented, focus **M:** it would enhance the well-being of society, as a whole

Social desirability bias was mitigated by indicating to respondents that there were no wrong answers, that for each choice there were many other entrepreneurs who thought that choice best reflected them, and the choices were labelled A, B, C. Across questions and interviews, the order of choices was presented randomly. If a respondent could not easily choose from amongst the options provided, the researcher offered additional clarification. In the vast majority of cases, respondents either readily selected one of the three options or responded using language that clearly reflected a particular social identity type. The approach taken usually enabled respondents to make a clear choice. In the few instances where this did not happen, respondents were asked to assign percentage weights to reflect their relative salience. In all but two cases (discussed below), one category was given a dominant weighting by founders and was selected by the researcher as the salient identity category.

A process to designate an overall identity-type based on the five prototype dimensions does not currently exist. For this study, a comprehensive review of social identity theory and the saliency literature was undertaken to guide this process. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) and the broader social identity approach (Turner et al., 1987) recognize that individuals will hold a constellation of social identities. Conflict between identities is generally avoided by managing their salience (Reed, Forehand, Puntoni & Warlop, 2012; Wry & York, 2017). Salience refers to the extent to which one social identity will be activated over another in our social identity set (Hogg & Abram, 1988). Salient identities have the strongest influence on how we think, feel and act. Drawing on identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) that has developed the construct to a far greater extent, salience is thought to comprise two dimensions, interactional commitment, and affective commitment. Interactional commitment is "the extensiveness of the interactions a person has in a social network through a particular identity" (Owens et al., 2010, p. 480). Affective commitment is "a person's emotional investment in relationships premised on the identity" (Owens et al., 2010, p. 480). Salience is determined based on the perceiver's readiness or accessibility (about the

perceiver), and fit (about the situation) of the social identity in the situated context. Accessibility is defined as, "the readiness of a given category to become activated in the person. It is a function of the current task and goals, and of the likelihood of certain objects or events occurring in a given situation" (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 229). Fit is defined as, "the congruence between stored category specifications and perceptions of a situation." (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 229). Fit is further divided into comparative fit (perceived in-group differences less than those between groups) and normative fit (perceived prototypes are consistent with societal normative culturally-situated stereotypes) (Stets & Burke, 2000). The higher the accessibility and fit of the social identity, the more likely individuals are to activate it in their self-concept. Thus, extant research suggests that through assessment of salience, individuals generate a hierarchy of inclusiveness for their multiple social identities. These are ranked, and the rankings can change with the context (Turner et al. 1987).

This complex and nuanced understanding of the salience activation of founders' social identities was well beyond the scope of the present study. However, any understanding of these salience processes will only arise from making a very early attempt to unpack hybrid identities and explore the possible complexities of these mixed founder identity-types. While Sieger et al. (2016) were not able to distinguish, for example, between communitarian-darwinian and darwinian-communitarian founder types because their scale questionnaire format did not permit them to collect more fine-grained data in order to make such distinctions possible; this level of detail was attained in the present study through the depth discussions with founders. Through actively unpacking responses related to "agree" and "somewhat agree" sentiments, and probing for clarification about a founder's primary motivation, entrepreneurial process, and opportunity focus, among others, the present study distinguishes between darwinian-communitarian and communitarian-darwinian identity founders. Since there is no indication in the extant founder social identity literature that one social identity dimension might be more influential than others, the dominant social identity is considered to be the one preferred on three or more of the five stated dimensions. This is deemed appropriate given that identities are generally understood to be hierarchically ordered (e.g., Burke, 2004; Hogg & Abram, 1988; Turner et al., 1987), and because currently there is no research to guide researchers on the specific salience-activation process for hybrid founder social identities. This is also consistent with Alsos et al., (2016) who found dominant and secondary identity

rankings in their pilot study, stating "one entrepreneur was identified as having a missionary identity in combination with some darwinian identity" (p. 245). In the case of founders' social identities, this primary ranking approach has particular appeal because founders cannot simultaneously occupy the three distinct self-definition loci of "self", "personal others", and "impersonal others".

In all but two cases, hybrid founders' choices varied between two identity types. Thus, for the remainder of this study, founders' identities are designated as D, C, or M when they are determined to be *pure* darwinian, communitarian or missionary founders. Hybrid founders are those designated as D-C, D-M, C-D, C-M, M-D, or M-C. The first identity listed signifies the dominant social identity-type based on founders' responses.

One founder did not identify with any of the social identities explored in the present study. What this might suggest for the future of social identity research in entrepreneurship is discussed in detail in Chapter 6, page 143. Since he could not be categorized using the social identity protocol outlined above, this founder was removed from the data set, dropping the total cases from 35 to 34. Table 10 below summarizes respondents' assessed social identities.

Of the remaining 34 respondents, only six were identified as *pure* social identity founders. More so than in the original study by Fauchart and Gruber (2011), but consistent with subsequent studies of founder social identity (e.g., Alsos et al., 2016) this study assessed that most founders had hybrid identity types. As outlined above, the methods adopted in this study make this likely, especially when five not three identity dimensions were considered.

Of particular note is that one founder's responses indicated a three-way hybrid social identity type, a classification not found in Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) original study but evident in the study by Sieger et al. (2016). In the depth interview, Ashton stated that he strongly related to all three answer selections in each of the five questions used to determine founder social identity. For example, when asked to choose the basis for his primary motivation from among the three choices provided, Ashton's reply was, *"Can I say all of the above?...Yah, 100% of all of the above. Everything in there."* Furthermore, when asked to choose between the three options for core values, Ashton replied, *"So all those things are very important to the core values of my*

company so I would have to say, honestly, that they are all tied." Additional information provided by the interviewer on the distinction between the answers for each identity type did not yield any change in Ashton's answers. An in-depth analysis of Ashton's overall interview did not reveal any additional information to suggest that he was, in fact, a two-way hybrid identity type. Given that Ashton identified equally with darwinian, communitarian, and missionary identity-types, and that to date there is no evidence to suggest that this is not a valid hybrid identity type, he has been included in the data as having a three-way hybrid social identity.

Table 10: Respondents' Social Identities

Entrepreneur	**Social Identity:**	**Entrepreneur**	**Social Identity:**	**Entrepreneur**	**Social Identity:**
	(D) Darwinian		(C) Communitarian		(M) Missionary
				Alejandra	M
Ross	D	Joan	C	Max	M
Sam	D			Nole	M
		Boris	CD		
Josh	DC	Brody	CD	Anna	MD
Keith	DC	Chris	CD	Bart	MD
Margie	DC	Natalie	CD	Javiar	MD
Shawna	DC	Ross	CD	Maxine	MD
		Tina	CD	Marty	MD
Cliff	DM			Nivin	MD
Jack	DM			Rohan	MD
Jin	DM				
Jordon	DM			Abigail	MC
Kora	DM			Martin	MC
Ashton	DCM			Roscoe	MC
				Spencer	MC
				Tess	MC

5.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative methods necessitate qualitative analysis of the data collected. Qualitative analysis generally comprises "preparing and organizing data (i.e. text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing codes, and finally representing the data as figures, tables, or a discussion. Across many books on qualitative research, this is the general process that researchers use" (Creswell, 2007, p. 148). Consistent with the pragmatism paradigm, this study's qualitative data analysis approach specifically comprised five phases in a recursive process: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2016). Below, each of these is considered.

5.4.1. Compiling Data

All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. To improve validity, each respondent was sent a copy of their transcribed interview and asked whether it was a fair representation of their experiences and to make any clarifications and/or corrections (Bollingtoft, 2007). The majority of respondents made no changes and those few who did made minor amendments. Each interview transcript was entered into the data analysis tool NVivo 10. Respondent claims were also cross-checked using the socio-metric cues displayed on founder/firm social network profile pages (Tong, Van Der Heide, Langwell, & Walther, 2008) as well as individual firm websites. Importantly, founders were only assessed for and given their social identity designation near the end of the data analysis process. Thus, most of the NVivo text analysis concerning founders' networks, networking behaviour, and network outcomes was completed without regard for founders' social identities. This was intentional and aimed at minimizing coding bias.

5.4.2. Disassembling Data

Consistent with the overarching pragmatism frame, the purpose of the analysis phase is to search for meaning, gain understanding and uncover "how things work" (Watson, 2013 b). Analysis of the interviews began with an open text coding process. As is appropriate in the pragmatism frame, generalized code categories were generated using information assembled from the literature review process and also emerged from the data. As well, some initial codes were drawn from the protocol and included nodes such as technical competency rating, platforms used, network size, demographics, emotional support, and start of SNS use. In the coding process it became clear that

some text phrases could be categorized to more than one node. The researcher did not limit a single interview text phrase to being categorized to a single node. Phrases were added to any node that fit the meaning of the phrase in order to ensure that a robust consideration of the data was undertaken. Another key consideration was in the length of the text phrases that were inputted into NVivo from the interviews. The researcher intentionally erred on the side of capturing too much data to help ensure that the full meaning of each respondent's sentiments were not lost. This is important because misunderstandings and data misinterpretations are possible if "text snippets" are used that obscure the original meaning (Yin, 2016).

Figure 6 presents a sample of the initial nodes created.

Figure 6: Sample Initial Codes

As is appropriate in qualitative research, new themes and categories also emerged in the analytic process undertaken to understand founders' networking behaviours, network outcomes, and social identity impacts on SNSs. This axial coding process was extensive, often occurred in vivo, and helped to synthesize the data into essential and non-essential information (Kvale, 1996). For example, the initial coding step created a node for "information resource". In the axial coding process, this node was unpacked to determine if there were any insights to be gleaned by taking a more considered look at what specific kinds of information resources founders were extracting from their SNSs. Axial coding revealed that founders were extracting multiple kinds of information from their networks. Thus, axial codes were created that captured when respondents mentioned using SNSs to garner information related to articles, basic background, research tools, industry knowledge, supplier knowledge, new ideas, stakeholder views, and the credentials of contacts. Through a stage of further refinement that involved multiple passes through the coded data, these nodes were collapsed into more workable axial codes of business knowledge, business research, new ideas, and stakeholder knowledge. Through thematic analysis of this data and the creation of matrices to help illuminate "how things work", a pattern was

uncovered in the use of SNSs by founders for extracting information resources. These findings are discussed in Chapter 6. The data analysis steps outlined above were also carried out for the resources of advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources.

Additionally, through thematic analysis, new categories (nodes) were added in the coding process and these nodes were populated with relevant/ explanatory/exemplary quotation blocks (Kuckartz, 2014). For example, a review of the text content of the initial nodes for the resources of information, advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources revealed that there was a common pattern between the nodes; regardless of the node category respondents mentioned that they were very worried about using SNSs to collect resources. Thus, relevant text blocks were duplicated and added to a new axial coded node called "fear of use". This particular node contained respondents' quotes related to different types of resource outcomes, and offered substantial insights into "how things work", as discussed in detail in the findings chapter, Chapter 6.

Figure 7 presents a sample of the nodes derived from axial coding.

Figure 7: Sample Axial Codes

Triangulation data derived from individual SNSs and websites was used to confirm founders' claims in terms of the degree of use, size of networks, and use patterns. No discrepancies were detected but in some cases actual SNS network size numbers were updated for accuracy (differences found were small).

5.4.3. Reassembling and Interpreting Data

Through an iterative process that analyzed the data line-by-line, sentence-by-sentence, and across broader conceptual meanings (Yin, 2016) key themes emerged. The aim was to identify patterns and themes important for understanding the phenomenon of interest (Shaw, 1999).

An interactive process of deductive and inductive reasoning, or *abductive reasoning*, was added to this phase of analysis (Onwuegbuzie & Comb, 2010). When combined with abductive reasoning, selective coding allowed the researcher to integrate and refine categories and themes (Yin, 2016). For example, axial coding was applied to the initial coding node categories of network broadening and network deepening. Specifically, in the axial coding process, the network deepening node was broken further down into the three nodes of time pacing interactions, overlaying friendships over purely business relations, and preserving existing ties. The network broadening node was further broken down into the two nodes of reaching out to new people, and establishing interpersonal knowledge of them. As well, the researcher went back to the original transcripts to look for any missed examples of these networking behaviours within the raw data. When these more specific nodes were examined no unique patterns in the data were discerned. Thus, in the final data analysis phase these nodes were rolled back up to being network deepening and network broadening, and founders' networking behaviours were reported at this broader level.

A second example of the iterative analytic approach adopted helps to further illuminate how the researcher engaged with the data. In an early pass through the content of the resource-related nodes, the researcher discerned that the word "calculated" appeared across nodes. No node that captured a similar sentiment had been created in the initial open coding process. An axial node was then created for the word "calculated" and quotes containing this word were duplicated and added in. In addition, the researcher went back to the raw data and a key word search was done of each respondent's interview for this word. One additional reference was found and added to the node. The researcher then examined the content of the "calculated" node and was able to discern a pattern in the motivation to engage on SNSs. The researcher then went back to uncover whether a similar underlying motivation was present in the data but where the use of the term "calculated" was not present. This entailed a review of each of the existing coded nodes on NVivo. As well, to ensure that a full review was conducted, the researcher went back to the raw interview data to look for evidence of a "calculated" networking approach or behaviour. Through this process, multiple additional examples of calculated behaviour were uncovered and added to the node. To better reflect the content of the node, the name of the node was changed to "calculative". In the latter stages of the data analysis, respondents' founder social identities were added alongside their names in the node of "calculative". At this stage it

became clear that the vast majority of those founders who expressed calculative networking behaviour were darwinians and darwinian hybrids. This finding is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

Figure 7 provides an example of the data structure that allowed theoretical patterned themes to emerge.

As described in the example above, this stage of data analysis included searching for broad and narrow patterns in the data that revealed substantive themes, and continually comparing these themes to other possible patterns in a process of rival thinking (Yin, 2016, p. 211). Four specific analytic techniques drawn from Onwuegbuzie and Combs (2010, p. 410) were used in this data interpretation phase: 1) constant comparison analysis; 2) componential analysis; 3) latent content analysis; 4) qualitative comparative analysis. These are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11: Description of Text Analysis Techniques used in Data Interpretation Phase

Text Analysis Technique	**Description**	**Example**
Constant Comparison Analysis	Systematically reducing data to codes then developing themes from codes.	NVivo software was used for coding of interview transcripts.
Componential Analysis	Using matrices and/or tables to discover the differences among the subcomponents of domains.	Tables were generated to summarize the 'yes/no' behaviours of respondents.
Latent Content Analysis	Uncovering underlying meaning of text.	A node that collected "dark side" comments proved powerful in uncovering the role of social judgment in founders' networking.
Qualitative Comparative Analysis	Systematically analyzing similarities and differences across cases, typically in theory building.	In the latter stages of analysis, organizing responses by social identity type helped to reveal differences in the networking foci of founders.

In qualitative research, the interpretation phase should uncover theoretical concepts. Yin (2016) defines these concepts as "ideas that are more abstract than the

actual data in an empirical study" (p. 99). Figure 8 provides an example of how reassembling nodes revealed important theoretical concepts that shed light on "how things work" within founders' online networks. Aligning with the constant comparative method, newly coded text was also "compared to previously coded text to ensure that the emergent constructs maintain their integrity" (Fischer & Reuber, 2014).

Emergent theoretical propositions were written up from the data and were also constantly compared to and refined against extant literature (Suddaby, 2006). Since examples help to clarify the specific approach adopted by the researcher, three are offered here. First, as introduced above, through the axial coding process the node of "fear of use" was created and it captured many founders' fears about their SNS use. Through similar data analysis, nodes were created for audience collapse concern, front stage-backstage awareness, reputation-legitimacy issues, concern for socio-metrics, symbolic concerns, and dark side issues (see Figure 9). By constantly challenging the data, the quotes within these nodes were re-evaluated for their underlying meaning. This approach brought to light that all of these nodes showed a thematic pattern of social judgment concern; this became a key theoretical contribution arising from the data. While data analysis revealed this pattern, data interpretation was needed to fully understand its influence on the networking behaviour and network outcomes of founders. As a result, the researcher returned to the literature to determine what was known about social judgment, and to better understand entrepreneurs' cognitive processes including biases and heuristics. This led to insights on social cognition theory and the importance of cognitive willingness in explaining the actions and inactions of entrepreneurs. These insights were key to accurately interpreting the data and to the theoretical and practical contributions of the data findings, as discussed in Chapter 7. They also lead to the development of proposition 1 described in Chapter 7.

A second example concerns the concept of norms. Norm awareness was identified in the open coding process and a Rossust number of quotes were captured where founders mentioned the "rules" for specific platforms. In the axial coding process, the researcher examined the node to see if further insights could be gleaned by pulling apart the node. Nothing noteworthy arose from this process. Near the end of the analytic process, the assessed founder social identities were added beside all respondents' names. This revealed that communitarian founders were over-represented as having commented on their node awareness. The researcher then went back to the raw data to ensure that other references were not missed in the initial

coding process. No additions were found. Further analysis of the node's content revealed that communitarian founders differed from other identity types in their expressed desire to keep their networking behaviour within the site norms set by different SNS platforms. This finding is further discussed in Chapter 6. Additionally, that the data revealed the important role that norms might have, caused the researcher to travel back to the literature to learn more about the role of norms in influencing behaviour. This process uncovered that there is theoretical support to suggest that norms for the exchange of resources on SNS can be established. This insight led to yet another data interpretation insight, described below, and to the theoretical premise for Figure 10, outlined in Chapter 7.

As introduced above, the open-coded node of "norm awareness" led to further investigation by the researcher of the construct of norms in the literature. The third example highlights that this review brought to the fore the important role that norms play in social exchange. Specifically, it emphasized that social exchanges rely on norms, trust, and reciprocity. This reaffirmed importance of reciprocity for network exchange caused the researcher to reconsider the accumulated insights from a new perspective. Applying this fresh lens, the researcher gained new insights into the reciprocity implications of founders' SNSs having few resource exchanges beyond information. This, in turn, led to the development of a key practical implication of the research findings concerning trust networks. It also led to the insights on networking behaviour reflected in the development of proposition 10 concerning the reciprocity content of communitarian founders' networks. Both of these insights are discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

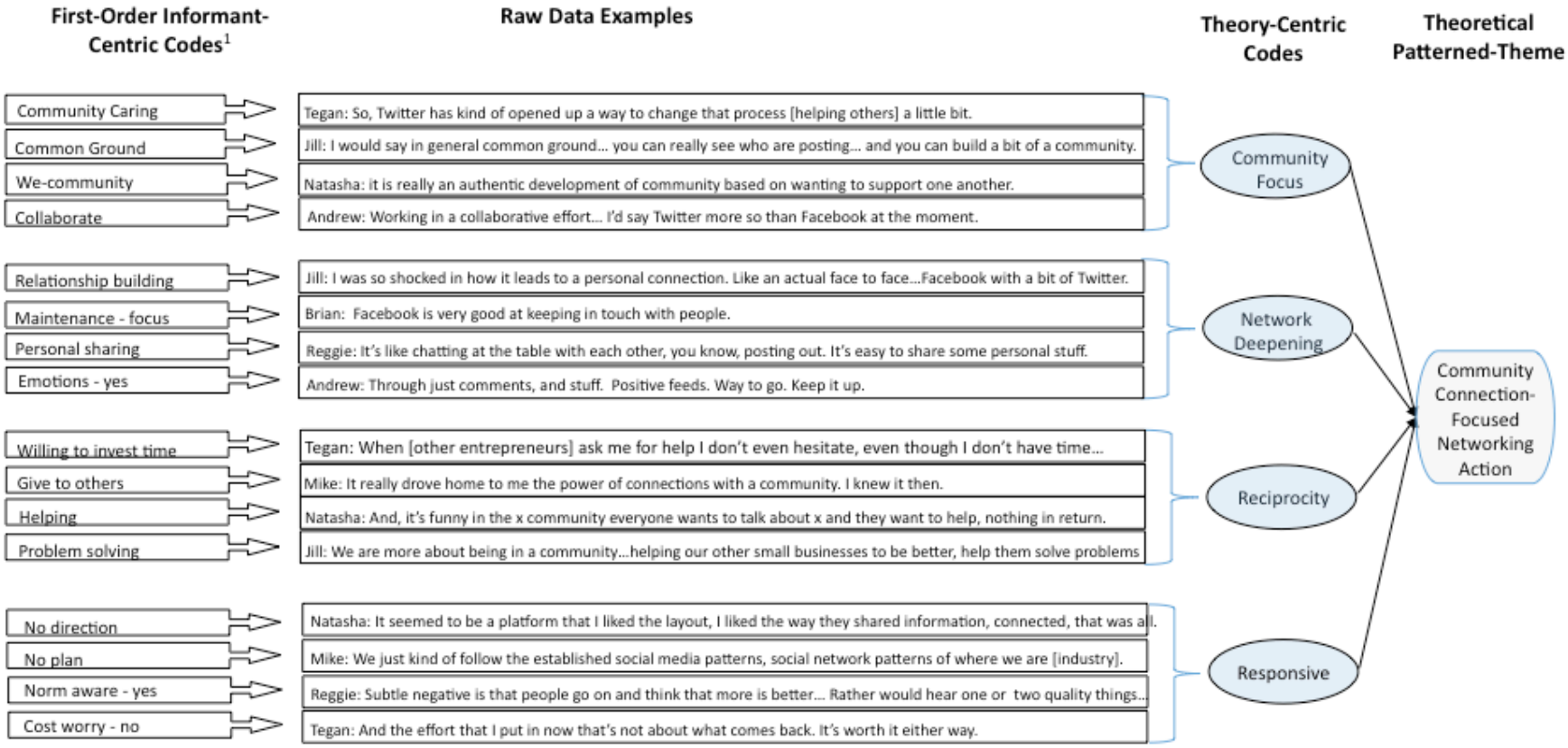
Throughout the stages of data analysis, dominant and secondary identity-type distinctions were maintained. However, it became evident when the founder social identities were layered over the networking behaviour-related data analysis, as discussed in the examples above, that the pattern of behaviors observed for pure darwinians, for example, were most often shared by darwinian-hybrids too. This was also observed for the communitarian and missionary pure and hybrid identities, suggesting that these dominant identities were salient in networking online. While beyond the scope of this study to investigate, it is possible that this salience alignment may have occurred because the identity-related questions were placed at the end of the depth interviews with founders. At this stage, most founders had spoken for 90 to 120 minutes about their networking behaviour online. It is possible that founders may have

subconsciously let the decision frame of networking on SNSs influence their identity-related responses. This is in line with the notion that social identities can be subconsciously held (Oyserman, 2009). This is also supported by Fauchart and Gruber (2011) who argue that salient identities, "will affect only those strategic decisions that are identity-relevant along the dimensions of the meanings that the individual associates with being a founder" (p. 949).

Heeding the advice of Yin (2016, p. 212), word occurrence frequencies were avoided since context and meaning are often lost. However, data matrices were used to bring the findings and underlying themes into focus. In this componential analysis process, evaluative qualitative text analysis was also undertaken to help illuminate patterns and themes (Kuckartz, 2014). Specifically, self-reported technical competency and personal privacy were collapsed from the 1 to 7 rating given by each respondent to just three categories: high (6-7), medium (3-5) and low (1-2). This improved understanding and pattern-finding in the data. For example, thematic analysis revealed that missionary founders are more likely than other founders to present their true selves on their SNSs. In the data interpretation phase, the researcher identified that one possible explanation for this behaviour difference could be differences in privacy concerns among identity-types. As a result, a matrix was created showing each founder's social identity and their privacy rating as high, medium, or low. This helped to discern that privacy concern did not help to explain the authentic networking behaviour of missionary founders.

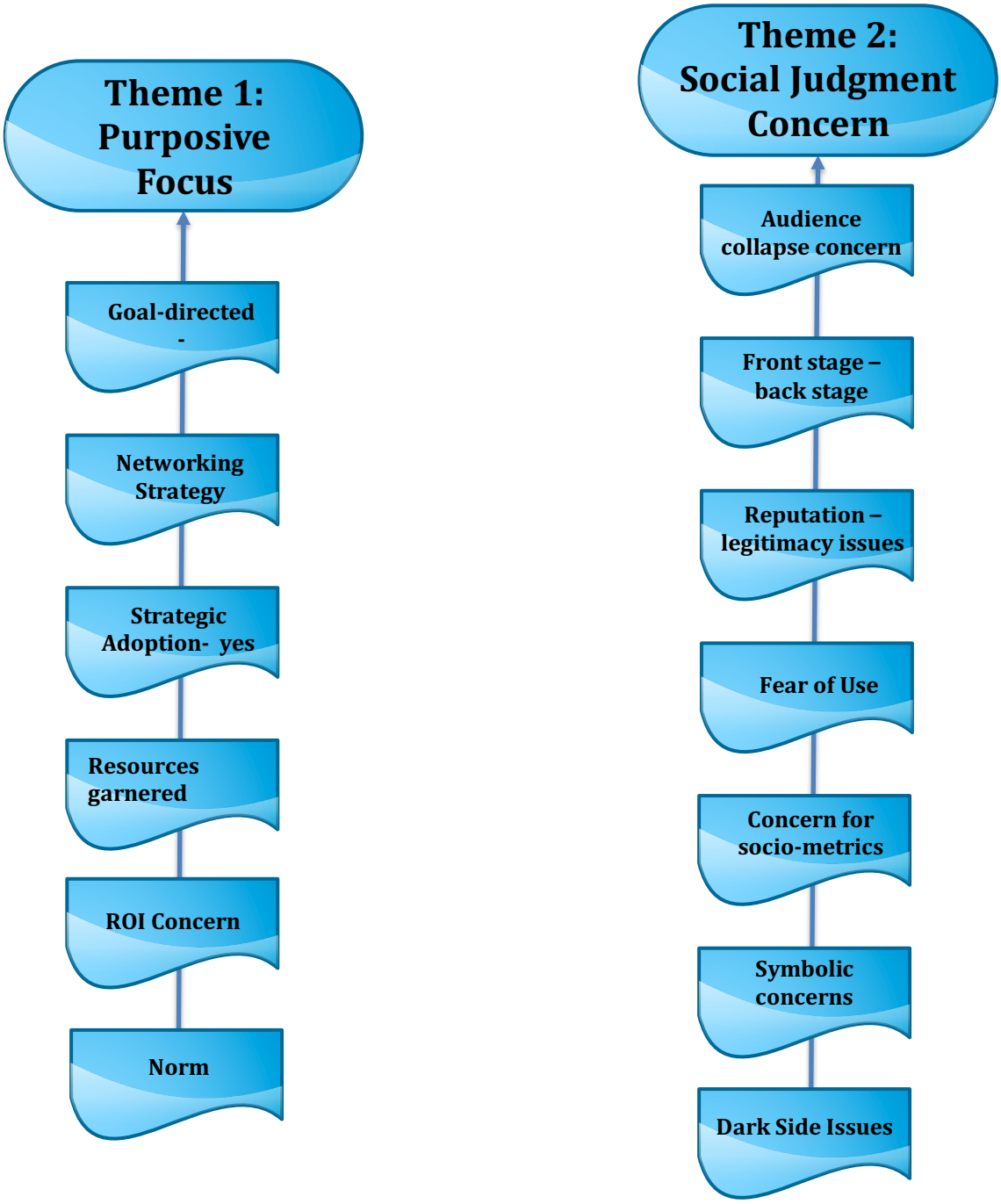
With the same motivation to reveal insights in the data, specific "yes" or "no" values were also assigned to each of the resource networking outcomes of information, advice, emotional support, advocacy and material resources. Type-building text analysis (Kuckartz, 2014) was also used in an effort to uncover what was "typical" for "how things work". This approach was particularly powerful in uncovering the emergent founder networking style categories of "instrumental", "collaborative" and "veritable" (see Chapter 7 for this discussion). Summaries of these matrices are presented in Tables 15 and 21 in the findings section, Chapter 6.

Figure 8: Sample Data Structure



1.Note: Many more initial coding nodes were created in the open coding process. A sample is provided here.

Figure 9: Two Theoretical Concepts Developed Through Data Interpretation



5.5 Quality Assurance

Many qualitative methods texts begin with a strong caution against inadvertently casting the matter of quality standards in the positivist frame of internal and external

validity (e.g., Neergaard & Ulhoi, 2007). The present study has carefully adhered to standards appropriate for qualitative methods within pragmatism. Specifically, attention has been paid to internal authenticity and internal credibility, as well as external transferability and generalizability (Kuckartz, 2014). The steps undertaken to achieve these quality standards are discussed below.

With respect to internal standards, authenticity was delivered by fully disclosing to respondents this study's general purpose, stating it as understanding founders' SNS networking experiences. As well, each interview entailed an open, frank, and complete discussion of all major lines of inquiry. Importantly, all interviewees mentioned that they found their interaction with the researcher positive and their experience worthwhile. Internal credibility in the study's processes and findings is achieved by being transparent about all major steps undertaken by the researcher (see above discussion). Additionally, the study's findings are supported through verbatim text examples, summary matrices, and counter-examples. Moreover, when uncovered contradictions in the findings are highlighted. (see for example, Appendix 2). Taken together, these steps help establish the present study's high internal authenticity and credibility (Kuckartz, 2014).

The study's external transferability was strengthened by paying special attention to the broad base of the sample and by examining a broad range of SNS networking behaviours. Additionally, there was no *a priori* expectation made that the study's respondents would collectively behave any differently than other founder entrepreneurs.

External generalizability refers to a study's ability to be "meaningful beyond the scope of the study" (Kuckartz, 2014, p. 155). Specifically, in support of *analytic generalizability* (Yin, 2016) the researcher defined constructs based on accepted definitions found in extant literature. This helps ensure that this study's findings can be "applied to wider theory on the basis of how selected cases 'fit' with general constructs" (Curtis, Gesler, Smith, & Washburn, 2000, p. 1002). As well, *analogous generalization*, defined by Onwuegbuzie and Comb (2010) as "extrapolation of an insight from the situation researched to recognizing this insight in a new and foreign context" (p. 271), has been supported by presenting a set of propositions and a conceptual model that seek to explain more generally "how things work" (see Chapter 7).

Leitch et al. (2010) state that quality research stems from strictly adhering to the highest standards in all aspects of a study's design and execution. Table 12 outlines 24 specific actions taken by the present researcher to establish high quality standards for this study's research design and execution. It comprises dimensions developed by O'Cathain (2010, figure 21.3) relevant to qualitative data. Additional dimensions have been included from the work of Leitch et al. (2010) who specifically consider quality assurance issues in the context of entrepreneurship. A triangulation standard is also included since this standard has received attention in other material on quality research using qualitative methods (Patton, 1990; Tracy, 2010).

Table 12: Adapted O'Cathain Quality Framework for Qualitative Research

Stage of Study	Domains of Quality	Items within Domain	Definitions of items	Source of Domain and Items	Actions taken in this study to address quality measure
Planning	Planning quality	Foundational element	Comprehensive lit review to situate study and shape RQs and methods	Delinger & Leech, 2007	Extensive and comprehensive lit review over multi-year period
		Rationale transparency	Justification for approach provided	Caracelli & Riggin, 1994; Creswell, 2003	Well developed rationale presented for qualitative study design
		Planning transparency	Details provided on the research philosophy, methodology and design	Creswell, 2003	Details provided on ontological and epistemological stance and implications, methodology, and research design
Undertaking	Design quality	Design transparency	Description of design type from known typology	Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; O'Cathain et al. 2008	Design type argued as accepted approach, including in network and entrepreneurship research
		Design rigor	Methods are implemented in a	Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007;	Extreme care was taken (and documented) to match the

			way that remains true to design	Caracelli & Riggin, 1994	pragmatism philosophy frame, and qualitative methods to research design
		Understand meaning	Openness to emergent issues	Leitch et al, 2010; Easterby-Smith, Golden-Biddle, & Locke, 2008	Proactively "booking" respondents for a 2 hour interview made exploring emergent issues possible
		Moral stance	Thoughtful, caring and responsible approach	Leitch et al., 2010; Angen, 2000	Every effort was made to ensure respondent interaction was respectful and pleasant
		Intersubjectivity	Understanding influences on researcher's prejudgments and preunderstandings	Leitch et al, 2010	Researcher statement was provided. As well, recursive process and multiple analytic techniques employed helped to ensure that any influence of unintended prejudgments or preunderstandings were surfaced
		Research process	Egalitarian relationship between researcher and participants	Leitch et al., 2010; Lather, 1986)	Each interview was framed in the context that purpose is exploratory and there are no right/wrong answers
	Data quality	Data transparency	Methods to collect data are described in sufficient detail	Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; O'Cathain et al., 2008	Care taken to describe in detail the sample, sampling method, and protocol
		Triangulation		Patton, 1990	Three types of triangulation were used – data triangulation (three sources), meaning triangulation (confirmation

					follow-up questions asked), and informant verification (transcripts verified for meaning)
		Sampling adequacy	Sampling technique and sample size are adequate in the context of the design	Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Onweugbuzie & Johnson, 2006	Sampling technique and sample size are justified with reference to accepted practice (Yin, 2016)
		Analytic adequacy	Data analysis techniques are appropriate	Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	Techniques based on qualitative data standards of practice – Yin, 2016; Kuckartz, 2013
		Researcher characteristics and attributes/ researcher authenticity	Good people skills, resilience, patience and persistence, versatility, flexibility, meticulousness, passion for topic, ethical stance, integrity	Leitch et al, 2010; Angen, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994	The rich quality of the data attained and the extent of the theoretical contributions made by this study reflect the researcher characteristics and attributes sought
		Give voice to participants	Attention paid to respecting intended meaning of participants	Leitch et al, 2010	Since all interviews were carried out by the researcher, the true intent of comments were never lost in the analysis phase
Interpreting	Interpretive rigor	Interpretive consistency	Inferences are consistent with the findings on which they are based	Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	Through the use of NVivo 10, the lines of inquiry and interpret-ations drawn from them were highly transparent and linked closely to the actual data
		Theoretical consistency	Inferences are consistent with	Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009;	The constant comparison method employed as well

			current knowledge and theory	Delinger & Leech, 2007	as the iterative approach taken within the pragmatism frame ensured consistency
		Theoretical candor	Conceptual development evidencing how conclusions were reached	Leitch et al., 2010; Morse, 1994	Care was taken to make conceptual argumentation transparent to data
		Personal involvement	Intensive and personal involvement in the process	Leitch et al, 2010; Sanjek, 1990	All aspects of the research process were undertaken personally by the researcher over multiple years
		Interpretive distinctiveness	Conclusions drawn are more credible than any other conclusions	Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	Data matrices, narrative arrays and representative quotations are presented to increase the credibility of conclusions drawn
		Interpretive bias reduction	Explanations are given for inconsistencies between findings and inferences	Caracelli & Riggin, 1984; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	Footnotes are used to draw attention to areas where there are inconsistencies between findings and inferences
		Interpretive correspondence	Inferences correspond to the purpose of the study, the research questions	Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	Propositions and models developed are directly linked to the study's two research questions
	Inference transfer-ability	Ecological, population, temporal and theoretical transferability	Transferability to other contexts, to other people, to the future, or other methods	Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	Sampling method and data collection process support transferability. Consistent with the pragmatism paradigm, the argument is made for analytic generalizability (Yin, 2016)

Disseminating	Utility	Utility quality	The findings are used by consumers and policy makers	Caracelli & Riggin, 1994; Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson; 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009	The theoretical contribution for researchers and the practice implications for entrepreneurs of the study's findings are discussed in the final chapter, Chapter 7.

5.6 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter outlined that the philosophical framework adopted for this study is pragmatism with its focus on experience and meaning-guided data analysis. In this frame, knowledge is always viewed as mediated and context is an important consideration to knowledge-building that aims to better understand "how things work". Thus, pragmatism is particularly well suited for the present study with its focus on better understanding how founders behave on their digital networks. The chapter outlined the consistent application of the pragmatism paradigm to the study's choice of ontology, epistemology, quality assurance measures, and research design.

The research design adopted also supports this study's two research questions answering "to what extent" and "how." Specifically, a qualitative research design is adopted because the social phenomena of interest are relatively undefined, detailed founder impressions and experiences are sought, and the goal is to extend theories of entrepreneurial behaviour by considering understudied contexts.

Through a process of theoretical sampling, 35 founder entrepreneurs who varied on key demographic dimensions and had been operating their ventures for under five years were recruited into the study. Data was collected through semi-structured, depth interviews. At the end of each interview that explored founders' networks, networking behaviours, and network outcomes on SNSs, each respondent was assessed for their founder social identity type. After completing six initial interviews based on RQ1, the researcher went back to the literature to look for an additional possible explanation for the considerable variance in respondents' reported networking behaviours. This resulted in the addition of RQ2, focused on founder social identity, into the study.

The transcribed founder interviews were analyzed initially using open coding. Through a subsequent process of axial coding, matrix inquiries, and a variety of text analysis techniques, themes and patterns in the data were uncovered that shed light on "how things work" when founders are networking online. This analysis phase also included categorizing each respondent into their distinct founder social identity-type: darwinian, communitarian, missionary, or some hybrid combination thereof. Six founders were assessed to have pure identity types, while nine founders were darwinian-dominant, six founders were communitarian-dominant, and 12 founders were missionary-dominant. This is not surprising given that previous empirical studies of founder social identity have noted that the majority of their founders possessed hybrid identities.

This chapter has undertaken to fully disclose the present study's philosophical framework and its research design. This information is intended to help ensure the transparency of the decisions made and processes undertaken by the researcher. The chapter that follows presents the detailed findings arising from the data analysis described above. The previous section's discussion of the quality assurance measures undertaken in this study is intended to help the reader place confidence in these findings.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS

The analysis of concepts is for understanding nothing more than what the magnifying glass is for sight.
~ Moses Mendelssohn

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings arising from the depth data analysis process outlined in Chapter 5. This chapter presents evidence in support of three overarching assertions about founders' online networks and "how things work": (1) founders are generally not accessing resources on SNSs as extant entrepreneurship network theory would predict; (2) social identity is salient, or exerts influence, when founders are networking on SNSs; (3) founders exhibit three distinct networking foci aligned with their social identities.

This chapter begins by presenting findings on the characteristics of the online networks of the entrepreneurs under study. The chapter then presents key findings related to the first research question: *To what extent and how are founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes different in the online context?* Specifically, findings are examined for the network resources of information, advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources. Findings related to key networking behaviours are also discussed, including founders' giving-getting balance on SNSs, network broadening, network deepening, and network separation. Next, the chapter examines findings for the second research question: *To what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviour?* The chapter concludes with a discussion of a broader finding as it relates to Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) original social identity typology.

6.2 Details on the Characteristics of Founders' SNSs

Important differences were noted between founders in their propensity to use SNSs, the size of their networks, and their time spent networking online. These findings are reviewed below.

6.2.1 Propensity for SNS Use

All respondents were familiar with SNSs and were able to speak to their decision to use, or not to use, each of the SNS platforms included for study. Ashton's comments are typical of how clear founders were in their use assessments:

> *On a daily basis we use [company] Facebook and Twitter*. *My Ashton Facebook page – I rarely go on that. I would say once a week, maybe. I just don't have time for it. LinkedIn is more Ashton/[company]. It is two people in one.*

All founders indicated that they were active on one or more SNS and were responsible for the strategic decisions related to use. A typical response is conveyed by Josh, *"[Company] has its own Twitter so when I am posting [company]-related things."* All of the founders confirmed that any value contained in their online networks belonged to them and that they could benefit directly from the outcomes of their SNS networking activities. Additionally, founders confirmed they felt that the SNS connections they had were *their* connections regardless of whether they were linked to a personal or venture-related account. Jordon's comments provide one example of how this was succinctly described, *"Yes I do have a [company] Facebook page. But that is irrelevant because it hooks in on the personal site. They all hook together."* None of the founders reported needing to get prior approval to do anything on their SNS accounts. Taken together, an analysis of these use-related attitudes and behaviours confirms the appropriateness of considering both the personal and venture-related SNS accounts of founders for the analysis of their online networks and networking behaviours. A summary of the SNS activities of founders is provided in Table 13 below.

As Table 13 indicates, Facebook was the SNS used the most by founders; Max was the only respondent without an account, and Anna was the only founder who had a personal but not a business account. Many founders also used LinkedIn; only three founders did not have a personal profile and 13 founders did not have a venture-related account. Fewer respondents were found to use Twitter; only one in four founders had a personal account and only half had a business account. Consistent with the North American participation rates on these SNSs, few founders had accounts on Pinterest and Google+, and fewer still had network connections there. Overall, most founders had some level of activity on at least two SNS platforms. Taken together, these use findings confirm that all of the respondents had enough familiarity with SNSs to speak to their personal and venture-related online networking experiences.

Table 13: SNS Activity by Respondent

Social Identity[22]	Founder	Facebook Founder/ Venture: Friends	LinkedIn Founder/ Venture: Connections	Twitter Founder/ Venture: Followers	Google+/ Pinterest Connections (N-no; Nw= newly on):	Time spent per week on SNSs (hours or minutes)
D	Ross	2,600/1,582	1,100/44	1,300/0	Nw/Nw	3hr/wk
D	Sam	80/100	500/23	500/300	N/Nw	3hr/wk
DC	Josh	500/170	500/30	60/169	Nw/Nw	2hr/wk
DC	Keith	70/99	8/21	0/0	N/N	10m/wk
DC	Margie	200/850	0/0	0/245	N/N	2hrs/wk
DC	Shawna	754/130	89/0	0/1,060	N/N	2.5hr/wk
DM	Cliff	200/350	500+/181	0/14,000	Nw/N	3hrs/wk
DM	Jack	3,400/6,456	500+/105	349	N/N	1hr/wk
DM	Jin	1,600/3000	200/25	100/293	N/N	1.5hr/wk
DM	Jordon	400/30	1,400/0	300/0	N/N	2hrs/wk
DM	Kora	50(personal ceiling)/717	376/0	466/1,500	N/N	7hrs/wk
C	Joan	800/100	500+/104	0/250	N/N	7+hrs/wk
CD	Boris	150/90	225/0	100/0	N/N	4hrs/wk
CD	Brody	32/9	32/0	0/0	N/N	30m/wk
CD	Chris	250/500	97/0	79/180	N/N	2hr/wk
CD	Natalie	1000/20pgs	400/0	60/0	N/N	7hrs/wk
CD	Ross	1,500/1,700	500/7	800/3,000	N/N	6hrs/wk
CD	Tina	450/240	0/0	250/160	N/249	5.5hr/wk

[22] Social identity is offered first to facilitate the comparison of identities in later sections.

M	Alejandra	500/548	500+/132	2450/3,000	N/Nw	2hrs/wk
M	Max	0/0	20/30	30/0	N/N	30m/wk
M	Nole	450/200	0/0	0/0	N/N	1.5hr/wk
MD	Anna	1,002/0	300/0	0/0	N/N	2.5hr/wk
MD	Bart	500/1540	500+/22	0/1,700	N/N	2hrs/wk
MD	Javiar	2,900/15,000	1,000/28	2000/2,200	Nw/Nw	3hrs/wk
MD	Maxine	29/6	33/0	0/0	N/N	30m/wk
MD	Marty	253/35	500+/51	0/0	N/N	1hr/wk
MD	Nivin	334/500	500+/967	40/1,534	Nw/Nw	1hr/wk
MD	Rohan	640/1,341	388/238	126/0	N/N	2hrs/wk
MC	Abigail	600/800	600/0	0/0	N/420	5hrs/wk
MC	Martin	500/694	500+/20	150/300	N/157	5hrs/wk
MC	Roscoe	188/3,510	245/44	13/0	N/N	3hrs/wk
MC	Spencer	1,000/180	382/0	0/0	N/86	3hrs/wk
MC	Tess	90/1,500	230/0	500/987	N/8	3hrs/wk
DCM	Ashton	0/150	144/21	175	N/N	4hrs/wk

Depth interviews also revealed that while some of the founders had chosen not to participate on a particular SNS platform, they were aware of the platform and had made a conscious decision not to sign-on. For example, while Anna is active on her personal Facebook account and posting about her venture to her network there, she revealed that her choice not to have a venture-specific Facebook account is strategic:

> *I'd say because we are dealing with [industry] at the end of the day, and they are not too tech savvy that way…. No, it is way better to call them up and say, hey, we are going to be up in [location], want to go for a coffee?*

Similarly, Max revealed that his choice not to be on Facebook, either personally or with his business, did not stem from a lack of awareness of the site. He commented, *"We don't [use Facebook]. If we need something we pick up the phone. We're old school… The thing we have found with [venture], if you want answers and you want to get something done, you have to talk to somebody."* Thus, founders were clearly aware of the platforms available for online social networking and were making distinct use choices. Importantly, all founders were deemed to have the necessary experience to comment on their use of SNSs in an entrepreneurial context.

Substantial variation was found in the size of founders SNS networks. Eight founders had more than 1,000 personal Facebook friends and eight, not necessarily the same eight, had ventures with more than 1,000 Facebook followers. Fifteen founders had more than 500 LinkedIn connections, the maximum number displayed by LinkedIn. Eight founders had more than 1,000 followers on their venture-related Twitter feeds while only three founders had more than 1,000 personal Twitter followers. In contrast to these high sociometric scores, a number of founders also reported having fewer than 100 friends, followers, or connections. These findings indicate that the sample is diverse for the size of founders' online networks and the SNS platforms on which they engage. Of note, analysis revealed that there did not appear to be a connection between the length of time that a founder had been an account holder on an SNS platform and the number of connections that she had established.

6.2.2 Total network size and patterns of use by social identity

Table 14 indicates the overall size of each founder's network online. This estimate was derived by adding together the connections that each founder had for each SNS platform. While this is a very crude assessment, it informs the ensuing analysis by allowing some comparison between founder social identities and the sizes of their overall online networks. The table also indicates which SNS platform was predominant for each founder. The network size totals vary widely, confirming diversity in the study's sample.

Of note, eight of the top 10 networks by size belonged to primary or secondary darwinian founders. However, darwinians, communitarians, and missionaries were found to be at the top and bottom of the SNS network-size rankings. Age of firm had no observable influence on the overall size of founders' networks. Founders with ventures under a year or over three years old are listed at the top and near the bottom of the

network size rankings. As well, some founders with serial venture experience had large networks while others had small networks. The age of the founder, gender, technical competency, and the on versus offline orientation of the venture did not appear to account for differences in the rankings either.

Table 14: Summary of Online Network Size and Primary SNS Used, by Respondent

Rank Order (largest to smallest in size)	Founder	Social Identity	Overall Network Size (sum of all platform connections)	Primary SNS
1	Javiar	MD	23,128	Facebook
2	Cliff	DM	15,231	Twitter
3	Jack	DM	10,810	Facebook
4	Alejandra	M	7,130	Twitter
5	Ross	D	6,626	Facebook
6	Jin	DM	5,218	Facebook
7	Ross	CD	4,800	Facebook
8	Bart	MD	4,262	Twitter
9	Roscoe	MC	4,000	Facebook
10	Nivin	MD	3,875	Twitter
11	Tess	MC	3,307	Facebook
12	Rohan	MD	2,733	Facebook
13	Abigail	MC	2,420	Facebook
14	Martin	MC	2,321	Facebook
15	Kora[23]	DM	2,392	Twitter
16	Jordon	DM	2,130	LinkedIn
17	Shawna	DC	2,033	Twitter

[23] Note that Kora limits her Facebook network to 50 connections.

18	Joan	C	1,754	Facebook
19	Spencer	MC	1,648	Facebook
20	Sam	D	1,503	Twitter
21	Natalie	CD	1,460	Facebook
22	Josh	DC	1,429	Facebook
23	Tina	CD	1,349	Facebook
24	Anna	MD	1,302	Facebook
25	Chris	CD	1,106	Facebook
26	Marty	MD	839	LinkedIn
27	Nole	M	650	Facebook
28	Boris	CD	565	Facebook
29	Margie	DC	245	Facebook
30	Keith	DC	198	Facebook
31	Ashton	DCM	175	LinkedIn
32	Max	M	80	LinkedIn
33	Brody	CD	73	Facebook
34	Maxine	MD	68	Facebook

Most founders in the sample had an account on the three major SNS platforms of Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, and this did not vary by social identity type. Only seven founders had high numbers of network contacts on all three platforms, and this also did not appear to differ by social identity type. However, most founders mentioned that they favoured the use of one platform over others. Founder Keith offers a typical response: *"I don't have a high perceived value in a lot of those other social media things. Facebook I do. I get it."*

A finding of note is that all but one (Shawna) of the communitarian and communitarian-hybrid founders preferred Facebook over other platforms. Darwinian and missionary founders did not show this same preference pattern (see Table 14).

An interesting pattern emerged in the analysis of heavy users, defined as those who spend three or more hours a week on SNSs. Most were either dominant or hybrid communitarians. Additionally, of the heaviest users, those logging five or more hours a week on SNSs, all but one was a communitarian or communitarian-hybrid. The non-communitarian, Kora, revealed in her interview that she is "addicted to Twitter", commenting, *"It's actually a big stress relief for me… I need Twitter."* Removing Kora due to this extenuating use motivation reveals that all users networking heavily on SNSs were communitarians or communitarian hybrids. The pure communitarian, Joan, reported the highest number of hours per week on SNSs, more than seven hours.

6.3 Founders' Network Outcomes and Related Networking Behaviors

As outlined in Chapter 3, online social networks may deliver valuable resource outcomes. Table 15 summarizes founders' responses on key online network outcomes. The demographic backgrounds of founders were also reviewed relative to these findings. Differences noted in founders' resource outcomes do not align consistently with any demographic characteristics. Following the summary table below, the findings for the five resource outcomes under investigation (information, advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources) are discussed in detail.

6.3.1 Information Resource Findings

The interview findings indicate that almost all founders are extracting information resources from their online networks. Only five founders indicated that they do not extract this resource on their SNSs, and this difference was not distinguishable by social identity type or size of network. Bart and Tess's comments typify many others concerning information use. Bart expressed:

> *I use social media mostly because other people curate good content and the cream rises to the top and you're able to save a tremendous amount of time in reading three or four articles a day that you would have taken a long time to find on your own.*

Supporting this view, Tess said, "*One of the things, the reasons that I do go on Facebook is to learn… I've got a couple of people who are on my Facebook that alert me to issues that I need to know."* Shawna also expressed a number of general information

resource outcomes including learning about her industry. This is conveyed when she says, *"I'll join different discussion groups and use it to learn about different industries or markets."*

Table 15: Summary of Network Resource Outcomes from SNSs, by Respondent

Social Identity	Entrepreneur	Advice	Advocacy[24]	Emotional Support	Information	Material Resources
D	Ross	No	√	No	Yes	No
D	Sam	No	No	No	Yes	No
DC	Josh	No	No	No	No	No
DC	Keith	No	No	No	No	No
DC	Margie	No	No	No	Yes	No
DC	Shawna	No	No	No	Yes	No
DM	Cliff	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
DM	Jack	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
DM	Jin	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DM	Jordon	No	No	No	Yes	No
DM	Kora	No	No	No	Yes	No
C	Joan	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
CD	Boris	No	No	No	Yes	No
CD	Brody	No	No	No	No	No
CD	Chris	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
CD	Natalie	No	No	No	Yes	No

[24] While a high number of founders were noted to be extracting advocacy resources from their SNS, this was mostly related to non-substantive endorsements such as liking, re-posting or tagging on Facebook. Removing these, the level of advocacy value extraction drops to four founders (Cliff, Ross, Anna, Spencer). Overall advocacy is presented because it is the only category in which non-substantive and substantive resources were markedly different. Page 117 discusses these differences in detail.

CD	Ross	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
CD	Tina	No	No	No	Yes	No
M	Alejandra	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
M	Max	No	No	No	Yes	No
Social Identity	**Entrepreneur**	**Advice**	**Advocacy**	**Emotional Support**	**Information**	**Material Resources**
M	Nole	No	No	No	No	No
MD	Anna	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
MD	Bart	No	No	No	Yes	No
MD	Javiar	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
MD	Maxine	No	No	No	Yes	No
MD	Marty	No	No	No	Yes	No
MD	Nivin	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
MD	Rohan	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
MC	Abigail	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
MC	Martin	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
MC	Roscoe	No	No	No	No	No
MC	Spencer	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
MC	Tess	No	No	No	Yes	No
DCM	Ashton	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
	TOTALS	3 total 'yes' to use	12 total 'yes'	4 total 'yes'	29 total 'yes'	9 total 'yes'

Interesting distinctions arose in the discussions with founders between receiving and giving information, and between specific and general information. Most founders discussed using SNSs to receive information. Far fewer mentioned that they sent out information on their SNSs for other than marketing purposes. As well, most founders were using their online networks to collect general information about their

industry or broader contexts, as conveyed by Maxine and Jack. Maxine commented, *"I use it to get basic information, like where is the best place to get printing done. I get a few things back, talk to this person, or talk to that person. So that works."* Jack expressed:

> *I use Twitter myself [by] just following a number of people because they just have a lot of good information they share… [I] get the top 5 or 10 stories that are relevant through Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. And then I use a social site called InstaPaper to essentially bookmark and then I read offline.*

Some founders were deploying SNSs to get information specific to their ventures as conveyed by Sam:

> *So, I've run an e-commerce site that runs on a platform called [platform] and with [platform] I'm often solving ticket issues or latency issues with our website and I'll tweet posts. I'll tweet my consumer complaints on Twitter. And I'll often get responses from their customer service department before their phone system answers my call that is on hold."*

Kora also conveyed that she is using SNSs in this way, *"So I think I wouldn't have known so much about her [key stakeholder] view, and how it mirrored my own, unless I was on Twitter and Facebook and had seen what she is writing."* As did Brody *"So if I want to check out their credentials. See their CV or resume. I'll go to LinkedIn and I can get a good idea of who they are and I can get their work history, and what projects* they are up to."

A number of founders also expressed using SNSs as a way to collect information for idea generation. Nivin highlights this when he says, *"On the personal side, I use Twitter as a way to find new ideas… The only way for me to do that or think like that because I'm always running my day-to-day operations is to have that information come to me without me searching for it."*

All identity types were equally engaged in accessing information on their SNSs. Of note, some missionaries were active in following inspirational cause-based leaders for information but this use was neither consistent nor widespread amongst this identity group. The vast majority of founders were making use of the efficiency of SNSs to gather general information resources and many were also using their online networks to gather venture-specific information.

Table 16 offers a summary of illustrative comments related to the general information resource outcomes of founders using their SNSs.

Table 16: Illustrative Founder Comments on Information Resource Outcomes on SNSs

Founder	Social ID	Use	Quote
Anna	MD	Yes	I do read the articles on LinkedIn. I feel like they are well targeted toward me... I like those popping up. So I get emails from LinkedIn everyday about what is happening in those groups I'm in. So that's better than Twitter because it is more professional I think, ...I guess the other thing I'd used LinkedIn for is, in the groups, they talk about stuff like conferences, stuff like that. Which I, you need to follow lots of separate websites, but one LinkedIn page ended up being, here's an advance program if anyone is interested in coming, and discount on tickets, and that stuff ends up coming in handy.
Cliff	DM	Yes	So, I guess, you can always find a little more information on there (LinkedIn). It's kind of, a research tool in that sense.
Javiar	MD	Yes	As the world gets more complicated as an entrepreneur becomes more public it's also important to figure out who you are dealing with and I think Facebook allows you to get that access. ...On the personal side, I use Twitter as a way to find new ideas... The only way for me to do that or think like that because I'm always running my day to day operations is to have that information come to me without me searching for it.
Joan	C	Yes	So staying relevant, current. I've also found out about grant programs, funding programs for ourselves.
Max	M	Yes	I find it a good source to get quick-stream information. I'm very particular about the feeds that I'm following. A lot of tech stuff. Fitness stuff. Anyway, anything that would just kind of help what we're doing. I'll sign up for it. I can scan through it real quick and them I'm off. . . I'm not Tweeting.
Martin	MC	Yes	I'll read business advice. I get links to different things I need to check out through Facebook and whatnot. Links to videos and articles to read. ...And then I'll also use LinkedIn as an information source so I get a regular email from LinkedIn. I'll join different discussion groups and use it to learn about different industries or markets.
Ross	D	Yes	Yes. I would use Twitter to ask questions...I use it as a tool for myself as a receiver of information rather than a giver of information.
Sam	D	Yes	So, in LinkedIn, I . . . well, in my industry,... So, there's a number of groups. There's about 10 influential groups that are discussing [industry] issues. And, so, I subscribe to those groups and I'm allowed to post comments to different theories and discussions that are happening. I follow that very actively. In fact, that's pRossably the main clutter in my Inbox, is discussion threads from LinkedIn specifically to my industry.
Tina	CD	Yes	I follow Startup Canada and they tweet about articles of value like whatever about marketing or networking. That's where I find value with them is finding articles that will help me in my learning.

6.3.2 Advice Resource Findings

Given the well-documented challenges faced by founders in starting and growing their ventures (e.g., Hanlon and Saunders, 2007), an unexpected finding of this study is that the vast majority of founders, regardless of their social identity type, reported that they were not using SNSs to get advice or to help solve a particular venture-related problem. Only three founders, Jin, Javiar, and Rohan, mentioned having done so and all three were darwinian hybrids. No communitarians or related hybrids were among this group. While Jin, Javiar and Rohan had large networks (over 2,700 connections) this alone did not account for their networking behaviour - other founders with large networks were not seeking advice online.

Founders extracting the resource of advice were making regular use of SNS connections for this purpose, as exemplified by Javiar, *"My biggest problem as a business owner/entrepreneur is finding expert advice in a timely fashion. I can do that from LinkedIn…"*

Jin's comment also supports this networking action:

> *So, whenever we have a relevant question to do with our business and we happen to remember to use Facebook, we do usually get results...I do use it to solve problems… sending private messages to large groups of people at a time.*

Most founders, however, conveyed that they are not extracting advice through their SNS use. Through analysis of the interview transcripts a common theme emerged amongst these founders. Namely, founders mentioned that concerns for "how it would look" to their network connections prevented them from seeking advice online. These founders felt that the perceived risk of looking like they were not in control as the founder or of not having the necessary expertise within their venture held them back from seeking advice online. Without exception, these founders appeared much more comfortable reaching out face-to-face for advice. These founders conveyed that accessing advice resources offline provides them with the privacy and discretion they feel they need. Boris's comment highlights this perspective:

> *If I ask for business advice [on SNSs] I would be concerned with being perceived as a business failure… I wouldn't go to my online network to ask how am I going to increase sales. I'm not going to do that. That is the kind of conversation I have one-on-one with people.*

Joan's comments are also insightful in shedding light on the use of SNSs to garner advice. She highlighted concern for the negative impression that such a request could leave:

> *Do you have any friends on Facebook that post their problems all the time? I know how I judge them and I wouldn't want to be judged that way…. If we have a problem we would go offline for that. We wouldn't go online with our problems. We would keep them offline entirely…You don't want to appear struggling you want to appear solid, especially as a start-up.*

Additionally, a number of founders expressed concern over the quality of the advice that was available through their online network connections as a further reason they did not extract advice on SNSs. Many founders suggested that there were few people on their SNSs who were qualified to give them useful advice. Keith relays this issue:

> *Because typically you have to have a lot of information to make a decision like that and no one on Facebook is going to have that kind of information. If it is a simple decision then sure, but if it is a complicated decision then I don't want somebody who doesn't know my business telling me what I should do. I think it is a lot deeper than that and you can't get that level by posting on Facebook.*

A summary of additional illustrative founder comments highlighting advice network outcomes is provided in Table 17 below.

Table 17: Illustrative Founder Comments on Advice Resource Outcomes on SNSs

Founder	Social ID	Use	Quote
Abigail	MC	No	So, I'd rather send the email to 10 people I care about the feedback of and say, "Here's my screenshot. Tell me what you think because I value your feedback." Than to post it online get that 600 people to give me "Like, like like like." which may not give me anything right?
Cliff	DM	No	Not really. No, I've never really solved a problem on LinkedIn or anything like that... I don't know if I would do that on a platform like that. Publicly. Maybe if it was my last shot at it, like, I couldn't find it anywhere else. I don't know.
Josh	DC	No	Right. It's a trust thing. A positive example is anyone can edit Wikipedia so how do you know the information you're getting is quality? I'd rather trust an entrepreneur that I've worked with than an entrepreneur online in Brooklyn. Something like that.
Jordon	DM	No	Because that won't help me. It is all face-to-face...Because the parts that make those decisions. The parts that contribute to those

			decisions cannot be found on social media. There are human elements to those decisions that you can't do electronically.
Martin	MC	No	What will happen is I know who the connectors are in my network and I'll go directly to those connectors and say this is what I am looking for. I'll do that through a phone call or an email but most likely through a phone call or a face-to-face meeting and those people will connect me most likely through email or a phone call. So if I am looking to connect that is probably the best. Interviewer: What about for advice? Martin: For business advice it is the same thing. I'll say 'this is my challenge and who can you connect me with. Interviewer: So I am hearing that you prefer one to one as opposed to one to many? Martin: Yes - either a face-to-face or a skype meeting.
Ross	CD	No	I have a list of people that are wealthy business owners and sit down with me to give advice. Offline I seek out people and just ask if I can meet for 30 min. Not on personal Facebook. People who I phone.
Ross	D	No	Not for online – so I have a philosophy and I've practiced this for 10 years. There are people for advice and for opinions. Everyone can give you an opinion. Only a few people can give you advice.
Rohan	MD	Yes	Yeah. I do that right now. So, as we've needed . . . like, I've said, "Where should we go for hosting?" or "What should we do for this?" And I ask my social network and I get amazing responses. People take the time. These people must be reading my feed and then they actually take the time to read it and then write quite thoughtful responses.

6.3.3 Advocacy Resource Findings

More than a third of founders revealed that advocacy was an outcome of their networking activities on SNSs. This finding did not appear related to any particular social identity type. Three darwinians, three communitarians, and seven missionaries described advocacy-related network outcomes.

A more comprehensive analysis of founders' comments, however, revealed that most founders who said that they were using SNSs for advocacy were counting simple actions such as "likes", "tags", or "retweets" as advocacy. In many cases, these actions had a pure marketing focus. Abigail's comment highlights this focus:

> *Yeah. I guess, in some cases, I would say something like, "We have a promo this Friday and it's [promo]. So, if you know anyone who is getting [service], pass this code along. That might be something that I would say and then I would definitely have some sort of way, some easy-to-forward way like, click here and it will be forwarded.*

This marketing focus is also conveyed by Alejandra:

> *So I go onto Facebook to do that, I'll say please, I'll ask friends, "Please ask this question in our comment field, or please like this page, um, or please share it." And it's not unhonest [sic] because at the same time we're getting them to ask questions that we want to be asked.*

While potentially helpful to a venture, these less substantive actions do not fully meet the criteria of advocacy as outlined for the present study (see Chapter 2). Determining the value of these actions to a venture is also beyond the scope of this study. When the present study's lens on advocacy is applied to founder's responses, the number of entrepreneurs who use their SNSs for substantive advocacy drops to four founders. This substantive value extraction is conveyed by Anna when she describes an advocacy network outcome:

> *You know there are those skills that people can endorse you for [on LinkedIn] that's kind of building legitimacy, people endorsing me for business planning and my [industry] expertise.*

Table 18 offers a summary of additional illustrative comments related to advocacy networking outcomes on SNSs by founders. The first four are substantive use examples.

Table 18: Illustrative Founder Comments on Advocacy Resource Outcomes on SNSs

Founder	Social ID	Use	Quote
Cliff	DM	Yes	So, I'm starting to build up a few, too, where randomly it's like, "Yeah, this guy endorsed you for email marketing skills." And I think that has some weight to it. We'll have to see if people end up gaming that system at all. If there's no concern around that then that's pretty cool. You can say, "Wow. A hundred people vouched for this person on this skill." That's powerful.
Joan	C	Yes	A lot of our clients are using Twitter so we will re-tweet their stuff and they re-tweet our stuff. We are always throwing out each-others messages...I guess for other companies that follow us that aren't our clients, and most of our followers are other companies, they can see us interacting with our client so it is sort of an indirect referral/endorsement.
Ross	CD	Yes	Huge benefit for us. We had 100 people at the [venue]. All the people at the table started using tweet outs - so very powerful tweets for us. Power of a testimonial from Twitter is a good credibility benefit.

Spencer	MC	Yes	That's probably the biggest thing is not only the awareness, but legitimizing the business on Facebook has been really key because we put it out there and then the person that owns that project will write a little something about how great it was or a designer will say, "That looks awesome." It might have even been a job they worked on. So, that looks really great. It's like [designer] saying something really nice on our Facebook page. It's awesome...Yeah. Definitely. There's a few designers and people that I sent an email out to, like, "It would be really great, I know we've done some business together and you're really happy with us, if you could put it on Facebook, it would legitimize us big time. "These guys are good." That kind of stuff.
Chris	CD	Not Substantiv	I use it to get people to like our page or promote something we are doing, but that's about it.
Ross	D	Not Substantiv	I'll phone them and I'll say 'can you chime in on this?' Yes – I would phone.

6.3.4 Emotional Support Findings

Given that the analysis of founders' SNSs includes their personal networks, an interesting finding in the present study is that only four founders discussed using their SNSs to garner emotional support – a difference that was not distinguishable by social identity type, online network size, or other demographics. This finding is unexpected because existing entrepreneurship literature suggests entrepreneurs' networks contain many strong tie connections and that these ties are important for emotional support (Sullivan & Ford, 2014). Interviews with founders did reveal that their personal online networks often contain many family members and strong personal friendships. However, when asked about emotional support attained through their SNSs, the vast majority of respondents drew no connection. Founders reported that they seek and attain emotional support offline. Spencer's comments generally sum up the replies from founders about getting emotional support online, *"I would say no. I just go home and cry."*

Many founders also expressed a sentiment similar to that voiced about garnering advice on SNSs. Founders were concerned that seeking emotional support through their online networks would be bad for their business. Abigail's insight brings this perspective into focus, *"I guess because it [seeking emotional support] showed*

weakness. I wasn't comfortable yet with anybody to show weakness… [And I'm] still not, [not] on social media. No."

Amongst founders garnering emotional support on SNSs, a qualifying pattern was detected. These founders indicated that the support they gave or received was only in the form of positive sentiment or good news. They qualified this resource outcome by stating that they do not use SNSs to receive emotional support for bad news relating to their ventures. The reason given was concern for the impression this would give, as noted above for advice. Martin conveys this difference in attitude in this way, *"Yeah – I guess from time to time we'll post milestones and get congratulations for those milestones and it is good for the team to get that."* But concerning possible bad news, Martin adds, *"No – I'm more of a private person when it comes to those moments and I have a close group when it comes to that…It's offline."* Alejandra also makes this distinction clear:

> *I would very rarely post something like, "Oh, I'm very sad today. Please everyone send me hugs and things." Like, I'm, I don't sort of openly do that. Um, if I was really down I'd probably phone someone, but in terms of giving support? Absolutely. It's great.*

Table 19 offers a summary of additional illustrative comments related to emotional support extraction on SNS by founders.

Table 19: Illustrative Founder Comments on Emotional Support Resource Outcomes on SNSs

Founder	Social ID	Use	Quote
Ashton	DCM	Yes	Yeah, definitely. Sure. Through just comments, and stuff. Positive feeds. Way to go. Keep it up. And a lot of my employees as well. It can be positive support towards them.
Jin	DM	Yes	Yeah, I'd say so. I consider that even well-wishes for your birthday as emotional support. The odd time when I'm just having a hard day or something, your close group of friends jump in there to give you support. Interviewer: And would you post something like that on [company]? Jin: No. Personal.
Ross	CD	No	Personally think not good. Not sure how it trumps just talking to your friend - it is beyond me. I can't see how it would work for us to say today oh bad day at [company]... Great question but I would talk to one person by phone rather than letting everyone in our following know what is happening as everyone might start doubting your business. It would be weird if people started wondering if you were going to stay in

			business. No one wants to go to a store that has no lineup they want to go to the store with the lineup.

6.3.5 Material Resources Findings

The depth interviews revealed that the majority of founders were not using their online networks to access material resources. Of the nine founders who did, most indicated that it was narrowly related to hiring. Rohan's is a typical response, *"Yeah. Two of our hires, so far. I posted saying, "Hey, I'm starting this new company. Who's interested?" and, literally, I've gotten a tidal wave, hundreds of people…"* Some founders also mentioned securing space or equipment.

As outlined in Chapter 2, existing network research suggests that founders use their networks to acquire the tangible resources they need for their ventures. This is also one of the key benefits cited for large, weak tie entrepreneurial networks (Granovetter, 1973). However, the vast majority of respondents in the present study said that they do not use their SNSs in this way, preferring to extract these network resources face-to-face. Keith expressed positions shared by many founders, *"I never even think of it from that angle – of putting things out there like "we need this…"*

Interview comments reveal that many founders are concerned about asking for and receiving material resources through their SNSs. Shawna's comment highlights this concern:

> *I'm just a little reluctant with Facebook, because you get so personal, and then all of a sudden you say, we're looking for something, and are like, well – really airing your dirty laundry in a way. It is okay to say, look we're hiring, but when you say, we're looking for a new vehicle, I don't really want people to know we are looking for a new vehicle, or if we are or are not doing well. We just got a new Smart Car, and people are like, wow, you've got a new vehicle. And I don't want people to – because we are twice as expensive as our competitor. Because we provide better service… We're like yes and no, we're asset rich and money poor, like most rich people, but it is mostly owned by the corporation, so it's not even ours really. And it is just a little too much information."*

This concern was voiced most strongly when founders were asked about their willingness to ask for financial resources through their SNSs. Chris offered a sentiment

shared by most founders, *"I don't see us asking for resources on Facebook or Twitter…Then people know you need money. I don't know. That's what I think of, "Hey, we need an investor" means we have no money left."*

Table 20 below offers a summary of key additional quotes regarding material resource outcomes attained by founders on their SNSs.

Table 20: Illustrative Founder Comments on Material Resource Outcomes on SNSs

Founder	Social ID	Use	Quote
Ross	CD	Yes-Broad	So we reach out and say who would want to be a [opportunity] . We ask if there is any interest in being a feature brewery for the next event in a Tweet. That's worked and so has the food photography tweet request.
Abigail	MC	Yes - Hiring only	It would probably be posted on my personal Facebook...I'd probably put it on my site because there's now entrepreneurs and friends who are in the biz that will say, "Oh I know so and so. Let me send in the resume." I just thought the likelihood is higher.
Cliff	DM	Yes – Hiring only	We're going to start tweeting a lot about, you know, "We're looking for new x. We need x in this area." And a lot of our followers are x because they are interested in what we are doing. They know there could be opportunities for them to work there so we are going to be tweeting that regularly, "We need more x. We need more x." And then, of course, as we build our staff, I'm going to be reaching out on LinkedIn, as well, so that would be a good area for that as well.
Jack	DM	Yes – Hiring only	I guess we use it for our hiring as well. That is mostly through LinkedIn and ReportOf but LinkedIn just bought ReportOf.
Jin	DM	Yes – Hiring only	Yeah we do. So, whenever we have a position that we would like to hire for immediately, we post it to our personal Facebook wall, not our corporate wall. And, given that there's so many partners in the organization, we've gotten feedback every single time and I think we've hired some every single time from Facebook.
Martin	MC	Yes – Hiring only	I'll use my personal social networks to do that. I'll post on Facebook if ever we are looking for a new hire and leverage my network that way. Mainly through LinkedIn. But time to time through Facebook. If I don't know who I'm looking for I'll send it out through Facebook as well.
Nivin	MD	Yes – Hiring only	You know, I can't say I've ever thought of going on Twitter and saying, we could really use a great web developer today. I mean, I do that on Facebook. I would post to LinkedIn and Facebook, I'm looking for a web developer, does anyone know anyone? And if my friend needs his cat house sat, that would end up there.

Spencer	MC	Yes – Hiring only	I could imagine it's going to be a really good source of finding somebody to be our next executive-type person for our business.
Bart	MD	No	But, in terms of building the business and acquiring some of those resources necessary in terms of money, mentorship, have just generally seemed to be all done face-to-face at mixers, networking events.
Chris	CD	No	I don't see us asking for resources on Facebook or Twitter. No, definitely not. Interviewer: Because . . . Chris: Then people know you need money. I don't know. That's what I think of. "Hey. We need an investor" -means we have no money left.
Joan	C	No	I guess because some of my personal friends on Facebook will always be drawing on social networks, you know does anyone have this, or can help me move. It just seems a bit lame. I don't want to seem needy for resources. I want us to appear resourceful within ourselves.
Keith	DC	No	No. It was just early days when we were going through that stage and we didn't start the Facebook until 2 months into being operational. I never even think of it from that angle - of putting things out there like" we need this".
Marty	MD	No	So I wouldn't go to them and say, hey we need funding. Because I wouldn't want them to think that these guys need money, are they in trouble, that kind of thing.

Beyond the specific network resource outcomes explored above, the depth interviews also revealed much about founders' online networking behaviours. The remainder of this chapter now turns to consider these findings.

6.4 Findings on Additional SNS-related Networking Behaviours

This section discusses additional SNS-related networking behaviours on which founders offered insights. The findings have been consolidated into the following areas: the balance between giving or getting more on their SNSs; network broadening and network deepening; and, personal and business network separation. Table 21 summarizes these findings A comprehensive summary of verbatim data by respondent in support of these findings is provided in Appendix 2. Following the table below, each of these networking behaviours is discussed, in turn.

Table 21: Additional SNS Networking Behaviours of Respondents

Social Identity	Founder	Give or Get more "balance" on SNSs	Network Broadening	Network Deepening	Personal/ Business Distinction	Desire for Personal Privacy
D	Ross	Give	Yes	Yes	No	Low
D	Sam	Give	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
DC	Josh	Give	Yes	No	Yes	Medium
DC	Keith	Get	Yes	No	Yes	High
DC	Margie	Equal	Yes	No	Yes	High
DC	Shawna	Get	Yes	Yes	No	Medium
DM	Cliff	Get	Yes	No	Yes	High
DM	Jack	Equal	Yes	Yes	No	Low
DM	Jin	Give	Yes	Yes	No	Low
DM	Jordon	Give	Yes	No	No	High
DM	Kora	Get	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium
C	Joan	Give	Yes	Yes	No	Medium
CD	Boris	Give	Yes	Yes	No	High
CD	Brody	Equal	No	Yes	Yes	High
CD	Chris	Equal	Yes	Yes	No	Low
CD	Natalie	Give	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium
CD	Ross	Give	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
CD	Tina	Give	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
M	Alejandra	Get	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
M	Max	Not given	No	No	Yes	Medium
M	Nole	Equal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
MD	Anna	Equal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium

MD	Bart	Get	Yes	No	No	High
MD	Javiar	Get	Yes	Yes	Yes	Low
MD	Maxine	Equal	No	No	No	Low
MD	Marty	Equal	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
MD	Nivin	Get	Yes	Yes	Yes	Medium
MD	Rohan	Equal	Yes	No	Yes	Low
MC	Abigail	Equal	Yes	Yes	No	Medium
MC	Martin	Equal	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
MC	Roscoe	Equal	Yes	No	No	High
MC	Spencer	Get	Yes	No	No	Low
MC	Tess	Get	Yes	Yes	Yes	High
DCM	Ashton	Not given	Yes	Yes	No	Medium
	TOTAL	10 Get 10 Give 12 Equal	31 founders 'yes'	23 founders 'yes'	20 founders 'yes'	10 Low 10 Med 14 High

6.4.1 The Extent to which Founders are Giving or Getting Resources on SNSs

Respondents were asked to discuss whether they felt they were giving or getting more resources from networking on SNSs. Founders were quite balanced in their responses. 10 founders said they give more, 10 founders said that they get more, and 12 founders suggested it was balanced, in the non-marketing SNS-use context. Alejandra offered a typical reply from among those who reported getting more:

> *If Facebook only existed for me to give or for me to get, I would like to say I'd go on there to give, but if I never heard anything back from anyone, then I wouldn't be on there because there is the receiving end. So then I guess it's "get".*

None of the communitarian and communitarian-dominant hybrid founders expressed getting more than they give and most felt they were giving more resources on their SNSs. This finding is consistent with their social identity orientation towards

"known others" and with viewing their online network nodes as part of their community. Natalie's comment offers an insight into this orientation to her community:

> *Oh, definitely give more. I like to think of myself as an example…. I do think that 90% of people are in it for themselves. Whether you think of it from a personal perspective or a business perspective, they don't take that old-fashioned way of thinking and so I like to think that I am leading by example. By supporting others and reaching out to give people a hand up if they need it…the intention is to always be a useful contributor in [my venture-related] community.*

The two pure darwinians also conveyed that they give more in their use of SNSs. However, a detailed analysis of their comments reveals that these founders have a very different reason when compared to communitarians and communitarian hybrids. Natalie's comments and those of other communitarians/communitarian hybrids did not convey their resource giving behaviour from a calculated, return-on-investment (ROI) perspective. In contrast, the pure darwinian founders were very aware of and strategic in choosing to give more than they get in their online networks because they deemed it a sound business decision. They were well aware that they were giving more and knew why. Pure darwinian Ross conveys this underlying reason when he says, *"Yes [I give more], but without it I'd be no one. I wouldn't be seen as [an industry expert]. So that is intentional."* Of the three darwinian-dominant hybrids who said that they also give more, an analysis of their comments reveals that they also were doing so with an ROI focus, as conveyed by Jin, *"If I ever feel I'm not getting much out of my Facebook page, it probably could mean a number of things, but on a fundamental level, it probably means I'm not putting much into it."*

This difference seen between darwinian and communitarian founders also extended to missionary founders. Many missionary founders mentioned not really being conscious of the balance in their give/get networking behaviour online. Missionary Nole's comment is typical of responses, "*So I guess it's a give and get kind of thing. I don't know. I'm not sure where we fall on that one."* Others reported getting more but did not communicate that it was particularly goal-directed either way. Bart's comments convey this sentiment, "*Getting more. I don't give much back. That's the information resources… and I get quite a bit out of it and I don't give very much."* While communitarians and pure darwinians report that they give more than they get on SNSs, the communitarians appear to do so because of their commitment to their communities

without regard for some sort of payback. In contrast, darwinians do so with an expected return to their venture for the time invested.

A comprehensive summary of verbatim data by respondent in support of these findings is provided in Appendix 2.

6.4.2 Network Broadening

Almost all founders mentioned using their SNSs to connect to new people who were potentially useful to their ventures (see Table 21). Only three founders described this as not relevant for them. Most founders were actively using the affordances of SNSs to find and connect with new network nodes and viewed this activity as important to their ventures. Typical comments were similar to those of Cliff and Martin. Cliff explained:

> *I've actually had a couple of guys, a couple of mentors that we've worked with around here who have connected me to someone through LinkedIn… Because then it shows, here's someone that you know that I also know and he's introducing me.*

Martin offered, "*LinkedIn, I use it more like a phone directory so when I need to connect with someone, I'll use LinkedIn to either get a referral to connect with that person or contact them directly."* Jordon also explains how bridging weak ties is facilitated through SNSs:

> *I mean the first one that comes to mind is LinkedIn, right? So, if I need [a particular contact] you can see I am one person away from this person. If I think I need an introduction to them, I might ask that middle man, "Hey Joe, I see that you know Larry. I think Larry might be a good fit for me. Do you think so? If so, would you be able to give us an introduction?" So definitely LinkedIn.*

Jack echoed this use, *"I've Googled different venture capitalists and then I've gotten people to do intros for me through LinkedIn."*

Anna, Shawna and Marty also described the value of SNSs to broaden networks through others' requests to connect. Anna commented:

> *I actually take part in discussions [in a LinkedIn industry group]. And I've had more professional people from random parts of the world that I've never met, they are like, oh, we're talking about [industry] and they add me as a connection. So I think that is pretty awesome and valuable.*

The role of LinkedIn to help broaden networks through the actions of others is also conveyed by Shawna, *"And it is interesting, because since LinkedIn… [I] have had more people friend me."* Marty conveyed this too, *"I rarely go reach out to connect with somebody. But I get regular connection requests on LinkedIn and as long as they are working in [the industry], I always accept."*

Additionally, all three platforms were being variously used by founders for their network broadening, and no SNS stood out as being used more than others. A comprehensive summary of verbatim data by respondent in support of these findings is provided in Appendix 2.

6.4.3 Network Deepening

Just over half of founders also conveyed strengthening ties using SNSs (see Table 21). However, nine founders said this was not something that they had consciously used it for. Given the transaction cost benefits of using SNSs for strong tie management (Sigfusson & Chetty, 2013), it is notable that one in four founders expressed that they were not engaged in network deepening behaviours online. A review of founder demographics did not reveal a pattern related to this lack-of-use behaviour.

Further abductive analysis revealed a possible link between emotional support garnered online and network deepening actions. Section 6.3.4 above noted that most founders expressed that they are uncomfortable garnering emotional support through SNSs. One of the ways that weak ties are strengthened is through increasing emotional content in the relationship (e.g., Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010). For the eleven founders who did not use SNSs for network deepening, all said that they do not seek emotional support through their SNSs, preferring face-to-face interactions. While it is beyond the scope of the present study, a possible link between garnering emotional support online and network deepening online warrants further investigation.

More than half of founders discussed using SNSs to strengthen existing ties online. Most often founders mentioned using SNSs as an efficient and unobtrusive way to mature connections in their networks. Abigail's insight typifies founder comments in this regard:

So, what I find good about LinkedIn is you kind of push the envelope a little bit right? Without being creepy about it. It's not like, "Can I have a coffee and continue to see you every week?" You haven't really pushed it in an uncomfortable way, if you will...it was just that subtle way of connecting without really bugging people about it. So… you're passively putting on some updates and it's a way to update somebody…it's totally acceptable to talk about your progress…

Tess described the same networking behaviour on a different platform, *"Twitter I use more for connecting with other people that I'm very involved with in the business. So I mostly use it for staying in touch with other [industry players]."*

Comments by Boris and Nivin also highlight how founders are using information available on SNSs to help them deepen their relationships. Boris said:

Using Facebook makes it just a little bit easier to access that person or to be able to communicate with that person which helps to strengthen relationships. It also provides additional information that I might not otherwise have, like their birth date, which friend we share in common, and what subjects we relate on… leveraging social networks to keep my core relationships or make my core relationships stronger.

Nivin's comments also help convey how information posted to SNSs is being used by many founders in the present study to help with their relationship deepening online, *"The other nice thing is LinkedIn tells you if there is a change in someone's life, if they've moved on to a new company or position and so on, so always an opportunity to reconnect."*

Noteworthy is that all communitarian and communitarian-hybrid founders mentioned using SNSs for network deepening. This consistency was not found across other identity types. A comprehensive summary of verbatim data by respondent in support of these findings is provided in Appendix 2.

6.4.4 Personal/Business Online Network Separation

Inquiries concerning the extent to which founders separated their personal lives from their business lives on SNSs revealed that about half the founders did make a distinction. The distinction between personal and business networks online did not

appear to depend on the self-assessed technical competency of the founders, age, size of network, age of venture, time spent on SNSs, or whether the venture was online or offline. Of the total, 14 founders felt no need to distinguish between business and personal contacts when adding network nodes online. These founders reported that their Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter account, for example, would have both personal and business contacts mixed together. These founders also said that they would add comments to their SNSs with both personal and venture-related content without hesitation. They also accepted requests to connect that came from both business and personal contexts. Spencer's comment reflects how many of these founders felt about their blended audience SNSs:

> *No, I'm definitely one of those people, and I'm like this with everything… If somebody 'friends' me… I'll just say "yes"… Spencer likes all the same things and posts a lot of the same things that [the venture] does.*

A similar sentiment was also expressed by Ashton. When asked if he separated his personal from his business networks he replied, *"Not really. My company is me now [on SNSs]".* Ross's comment is an extreme example of a founder who has continued to mix his personal and business networks on SNS despite receiving criticism from his personal network offline for doing so, *"I have lost a number of friends… They go, "Dude, lay off all the [venture] stuff." And 'unfriend' me. So it is unfortunate but it is a business, social networks for me. I have made that decision."* Abigail conveys a more moderate but related approach to blending audiences on her SNS:

> *A line is no longer serving a purpose because I am no longer able to talk about silly things because there are people who are work-related here so I might as well put a little filter on what I might put on Facebook, keep it respectable and not as silly.*

Twenty founders, however, did express that they try to keep their business and personal networks separate on their SNSs. These founders reported doing so by designating one SNS platform for their personal network and one or more for their venture-related networks or by creating personal versus venture-specific profiles/ accounts within a platform. Josh characterizes the sentiment of these founders well when he states, *"Because I really believe, nowadays, there needs to be a distinct*

disconnect between what you're subjecting your personal ties to on the Internet. You have to separate them from the people who are interested in your [venture] …"

Nivin further illuminates this distinction:

> *I'm not sure the [industry niche] need to know about my weekend party… I'm not embarrassed about the weekend party, but it's just a separate medium. I just see it as, you can't have, if you are posting, the thread of your life, going out in a stream, I'd like to categorize it a little bit. And LinkedIn and Facebook have become that simple category. This is personal, post to Facebook, professional, post to LinkedIn.*

Kora mentioned a hard line SNS use distinction. She has a large, venture-based Twitter following but has limited her networking on Facebook to personal use, stating, *"Yes, they are different, I do use them differently…. So I decided early on I would have a maximum of 50 personal friends [on Facebook]."*

Further analysis revealed that there was a distinction between personal and venture-specific networks that divided along social identity lines for one group only, missionaries. All pure missionary founders drew distinctions between their personal and venture-related networks on SNS platforms, as did seven of the 12 missionary-dominant founders. Missionary Alejandra made this distinction clear in her comment:

> *I want to keep that for me. Facebook is a personal thing. So, like, if a business person I met, like at an event, asked me to be their friend on Facebook, I would decline and I would send them an email or ask them to be a friend on LinkedIn or something because I don't want that platform to get confused.*

Founders' personal privacy preferences (see Table 21) were also analyzed against their personal/business network distinction preferences. No patterns were uncovered. A comprehensive summary of verbatim data by respondent in support of these findings is provided in Appendix 2. There were founders in the sample who had a high desire for personal privacy and had distinct personal and business networks, and there were founders with a high desire for personal privacy who made no distinction between their personal and business networks online. This is an interesting finding but it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the psychological reasons for why this might be the case.

6.5 Findings on Founders' SNS Networking Foci

Beyond individual uses of SNSs amongst founders, the analysis of depth interviews also looked for patterns in networking behaviour amongst social identity types to help address RQ2: *To what extent and how does founder social identity impact founders' networks and networking behaviour?* This analysis revealed a number of distinctions between founder social identity types and their networking behaviour on SNSs. Three pattern differences were discerned in the data related to purposive, community-connection, and authenticity networking foci on SNSs. Each is discussed in detail below.

6.5.1 Purposive Networking Focus

One theme that emerged from the data was the extent to which founders expressed being purposive on their SNSs to secure network connections and resources to help their ventures. A comparison of the overall tone of the interviews revealed that pure darwinian founders were exceptionally purposive compared to their pure communitarian and missionary counterparts. For example, darwinian Ross's comments reveal that he actively leverages the weak tie building capabilities of his SNSs with calculated intent and does so to an extreme extent. He describes that he is constantly thinking strategically about how to leverage SNS tools for his venture. His purposive network broadening actions have even been flagged by multiple SNS platforms as extreme and potentially in violation of the terms of reference for the platform, as Ross revealed:

> *I've gotten my hands slapped by LinkedIn and also by Facebook. And I guess now by Twitter. There was a time that Facebook wouldn't let me add any more people because I did it too aggressively. And, only temporarily though. And then LinkedIn, I have to go through some extra hoops. I can't connect with anybody unless I have their email address. So it is a real pain…That is what happens when you kind of push the bounds. And not that it's, they are more connection tools to me, they are not really promotion tools. If I want to promote something, I will buy an ad on LinkedIn or I'll buy an ad on Facebook*.

Ross's purposive behaviour is summed up when he states, "*Everything [that I do on SNS] has a reason. Calculated sounds like a bad term but it has a purpose.*"

Darwinian Sam also expresses how he is purposive in his networking actions on SNSs. He describes his actions to connect to key players in his industry as deliberate

and calculated. He has also gone to extreme lengths to leverage the power of SNSs to advantage, largely focused on network broadening behaviour. Conveying this purposive focus, Sam states:

> *We try to grow networks. There's a particular [target contact] that we've been following on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. And we actually engaged in a conversation with him last week and asked him if he would participate in a social media experiment with us where we could actually start a group discussion, specific to 10 other [industry leaders] we work with and have it in an open platform, an open environment. So, we are trying to pull someone in, an industry expert, that is willing to participate with us in an open platform…to engage and secure a relationship."*

Sam's purposeful behaviour is further exemplified when he says, *"As soon as a new social media tool pops up, I try to secure my real estate right away so it can't be taken by someone else. And Twitter sat for two years before I touched it."* His calculated use of SNSs for networking is further summarized with two additional comments, *"Very conscious effort. And we go specifically after that. We try to find them on Twitter"* and, *"Who has an offline network these days?"* These purposive approaches to networking on SNSs distinguish darwinians from other founders.

A review of the verbatim data for darwinian-dominant hybrid founders reveals that all but one appear to have a more purposive focus to their SNS networking actions compared to non-darwinian founders. While these founders lacked the purposive intensity displayed by Ross and Sam, they spoke in more calculated terms and with more strategic intent about their networking on SNSs when compared to other non-darwinian identity types. Darwinian-missionary Cliff's comment highlights this distinction:

> *I'm not saying I'm an expert on it, but now I can sit back and kind of pull the levers and manage it instead of being susceptible to the principles inside that system, right?...I'm not really a social butterfly which is why I don't really care about using these tools, but I can see how they benefit business which is why I use them. I have this ideal strategy in my head.*

The comments by darwinian-missionary Jack also speak to his purposive focus on SNS, *"I do mention that I have 30,000 Facebook fans, that's a true measure of success. I*

do believe that the market values every single "Like" for $5 which is why I'm going to mention it." Darwinian-missionary Jin also conveys the calculated behaviour exhibited by darwinian founders when he says, *"So, I've shaped it... It's just like having a toolbox. It depends on what you're trying to accomplish to what you use."*

A review of darwinians' comments also uncovers that this purposive focus is related to founders building weak tie links as opposed to strengthening ties already in their networks. Highlighting this emphasis, darwinian-missionary Cliff says, *"We have more than 14,000 Twitter followers. Just create a Twitter account and then just start curating content – find all the best [connections] in your industry, all the best resources, keep tabs on them."* Darwinian-communitarian Keith also expressed his purposive focus when he said, *"We don't want to bombard people with irrelevant information. We, at least, don't like that and I don't want to impose that… We have clear goals…"*

In contrast, non-darwinian founders' comments were similar to those of missionary Alejandra, *"Yeah, I had no goals, nothing"* and communitarian Joan who mentioned, *"I'm trying to remember why I did that [joined LinkedIn]. I didn't think much of it at the time."* Non-darwinians' networking behaviours lacked the goal-oriented intensity conveyed by the darwinian founders, and their use of SNSs was not focused primarily on adding weak ties. Maxine's comment further highlights non-darwinians' less-directed approach to networking on their SNSs:

> *I also find it makes your mind too busy and is very distracting. The kind of business where you are trying to be captain, wearing all the hats, you can't afford to be distracted. You need to focus on the task at hand. I find that it isn't easy, a lot of times I will need to make myself sit down and finish something before I go and check [SNS] for something."*

Nole also succinctly captures this difference when he says, *"It is not something that I premeditate about."* Marty's comment echo this difference, *"We just kind of follow the established social media patterns, social media patterns of that industry that we happen to be in…We just go where people tend to draw, rather than draw them to us."* The lack of purposive intent for leveraging SNSs is also evident when Tina says:

> *So, as much as social media is a new thing and I'm sure I'll find more value once I figure it out a bit more, doing social media has been helping me realize how*

important it is to still pick up the phone and meet people and see people face-to-face.

Such comments by non-darwinians contrast sharply with those of darwinians who expressed that their time spent networking on SNSs is a core and calculated venture-supporting activity.

Of note, darwinian hybrid Margie expressed a purposive approach in choosing not to adopt one of the online network platforms. Margie conveys how her lack of engagement with LinkedIn is a calculated decision rather than a by-product of indecision:

We can learn about this in a way so that we can set it up just like we have set up all of our back production and all of our front of house policies, we need to be able to understand it well enough to craft it for our business in a way that allows us to trust to leave it with the business. Like it needs to become a policy. It needs to become a piece of the working cogs. And right now it is not because we don't know it well enough to trust how we would interact with it.

Pure darwinians also stood out from other founders for how mindful they were about the return on investment for their time spent networking online. Not only was their SNS activity very deliberate and focused, these founders mentioned being very concerned that their time investment offer net benefits to their new firms. Other identity-type founders did not offer comments that revealed such clear, bottom-line driven perspectives on networking online. Darwinian Sam's comments also capture this difference:

There's a huge plethora of opportunity and to know where to spend your time is really challenging. And, as an entrepreneur, it's really fun getting distracted by fun, new things. But, at the end of the day, it has to return revenue. It has to be a profitable return on your time… And I think that is the biggest concern, is understanding the platform well enough that you can generate return for the time you are investing. You want to see a positive return on your time invested."

This ROI concern was also evident among darwinian-hybrid founders, which Jack highlights when he says, "*I think you can use it inefficiently. It can be a time sink, so*

you have to be kind of pragmatic about what you are doing. Have goals and manage your time." Offering a similar sentiment, Jin comments:

> *So that's what I mean by ROI. You need to know, when it comes down to [SNS use], you need to understand, if, are you expecting return on that investment?... So it's a bandwidth thing. How much bandwidth in a day do you have and how much can you commit to something where you can't actually put an ROI on it. Because, meanwhile, there's other things you can put an ROI onto that you, that, if you put more time into, you know you could get better results.*

Darwinian hybrid Keith also discussed how he had strategically chosen not to engage on Twitter and only very minimally on LinkedIn due to ROI concerns, *"I don't have a lot of perceived value in a lot of those… I don't have a high perceived value of those other social media things..."*

Additional respondent comments in support of darwinians' purposive focus can be found in Appendix 2. A review also found no consistent link between this purposive networking focus band other founder demographics such as age, technical competency, online business, or size of network.

6.5.2 Community-Connection Focus

A comparison of the overall tone of founder interviews revealed that there was a much higher propensity for communitarian and communitarian hybrid founders to be acting in a manner cognizant of their community and to be focused on serving it. Given the "personal others" focus of their social identity type this is not surprising. However, this difference appeared to also have important networking behaviour implications for these founders.

All but one of the communitarian-type founders described their attitude towards their online social network as a community much more frequently than was observed for other founder types.[25] Brody, the one communitarian-dominant founder who did not appear to exhibit an active community orientation, described not doing so because he was mindful that his start-up is not sufficiently ready to engage with his community yet. This conveys his community-sensitivity, albeit differently. Pure

[25] Note: "frequency of mention" measures were attempted but all founders used the word "community" in their discussion since it is a standard word used to refer to an SNS network. Sentiment analysis was required to illuminate the distinctions discussed here.

communitarian Joan's comments reveal her focus on her sense of community among her network contacts. She actively fosters cooperation within the network. She does not view her network from a return-on-investment perspective but rather as a set of sustainable relationships of value to all members. Her community-connection focus in SNS networking is evident when she comments, *"I would say in general, common ground, in the broader context, you can really see who are posting similar things and you can build a bit of a community, within that…. Yes, it is more about community."* Joan described using her SNSs to connect her online community members with the resources they need, not to benefit her venture, but as a service to her community, *"…but if you bring community into the picture …you can find resources …more synergies and it all just becomes very sustainable, innovative, compared to a bottom-line type of process."*

Communitarian-dominant hybrids also stood out from other hybrid identity types in their focus on community-connection through community building on their online networks. Nathasha's comment typifies responses:

> *Facebook I see as a very casual connecting community…I'm trying to think of how I can help others and support others. Whether it is by posting something, sharing information that I think would be useful…the intent is to always be a useful contributor to that community…. With social media I think that people often get the term 'networking' confused with what can you do for me, when the true essence of networking is how can we support each other. So my perspective on it is to always lend a hand up when I can… Whatever it is, in my definition, whatever social media is, that is the true definition of social media, is using the platform to create community, help others and network in the true sense of the term.*

Tina echoed this focus, *"And it's funny in the [group on SNS] community everyone wants to talk about [industry] and they want to help so we don't want anything in return."* She also mentioned her community-connection approach in supporting her online network of entrepreneurs: *"I know 100% that entrepreneurs want to help other entrepreneurs because I do it too. When people ask me for help, I don't even hesitate, even though I don't ask other people for help, I will help them…"*

All of the comments noted above are in sharp contrast to those of the darwinians who described their SNS use from a strategic, calculated, and return-on-investment angle, as discussed in the previous section.

Communitarians also described a willingness to engage in deeper connections with people than was discernable for other identity-typed founders. Communitarian-hybrids Ross and Natalie's comments highlight this difference. Ross expressed, "*There are those ready to engage on another level and really care about these deeper issues [in my online network] – are more on the deeper common ground on social issues."* Natalie said, *"So I have spent the last three years supporting other people. Looking at what they are trying to do online and then helping them…So there are people that I feel I know really well just because I see them on Facebook."*

While some other founder-types described using SNSs in this way, it is notable that most communitarian founders mentioned that SNSs were helpful to stay in touch. This orientation is conveyed by Chris, *"One of the things that Facebook is really good at is helping keep in touch with people, like 'Oh, look, so-and-so got married'."* Boris also captures this focus when he says:

> *Using Facebook makes it just a little bit easier to access that person or to be able to communicate with that person which helps to strengthen relationships. It also provides additional information that I might not otherwise have, like their birthdate, which friend we share in common, and what subjects we relate on….leveraging social networks to keep my core relationships or make my core relationships stronger.*

Missionary and missionary-dominant founders did not generally appear to convey this strong interpersonal connection and community focus in their SNS use. Missionary Alejandra's comment reflects sentiments heard by many of these founder types: *"I'm going to consciously say I don't really go on there to, to think about what I can do with my community…"* Rohan conveys this difference succinctly: *"We've tended to avoid to really try to do any community-building. Because we just think it cheapens our brand a little bit."*

Additional respondent comments in support of communitarians' community-connection focus can be found in Appendix 2. A careful review of all findings did not

uncover any consistent link between this community-connection focus and other founder factors such as age, technical competency, online business, or size of network.

6.5.3. Authenticity Focus

An analysis of tone, perspective, and approach described by founders for their SNS use also revealed an important pattern that distinguishes missionary founders' networking behaviours from others. These founders appear concerned with presenting an authentic version of themselves and consciously choose to do so online. They described being focused on portraying themselves consistently and accurately on their SNSs. This propensity pattern did not manifest for other social identity types.

Missionary Max conveys this authenticity orientation when he states:

> *I think the authenticity piece is very important to us because we're passionate about what we're doing and there's a reason for it…you can't speak on something the way we do if they don't think you're being real with them.*

This focus is echoed by missionary Nole, *"There is no hidden agenda to it. It is very easy and open. I have nothing to hide…As far as Facebook goes, we have no qualms about opening up to people."*

Distinct from other hybrid types, all but one of the missionary-dominant hybrid founders also mentioned a commitment to being authentic when networking online. Rohan's comment illustrates this well:

> *In my opinion, social media is just about getting out there and being honest. Being yourself. And whoever follows you, follows you because who you are is a value to them. I really believe that authenticity is something that is so often missing from how companies are presenting themselves online. And they hire these outside firms to be their social media, but the whole point of social media, I think, is about radical transparency. And, like, how do you give people a window into who you really are?*

In his comments, Spencer shared a similar insight on his transparent networking approach:

> *I try to be honest to me. If I'm representing myself, all aspects of myself, even the personal fun party guy side, I'll still put it on there….I like to think that they*

understand that everybody has a little bit of that side to them and if they are the type who is going to make a big judgment based on one weekend or one little thing or one little comment, then I don't really want them, I don't want to be involved with them anyway. That's the way I approach it anyway.

Revealing that even as a serial entrepreneur he maintained an authentic networking approach, Javiar states:

…my value in the world is based on my authenticity. So it doesn't matter if it is offline or online, for me it has to be the same….As an entrepreneur, with failures and successes, I'm okay with letting people know what my failures and successes are. I don't really have any reservations about it because I have reached a point where I am comfortable with that. I am no longer defined by …I'm not defined by that any more."

One missionary hybrid did not convey a authenticity focus. Anna's comments reveal that she was not concerned about aligning her online and offline selves on her SNSs and was more concerned about her self-presentation than authenticity. She expressed, " Yah, we always have to make [SNSs] look perfect", and "I am more comfortable typing my personality than I am interacting directly." She also mentioned, "I don't have anything to hide on there. But at the same time, I make it very – I understand that, like, pictures I put up could surface at any time in my life."

The comments of missionary founders concerning authenticity also stood in sharp contrast to other founder identity types who either made no reference to it as an issue of concern or who consciously chose not to present an authentic self on their SNSs. Darwinian-missionary Jordon's comments illuminate this difference seen among non-missionary founders:

I bring a huge network. I bring 30 years of experience. I built companies. And I'm like a pinball and I'm scared and I'm lonely. We say we are in a social world. We are not because we are not bringing ourselves to the social engagement. You can't. You can't. People would run away.

Communitarian-darwinian Brody expressed this difference even more succinctly, *"I'm not interested in sharing my personal self with the world at large."*

The extent to which founders' personal privacy concerns might impact their authenticity focus was also considered. Privacy preferences did not appear to align with the authenticity focus findings. Missionary and missionary-dominant founders conveying a strong authenticity focus to their networking online were equally likely to have high and low privacy preferences.

A review of the distinction founders maintained between their personal and venture-related SNSs did reveal a possible pattern difference. More than two-thirds of missionary and missionary-dominant hybrids who conveyed an authenticity focus also distinguished between their personal and venture-related networks on their SNSs. Moreover, these founders were equally likely to discuss their authenticity focus when referring to their personal or their venture-related networks. They described the importance of making "authentic" postings to all of their SNS platforms, regardless of audience. Tess's comment reflects those of others, *"I think you can still be authentic. It doesn't matter where I'm posting."* However, many missionary founders did mention that they felt that being authentic did not necessarily mean posting everything to everyone but rather that what was posted to SNSs was a true reflection of them. Roscoe reiterates this distinction, *"I try to keep it separate because I'm shuttering people off from some of my personal stuff. On my business page, I'm me, I just don't talk about everything."*

The findings for respondents' purposive focus, community-connection focus, and authenticity focus by social identity type are summarized in Table 22 below. A comprehensive summary of verbatim data by respondent in support of these findings is provided in Appendix 2.

Having considered the resource outcomes accruing to founders networking on SNSs, founders' networking actions on SNSs, and possible networking differences related to their social identity types, the chapter now turns to consider an additional finding related to Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) flagship social identity study.

Table 22: Networking Focus Differences Expressed amongst Respondents

Social Identity	Entrepreneur	Purposive Focus	Community-Connection Focus	Authenticity Focus
D	Ross	Yes	No	No
D	Sam	Yes	No	No
DC	Josh	Yes	No	No
DC	Keith	Yes	No	No
DC	Margie	Yes	Yes	Yes
DC	Shawna	Yes	No	No
DM	Cliff	Yes	No	No
DM	Jack	Yes	No	No
DM	Jin	Yes	Yes	Yes
DM	Jordon	Yes	No	No
DM	Kora	Yes	No	No
C	Joan	No	Yes	No
CD	Boris	No	Yes	No
CD	Brody	No	No	No
CD	Chris	No	Yes	No
CD	Natalie	No	Yes	No
CD	Ross	Yes	Yes	No
CD	Tina	No	Yes	No
M	Alejandra	No	No	Yes
M	Max	No	No	Yes
M	Nole	No	Yes	Yes
MD	Anna	Yes	No	No
MD	Bart	No	No	Yes
MD	Javiar	Yes	No	Yes
MD	Maxine	No	No	Yes
MD	Marty	No	No	Yes
MD	Nivin	No	No	Yes
MD	Rohan	No	No	Yes
MC	Abigail	No	No	Yes
MC	Martin	No	Yes	Yes
MC	Roscoe	No	No	Yes
MC	Spencer	No	No	Yes
MC	Tess	No	Yes	Yes

DCM	Ashton	Yes	Yes	Yes

6.6 Possible Additional Social Identity Type

Through the course of this investigation an additional finding emerged related to the Fauchart and Gruber (2011) founder social identity typology. An unexpected finding of the present study is that one founder did not identify with any of the interview protocol questions used to distinguish between darwinian, communitarian, and missionary identity types, as discussed on page 89, Chapter 5.

In the interview process, Danny categorically rejected all choices for each of the five identity-assessing questions posed to him. Despite offering follow-up information to clarify each question, Danny was steadfast in his resolve that none of the categories applied to him. Specifically, Danny's responses to each of the five questions aimed at assessing founder social identity were distinctly different from those received from other founders. To shed light on these differences, Danny's comments are summarized in Table 23 below.

Table 23: Aesthetic Social Identity Founder Responses

Social Identity Dimension	**Founder Danny's responses to social identity determining questions**	**Standard Social Identity Response Options** **D= Darwinian, C= Communitarian, M= Missionary social identity**
Basic social motivation	Entrepreneurs create ventures for lots of different reasons. What was your primary motivation for starting your most recent venture? *"To me, entrepreneurship is an art. It's like creating this piece of art. I feel satisfied when I'm doing that. I feel even more satisfied when other people acknowledge that. For example, when I do demos with my prospects, they say, "Wow! This is beautiful. I've never seen something like this before." <u>That</u> drives me."*	D: mainly financial: making money, creating personal wealth, and/or building a business that will be inherited by the next generation C: mainly serving the needs of a specific interest group or community: helping others enhance their performance or satisfaction and/or helping others achieve their goals or attain their desired outcomes M: mainly to advance a particular cause: I have a mission to show others or to prove the viability of different approaches or thinking

Basis for self-evaluation - strive	Which of the following best fits what you strive for most in running your venture? *"See, some people really enjoy improving a process. They see something that's not working and they feel like they need to fix it. That's not me. I feel like to create something brand new that nobody has seen before, it's so beautiful and that, wow, it's crazy. I love it."*	D: I strive to be professional in managing my organization C: I strive to bring authenticity to addressing the needs of fellow community members M: I strive to make the world, or some part of it, a better place
Basis for self-evaluation – value	Which of the following do you value most in running your venture? *"[type] software doesn't have to be that complicated. It can be beautiful. Everyday when you wake up in the morning and you open up that software, you can feel the love. Right?"*	D: being professional: demonstrating entrepreneurial competencies and solid business principals C: being supported: having other community members help move your venture forward or recognize you for your community contribution M: being responsible: identifying a problem and doing something about it
Primary frame of reference – central process	Which of the following do you believe is most central to the entrepreneurial process? *"Just the internal passion to want to create something. It doesn't matter what that is. But I really enjoy the process of creating something, crafting something beautiful that people really enjoy using or looking at or whatever… it's most like art."*	D: being distinct from other firms C: offering products (goods or services) that support a particular community of like-minded people M: leading broad social change, by example
Primary frame of reference – opportunity focus	If you were to start another venture, which of the following best describes what kind of venture it would be? *"If I'm not an artist anymore, I would just lose interest. When you have to care about all the processes trying to optimize the processes, have hierarchies, it's not exciting anymore. I would not pursue something like that. I really enjoy the process of creating something new. Now this is very different from my co-founder. He said the creation process is very painful and hard to enjoy."*	D: it could be anything with a clear competitive advantage C: it would have a strong niche, customer-oriented, focus M: it would enhance the well-being of society, as a whole

Danny did not align himself with the darwinian, communitarian, or missionary social identity types. Further discussions revealed that Danny's orientation was derived from the pure esthetic value of the products he had created through his venture. He was most proud of the beauty of the solution that he had brought to market. He described himself and the venturing process in the fashion of an artist. He was not concerned with whether his product made money, served a purpose, satisfied a specific community need, or changed the world. He simply took great pleasure in single-handedly crafting an elegantly functional product that was more beautiful than anything else on the market (in his case it was a software product). Danny clearly did not perceive his social "in-group" as darwinians, communitarians, or missionaries.

Danny appeared to convey a different and distinct social identity prototype. Danny's sense of social connection appears drawn from an artistic sensibility that concerns itself with the specific aesthetic or creative value of the endeavour at the core of his venture. In personal discussions with Marc Gruber, (co-author of Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; June, 2016), he confirmed that their study did not uncover a founder like Danny. However, he was very intrigued by the finding and could see that it is possible that a fourth social identity type may have escaped their analysis. It is possible that there exists an "aesthetic founder" social identity type of which Danny would be one. This would explain why none of the questions aimed at identifying the darwinian, communitarian or missionary social identities resonated with Danny. This finding warrants further study to determine if the addition of a fourth social identity type to Fauchart and Gruber's 3-way typology is warranted. Determining the specific nature of an aesthetic founder's social group motivation and frame of reference are beyond the scope of this study.

6.7 Chapter Conclusion

The findings outlined in the previous sections point to three overarching assertions under the pragmatism frame: (1) founders are generally not accessing resources through their SNSs as extant entrepreneurship network theory would predict; (2) social identity is salient, or exerts influence, when founders are networking on SNSs; (3) founders exhibit three distinct networking foci aligned with their social identities: purposive, community-connection, and authenticity. These findings were consistent despite the fact that there was great variety in the size of networks among the 35

respondents (ranging from under 100 to over 20,000 connections), in the demographic characteristics of the sample, and in the diversity of SNSs platforms on which they networked.

The finding that most all respondent entrepreneurs did not garner significant resources other than information from their networks is unexpected because the *network success hypothesis,* the *strength of weak ties hypothesis*, and the advantages of brokering structural holes are widely accepted assumptions in the entrepreneurship literature about networking and network outcomes in the offline context. This suggests that the online context for networking is likely distinct from the face-to-face context. The present study's findings reveal that almost all of the 34 founders were actively collecting information in support of their ventures. This contrasts sharply to the just under six founders who described either garnering advice, advocacy, emotional support, or material resources from their digital networks. While all founders mentioned that they would garner these resources from their networks in the offline context, the vast majority described being hesitant to do so using their networks online. A pattern that was discerned in the data suggests that founders were concerned about asking for these resources from their SNSs because they feared it might be perceived negatively by their network of connections. Specifically, founders worried that such SNS requests could have negative repercussions for them and/or for their ventures.

Comparing respondents' self-reported networking actions and network outcomes against their assessed social identities also revealed that founder social identity is likely an individual-level difference that influences founders' networking behaviours. Founder social identity was revealed to have potential influence on respondents' network broadening actions, their network deepening actions, the balance of reciprocity in their networks, and whether they blend their personal and business networks online.

Specifically, three distinct patterns of networking action were uncovered related to either darwinian, communitarian and missionary primary identities. Respondents with a pure or hybrid darwinian social identity were found to have a purposive networking focus. These founders' actions networking online were more calculated, purposeful, and return-on-investment focused than other founder identity-types. For many, their SNS networking behaviour was concentrated on growing their networks by adding weak ties through network broadening activities. Respondents

with a pure or hybrid communitarian social identity were found to have a community-connection networking focus, with networks high in reciprocity. These founders' actions networking on SNSs centred on serving and building community and common ground. Their focus was on interpersonal connection, and many actively engaged in network deepening actions on their SNSs to help strengthen ties. Respondents with a pure or hybrid missionary identity were found to have an authenticity focus networking on SNSs. These founders' actions networking online were distinct from other founder identity types because they made it a priority to present an authentic, consistent version of themselves to their network connections, and to be transparent in representing the same person online as offline. These findings indicate that founder social identity is an important individual-level context difference that can help researchers better understand entrepreneurs' networks and networking behaviours.

No link was found in the data between respondents' founder social identities and the extent to which they did or did not garner needed resources from their digital networks. Thus, why founder social identity is found to have an influence on the networking actions of founders, it does not seem to explain why most founders in the present study were not accessing available resources through their online networks.

The following chapter considers the theoretical and practical implications of these findings and addresses the two research questions posed in this study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

It has been argued that new venture creation is the result of the interplay of entrepreneurs' social networks and cognitive biases.
~ De Carolis, Litzky and Eddleston (2009, p. 528)

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 outlined the detailed findings of this study. These findings offer insights into the two research questions addressed by this study.

This chapter draws together key insights derived from the data analysis and findings presented in Chapter 6. It begins by discussing the research findings and setting out 12 research propositions, and a conceptual model rooted in the analysis and theorizing presented in this chapter. Next, the theoretical and practical implications of the research are discussed. The chapter then examines the limitations of this study, and suggests possible future research directions. The chapter concludes with a summary of the contributions of this study and final remarks.

7.2 Discussion of the Research Findings

7.2.1 Discussion of the Research Findings for RQ1

One research question underpinning this study is:

RQ1: *To what extent and how does the online context of digital networks influence founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes?*

Extant network theory in entrepreneurship suggests that founders actively build their networks in order to secure resources to further their venture interests (Ozdemir et al., 2016). Extant entrepreneurship network and social media literatures also predict that founders will be motivated to acquire these resources through their online social networks due to the higher efficiency and lower transaction costs associated with doing so.

However, based on depth interviews with founders, this study's findings do not support these assumptions in the online context of SNSs. The only resource founders consistently reported extracting from their online networks was information. Most

founders were not acquiring substantive advice, advocacy, emotional support, or material resources from their SNSs. This is somewhat surprising given the extreme paucity of resources present at the early venture stage (Sarasvathy, 2001), founders' strong motivations to acquire them (Hanlon & Saunders, 2007), and the easy access to them that SNSs afford (Morse et al., 2007).

Analysis also revealed that the resources that were being extracted by founders via SNSs belong to a narrow range of categories. For example, of the founders who expressed extracting emotional support, all of them qualified that this support was focused only on positive affect. Founders did not share bad news in order to receive support and did not seek support on SNSs when times were tough. Similarly, in terms of material resources, founders indicated that they were comfortable using their SNSs for very few purposes, specifically new hires and facilities-related resources. The vast majority of founders conveyed that they would not use their SNSs to ask for either financial help or substantive resources such as key manufacturing products or services. They also expressed reticence to seek third-party endorsements on SNSs beyond very oblique "liking", "retweeting", or "tagging" actions. In addition, the vast majority of founders described that they did not seek substantive advice or problem-solving help online.

These founder comments reveal an underlying pattern that warrants further consideration. Most respondents had over 500 connections on their SNSs whom they could cost-effectively reach out to online. Current network theory offline (e.g., *the strength of weak ties*, Granovetter, 1973) suggests that founders would be actively seeking the resources embedded in these connections. However, this study finds that founders resist doing so despite being fully aware that garnering these resources through their SNSs is possible. Discussions with founders confirmed that they have and will continue to access these same resources face-to-face through their offline networks.

Previous research on networks suggests that large networks are valuable for founders to access a number of resources including advice, legitimacy (advocacy outcome), and material resources (e.g., Granovetter, 1973; Raz & Gloor, 2007; Semrau & Werner, 2014). However, the present study finds that while founders have access to many connections on their SNSs, they are reticent to activate them online to seek advice, advocacy and emotional support, or acquire needed material resources. Existing

network research in entrepreneurship is largely silent on the important distinction between a founder having access to resources and her willingness to actually collect them from her network. Jack (2010) identifies understanding the activation of ties as an important area for new research. This study's findings suggest that previous network research may have oversimplified the assertion that having a larger network is, de facto, more valuable to entrepreneurs (Stam & Elfring, 2008). A more relevant assessment may be to determine which, if any, of the tie nodes available within an entrepreneur's network is she willing to activate in search of particular resources or assistance? In the present study, founders limited their SNS resource requests to four general areas: information, advice that was not strategically important, low impact advocacy and emotional support, and resource requests that were neither financially nor strategically significant. This networking behaviour suggests that "willingness to access available resources from your ties" is an important qualifier that may lead to a more accurate assessment of a founder's actual access to resources in her SNSs. This "willingness" influence on networking action has not previously been identified in the founder network literature and is an important contribution of this study.

While existing network theory is challenged to offer an explanation for the findings of this study, social cognition theory may help to shed light on "how things work". Specifically, expert information processing theory (e.g., Galambos, Abelson & Black, 1986), and the social information processing perspective (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978) offer new insights for understanding founders' networking behaviours online. Social cognition is defined as "the ways in which we interpret, analyze, remember, and use information about the social world" (Mitchell, Busenitz, Bird, Gagliio, Morse, & Smith, 2007, p. 5). Social cognition theory specifies that individuals have cognitive knowledge structures that serve to guide personal intent and action. These knowledge structures also help entrepreneurs to minimize cognitive effort in the highly complex task of venturing (Baron, 1998). These knowledge structures have also been found to be distinctive for entrepreneurs (Mitchell, Mitchell, & Randolph-Seng, 2014).

Entrepreneurial cognition research has been defined as, "understanding how entrepreneurs use simplifying mental models to piece together previously unconnected information that helps them to identity and invent new products or services, and to assemble the necessary resources to start and grow businesses" (Mitchell, Busenitz, Lant, McDougall, Morse, & Smith 2002, p.97). Since a key focus of entrepreneurial cognitions can be on assembling resources, investigating entrepreneurial cognition for

a possible explanation for the SNS networking findings of the present study is a particularly strong fit. Additionally, cognition theory has been applied elsewhere to explain entrepreneurial behaviour (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006; Mitchell et al., 2014). For example, social cognition theory has proven effective in helping to explain other networking-related behaviours among entrepreneurs (De Carolis et al., 2009). Similarly, Kwon and Alder (2014) provide support for the impact of cognitions by stating, "actors who occupy objectively similar places in a social network… perceive their social ties differently and thus may not see the same structure of constraints and opportunities (p. 414). Consistent with this study's focus on the under-explored area of online networks, social cognition theory also recognizes that a particular situation or context can impact how an entrepreneur thinks (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Pryor et al., 2016). Accordingly, the theory postulates that entrepreneurs' actions are fundamentally guided by the structure of the mental cognitive processes or knowledge scripts that we all possess. Knowledge scripts have been defined as, "highly developed, sequentially ordered knowledge" (Zhang & Cueto, 2015, p. 437), and "the observable, recurrent behaviours and patterns of interaction characteristic of a particular setting" (Barley & Tolbert, 1997, p.98). These scripts may be followed knowingly or subconsciously. The existence of scripts for a variety of venture-related activities has been suggested, including for resource acquisition (Pryor et al., 2016). In particular, entrepreneurs' actions are influenced through the enactment of two kinds of cognitive scripts aligned in inter-related and sequential order: entry scripts and doing scripts.

Entry scripts have been found to focus on arrangements. Arrangements are defined as "the knowledge structures that individuals have about the contacts, relationships, resources, and assets necessary to economic relationships (Smith, Mitchell & Mitchell, 2009, p. 812). Linked specifically to entrepreneurship, arrangement scripts have been identified that focus on having the contacts, relationships, resources and assets necessary to form a new venture (Mitchell et al., 2014).

Doing scripts are broken down into two specific kinds of scripts – *willingness* scripts and *ability* scripts. Willingness scripts are, "knowledge structures that underlie receptivity to the idea of engaging in an economic [or other] relationship (Smith et al., 2009, p. 812). In entrepreneurship, such scripts have been identified for actions such as opportunity-seeking, commitment tolerance, and venture opportunity pursuit (Mitchell et al., 2014). Ability scripts are the knowledge structures that individuals have about the capabilities, skills, knowledge, norms and attitudes to carry out an action (Mitchell

et al., 2002). Entrepreneurs have a number of ability scripts associated with starting and growing their ventures (Mitchell et al., 2014).

The social information processing perspective argues that cognition does not happen in a vacuum. It takes place in a person-environment interaction that shapes how we think and process information about ourselves and about others, and also how we act (Clancy, 2009). Thus, cognition is context-sensitive, including both the contexts of starting and growing a new venture (Baron, 1998; Busenitz & Lau, 1996), in addition to the context of communicating and socially interacting with others (Smith & Conrey, 2009). Thus, it is plausible that how founders think about and behave with their offline networks might be very different from how they do these same things with their networks online.

Cognitive knowledge structures relating to arrangements, willingness, and ability can inform our understanding of this study's finding that most founders are not accessing important resources available to them through their online social networks. The present study also revealed an inter-related series of beliefs regarding the usefulness of SNSs: that value/resources were present in their SNSs; that this value could be extracted through their Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts, among others; and, that they were technically capable of extracting this value. Consequently, the reasons for founders' inactions on SNSs point towards a cognitive rather than a physical or technical explanation. As discussed below, founder cognitive entry and doing scripts may help to explain the expressed behaviour of these entrepreneurs.

Turning first to entry scripts, founders in this study indicated they were well aware that they had ample contacts in their online networks who could potentially furnish the advice, emotional support, advocacy and material resources needed to build and support their ventures. In fact, founders mentioned that, if needed, they would extract these resources from network contacts on a face-to-face basis. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that the online cognitive *arrangement* entry script for venture-related network resource extraction was enabled for the present study's founders.

In terms of the doing script of *ability*, none of the founders indicated that knowledge, skills, or technical competency impeded garnering resources from their SNSs. Thus, the online cognitive ability script also appears enabled for this study's founders.

The same, however, was not observed for the doing script of *willingness*. Most founders indicated that they were very hesitant to ask their SNS contacts for substantive advice, emotional support, advocacy, or material resources. Most founders voiced this concern by stating either directly or indirectly that they were very concerned that to do so in the one-to-many environment of SNSs could have potentially harmful repercussions on their ventures. Founder Boris's comment states this succinctly: *"What I want to do for the business presence [on SNS] is to emphasize the positive and deal with the negative or downside one-on-one with people who can help me [offline]."*

Founders' concerns can be summarized as relating to a fear of losing support, losing confidence, losing reputation, and losing legitimacy. These kinds of concerns relate to social judgment. Social judgment assessment is defined as the action of making decisions about, or rendering opinions of, the cognitive legitimacy, sociopolitical legitimacy, reputation, and status of another (Bitektine, 2011). Users make legitimacy, reputation and self-image assessments of others on SNSs and concern for these assessments can affect networking behaviours (Tong et al., 2008; Walther & Park, 2002). Cognitive theory may offer a possible explanation for the observed behaviour that generally founders extract few non-information resources from their SNSs relative to what is potentially available. Founders' comments suggest many are very concerned that an SNS-based resource request may result in negative social judgments from their 500+ network contacts, which could, in turn, damage their ventures. This perceived risk may effect how founders think and then behave.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the SNS affordances of signaling, viewability, searchability, and transversability, among others, make SNSs a unique context for extracting network resources. These capabilities make founders' online requests highly visible and easily accessible to known and unknown others. Findings in the present study suggest that these capabilities may have made resource requesting on SNSs seem a very risky prospect for founders. Given that "judgments stimulate decisions that trigger action" (Woods, Williams & Dover, 2017, p. 110), founders may well perceive the social judgment risk to their ventures of one-to-many or one-to-one resource requests online as prohibitive.

When networking to access resources, it appears that a founder's willingness cognitions are enacted differently in the online context. While *arrangements* are in

place and *ability* is present, the cognitive structure of *willingness* appears to hold many founders back from asking for advice, emotional support, advocacy, and material resources on SNSs. It may be that only requests with low perceived social judgment risk have the capacity to satisfy the "willingness" threshold. This would explain why all founders readily expressed that they were actively extracting information resources from their SNSs. The vast majority of simple information requests would have low perceived social judgment risk. This would also explain why founders who were extracting material resources were focused on requests related to new hires or securing new facilities. These types of requests are likely to position their companies in a positive light, conveying growth and success.

While founders conveyed their reticence to extract resources from SNSs, they repeatedly expressed their willingness to do so with their networks offline. Asking for advice, emotional support, advocacy, or material resources face-to-face and one-to-one substantially lowers the social judgment risk compared to broadcasting a Facebook or Twitter request to hundreds of 'friends' or 'followers' where reactions are unobservable. One-to-one messaging on SNSs also carries some inherent risk for a founder since a message sent to one person can be copied or edited and sent to unintended others, either deliberately or accidentally.

A number of studies have identified that entrepreneurial cognition is influenced by cultural values, social context, and personal variables (e.g., Busenitz & Lau, 1996; Mitchell et al., 2002). Subsequent research has upheld that entrepreneurs' cognitions are impacted by person-in-situation and that social context informs arrangement scripts (Mitchell et al., 2011). Consistent with this research but contributing to a new understanding of networking, the present study's findings suggest that entrepreneurs think differently when they are networking online compared to face-to-face. This conclusion answers the call by Pryor et al. (2016) to consider how entrepreneurial cognitions might affect entrepreneurs' networks.

This study's findings, the foregoing discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following propositions:

P1: Willingness cognitions influence the network resource outcomes of founders in the online network context.

P2: Most founders extract resource outcomes from their SNSs only if they perceive the social judgment risk to their ventures of doing so to be low.

By breaking down the cognitive willingness script even further, cognitive theory can shed additional light on founder's networking actions on SNSs. Cognitive structures like willingness comprise knowledge and process (Smith et al., 2009). Knowledge is the information that is learned from process. These cognitive processes comprise two mechanisms: cognitive heuristics and cognitive biases. Cognitive heuristics are "specific informal rules of thumb or intuitive guidelines that lead to quick and usually acceptable solutions to problems" (Busenitz & Lau, 1996, p. 29). The heuristic process is a mechanism for simplifying human judgments and making them feasible under conditions that are situationally, motivationally, or cognitively suboptimal (Topolinski & Strack, 2015, p. 825). These heuristics reduce the effort needed for information processing or performing a task (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011; Shah & Oppenheimer, 2008), and can vary by context (Cossette, 2014). Entrepreneurs have been noted to use a wide variety of cognitive heuristics in starting and growing their ventures, including in decision-making (Alvarez & Busenitz, 2001), assessing opportunity (Bryant, 2007), and the start-up decision (Townsend, Busenitz & Arthurs, 2010; see also Zhang & Cueto, 2015, for a comprehensive review).

In contrast, cognitive biases are "subjective or pre-disposed opinions that emanate from specific heuristics" (Busenitz & Lau, 1996, p. 29). In his seminal work, Baron (1998) identified six conditions that contribute uniquely to an entrepreneur's reliance on cognitive biases: information overload, high uncertainty, high novelty, strong emotions, high time pressure, and fatigue. These conditions persist for entrepreneurs in their networking efforts and specifically in the context of their SNS use, where unique affordances make their networking behaviour highly visible. While there is ongoing debate concerning the negative influence of biases, many scholars now concede that they can also enhance outcomes (Zhang, 2015). A number of cognitive biases have been mapped for entrepreneurs including: overconfidence bias (e.g., Arend et al, 2016; DeCarolis & Saparito, 2006; Tipu & Arain, 2011), optimism bias (e.g., Landier & Thesmar, 2009), confirmation bias (Hmieleski & Baron, 2009), counterfactual thinking bias (Gaglio, 2004), and the law of small numbers bias (Buzenitz & Barney, 1997). Taken together, cognitive heuristics and cognitive biases

comprise simplifying strategies that are "efficient mechanisms for making decisions, particularly in uncertain environments" (Busenitz & Lau 1996, p. 29). These mechanisms can also have emotional components (Topolinski & Strack, 2015), often called "hot" cognitions - including fear of social failure (Foo, Murnieks & Chan, 2014).

As outlined in Chapter 2, networks are important opportunity structures for entrepreneurs (Brüderl and Priesendörfer, 1998). It follows that founders would be engaged in a number of opportunity cognitions related to their use of networks and specifically, their network resource outcomes. By viewing the construct of cognitive "willingness" to tap network resources through the cognitive heuristic and cognitive bias lens, some interesting insights arise. To varying extents, most founders in this study described actively using SNSs to build and manage their network connections of strong and weak ties. Founders also clearly identified that the resources available through their SNSs were of value to them because they sought these same resources face-to-face. All founders were choosing to spend some time on SNSs despite many competing demands for this time. Given this inherent time pressure, it would be inefficient for founders to undertake a comprehensive determination about whether and how to engage on SNSs each time the opportunity to "post", "tweet", "friend", or "connect" arose. Consistent with this, founders did not express undertaking such methodical cognitive processes. To undertake a more streamlined networking process, founders likely enact many cognitive shortcuts, or heuristics.

This study's findings suggest that one cognitive heuristic or intuitive guideline that founders may enact is, "Spend time on SNSs because they are helpful to my venture." Additionally, norm-following can be a reinforcing heuristic (Tanner & Medin, 2004). This suggests that the more founders use SNSs, the more other founders feel compelled to join in. This heuristic may prompt founders to spend time on their online networks and manage one or more SNS accounts and platforms.

However, most founders also revealed that they perceived SNSs to be high-risk environments, virtual places where one wrong move such as an ill-placed resource request could negatively impact their business. Founders' comments suggest that this has led many to be wary of the risks of asking for help or resources on SNSs, and to formulate the subjective opinion that substantive resources for their venture are best attained through face-to-face network connections and interactions. Substantive resources are defined as resources that are perceived by the founder to be important,

meaningful, or considerable for the success of their venture. It appears a *cognitive social judgment bias* inhibits most entrepreneurs from accessing the latent value in their SNS connections, except in terms of information. Further research is warranted to determine if this bias is a "hot" cognition (Foo et al., 2014).

While this is a very simple bias, research shows that the use of one-reason cognitions are common (Brighton & Todd, 2009). Confounding this observed proclivity, research in psychology suggests that this may be a self-perpetuating bias since the more others see this behaviour, the more likely they are to follow suit (Leddo & Abelson, 1986; Tanner & Medin, 2004). Adding to this, research suggests that biases can be learned through social processes such as imitation (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011). Taken together, this line of argumentation suggests that a social process feedback loop may be directing founders' SNS networking behaviour as depicted in Figure 9, below.

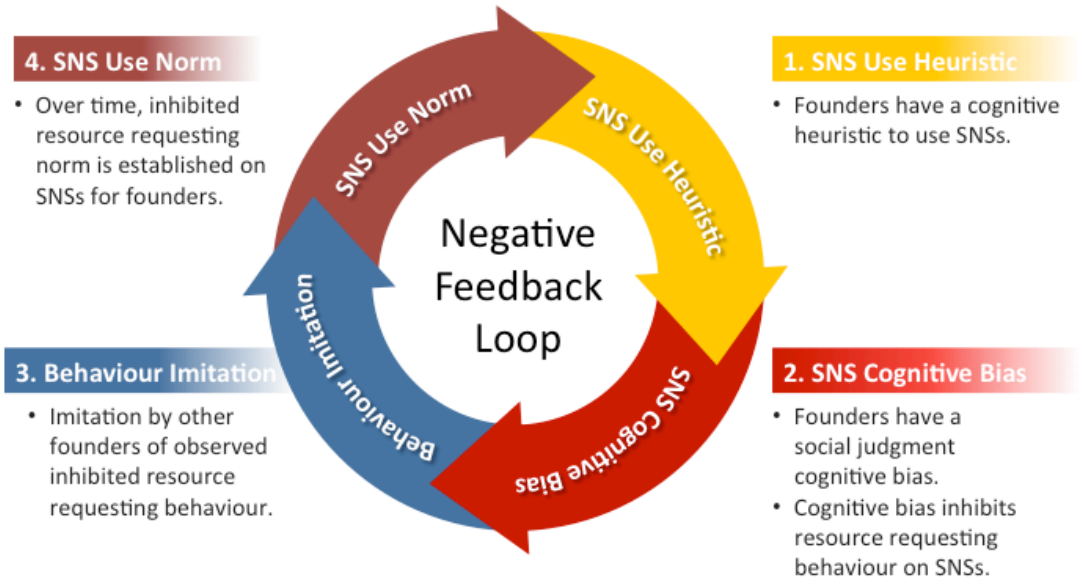
If such a feedback loop is in place on SNSs as argued, then it makes the cognitive social judgment bias a reinforcing and pervasive impediment to a founder's resource extraction networking behaviour online.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following propositions:

P3: Many founders possess a *cognitive social judgment bias* that precludes them from seeking substantive advice, emotional support, advocacy, and material resource outcomes through their SNSs.

P4: Through imitation and subsequent norm establishment, a founder's *cognitive social judgment bias* is reinforced on SNSs.

Figure 10: Reinforcing Negative Feedback Loop for Resource Requesting on SNSs



There was also some suggestion in this study's findings that cognitive social judgment bias inhibits founders from building stronger ties by limiting emotional support through SNSs. An interesting area for future study would be to determine whether heightened social judgment concerns by founders impedes their ability to evolve weak ties into strong ties on SNSs.

7.2.2 Discussion of the Research Findings for RQ2

The second research question underpinning this study is:

RQ2: *To what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviours on social network sites?*

As described in Chapter 2, extant network theory in entrepreneurship has been silent on the impact that social identity might have on founders' networks. This study's findings suggest that social identity influences founders' networks in terms of both networking behaviour and networking outcomes. Below, each is considered in turn.

The present study found evidence that social identity exerts an influence by manifesting differences in the networking behaviours of entrepreneurs based on

differences in their purposive, community-connection, and authenticity networking foci. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) identified that social identity may influence the strategic decisions of entrepreneurs, and networking is understood as enacted strategy (Jack, et al., 2008). As outlined in Chapter 4, however, our social identity influences our actions only when it is considered salient to the behaviour, activity, and/or context in which we are engaged. As discussed above, founders are aware that there is social judgment risk associated with engaging with their networks online. Founders' comments revealed that they are very aware that SNSs are a highly visible, one-to-many means of communicating with others that involves risks. Given these uncertain conditions and the importance of networking to entrepreneurs, it is not surprising that the findings of this study reveal that social identity is, in fact, salient for founders networking on SNSs. This suggests that their founder social identities influence how founders behave networking online.

Three distinct themes of networking action were uncovered in the analysis of founders' networking behaviours and social identities as discussed in Section 6.5 of Chapter 6: purposive focus, community-connection focus, and authenticity focus. Pattern differences in how darwinians, communitarians, and missionaries approach networking online suggest they have propensities to approach networking differently based on SNS networking styles: instrumental, collaborative and veritable. Much like entrepreneurs are found to have preferred and habitual cognitive style differences for organizing and processing information and making decisions (e.g., Kickul, Gundry, Barbosa, & Whitcanack, 2009), or cognitive explanatory style differences that impact their optimism (Kasouf, Morrish, & Miles, 2015), this study's findings suggest that darwinian, communitarian, and missionary founders have cognitive style differences related to networking. *Cognitive style* is defined as "a characteristic and self-consistent mode of intellectual and perceptual functioning" (Colman, 2015, "cognitive style"). While Vissa (2012) discusses network style, a form of cognitive style, in terms of propensity to engage in network broadening or deepening behaviour, network style may also relate to differences in overarching preferred or habitual approaches to networking actions on SNSs. Each of the distinct networking styles uncovered in this study are discussed below.

Instrumental Networking Style: As noted in the findings presented in Chapter 6, there were observed differences in darwinian founders' SNS networking behaviour compared to other social identity types. Darwinians mentioned networking on SNSs

with a more purposive orientation. The pure darwinians used words like "strategic" and "calculated" when describing their networking behaviour. They more often set clear objectives in their online networking and their choice of language to describe how they engage online reflects a strong goal-oriented approach. Darwinian hybrids also convey a purposive approach to network structure, maintenance, and value extraction, though often not with such extreme language. This *instrumental networking style* is defined as a founder's overarching cognitive focus on purposive motivations, calculated actions, a gain orientation, and a transaction mindset. It is aimed at leveraging the key affordances of SNSs, such as searchability and shareability, to maximum benefit of their ventures. The focus of an instrumental networking style is on developing a competitive advantage and leveraging a positive return-on-investment for time spent on SNSs. Social network theory argues that entrepreneurs are able to change and leverage their networks to firm advantage (Aldrich & Simmer, 1986; Neergaard, 2005). Findings of the present study suggest that on SNSs, this is more likely to be true of darwinian founders exhibiting an instrumental networking style.

In addition, darwinians (pure and dominant) appear more focused on a particular kind of networking behaviour. Specifically, darwinians' comments suggested they were more purposive than other founders in their network broadening behaviour. As outlined in Chapter 2, network broadening behaviour includes two specific actions: reaching out to new contacts, and establishing interpersonal knowledge of them (Vissa, 2012). Darwinians' strategic pursuit of network connections seems to set them apart from other social identity types. They appear more purposive and strategic about using the affordances of SNSs to find contacts whom they believe could benefit their ventures, reaching out to them through SNSs, and establishing interpersonal knowledge of them. They see forming these calculative and opportunistic ties as a key benefit of SNSs and a core networking behavior. This action is consistent with adding weak ties into their SNSs networks. It is reasonable to suggest that these ties are weak because most darwinians did not convey in their depth interviews a commitment to emotional intensity, intimacy, mutual confiding, or time investment in individual relationships all of which are hallmarks of strong ties (Granovetter, 1973). Consequently, founders with an instrumental networking style are expected to have weaker, more shallowly embedded ties than those with other networking styles.

Specifically, founders adopting an instrumental networking style, may be more likely to have networks comprising more of what Hite (2003) describes as competency

ties (economic basis), hollow ties (resource extraction), or functional ties (economic and resource extraction basis) as all of these have an instrumental purpose. Ironically, despite purposefully building these calculative ties, darwinians seem to access primarily information resources from their SNSs. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine to what extent darwinians might pursue a face-to-face meeting with a calculated, weak tie formed online to extract value offline, but this would be an interesting avenue for future research.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following propositions:

P5: Founders adopting an instrumental networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to engage in calculated network broadening behaviour.

P6: Founders adopting an instrumental networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have higher competency, hollow, and functional embedded ties as network outcomes on SNSs.

The networking style and networking action differences described above could also be expected to lead to network structure differences. In particular, darwinians adopting an instrumental networking style could be expected to have larger networks of weak ties compared to other social identity types who are less purposive in their network broadening actions online.[26] Darwinians' SNSs could also be expected to comprise more calculative ties. These are ties possessing resources that are strategically valuable to darwinians' ventures; such resources are most often found in heterogeneous weak ties (Granovetter, 1975).

[26] While a crude assessment of founders' network size was undertaken in this study, it was beyond the scope of this study to compare size differences while controlling for industry, age of firm, scope of operation, etc. This would be necessary to accurately assess *relative* network size between founder social identity types. The specific number of strong and weak tie nodes was also not assessed. This would be an interesting avenue for future research.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following proposition:

P7: Founders adopting an instrumental networking style on SNSs are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have as a network outcome large networks of weak ties.

Collaborative Networking Style: As outlined in the Chapter 6 findings, this study also found notable differences in many communitarians' SNS networking behaviour compared to other social identity types. Most communitarian and communitarian-hybrid founders did not use words like "calculated" or "strategic" to describe their networking behaviour. Unlike darwinian and missionary founders, these entrepreneurs consistently used words like "community", "giving back", and "supporting" instead. Communitarians described being focused on the interpersonal connectivity of their online network, and referred to their SNSs as a community. These founders appeared much more aware of their place within a larger community, and the need to act based on an established set of norms within that community. They described not being prepared to activate their network connections without also giving back. They were also more likely to describe the importance of tie maintenance and the value of being a "good community member". These behaviours are consistent with an emphasis on network deepening behaviour. Vissa (2012) breaks this behaviour down into time-based interaction pacing, network preserving, and relational embedding. This observed *collaborative networking style* is defined as a founders' overarching cognitive focus on integrative motivations, collective actions, relational orientation, and a supportive mindset. It is aimed at leveraging the affordances of SNSs, such as scalability and social interactivity to the mutual benefit of their community and their venture. As the study's findings reveal, communitarians appear to be much more engaged in these networking behaviours than darwinians or missionaries.

Findings also revealed that founders enacting a collaborative networking style are more consistent in their networking efforts to strengthen tie relationships by getting to know connections better, offering help in some way, connecting more deeply, and consciously trying to "stay in touch". These actions expand the dimensions of their

relationships (Hite, 2005). These behaviours are consistent with building weak ties into stronger ties, with maintaining ties, and with fostering multi-dimensional ties. Reflecting their commitment to tie maintenance, tie deepening, and embedding reciprocity through giving more than they get on SNSs, founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely to have more of what Hite (2003) refers to as personal ties (inter-personal exchange), isolated ties (personal and economic), latent ties (personal and resource extraction), and full ties (personal, economic and resource extraction) in their networks. Given that research suggests that full ties are the most valuable to entrepreneurs (Hite, 2003), these founders may be more effective in garnering resources from their network connections, if they choose to do so. This premise is also supported by research that suggests that there is a link between the amount of time entrepreneurs spend with their networks and their firm's success (Chunyan, 2005; Duchesneau & Gartner, 1990). There was some supporting evidence in this study's preliminary findings that founders with a collaborative networking style spend more time networking on SNSs than other style-types.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following propositions:

P8: Founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to engage in network deepening behaviour on SNSs.

P9: Founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have higher personal, isolated, latent, and full embedded ties as a network outcome on SNSs.

Within CMC, it has been established that SNS platforms have distinct use norms (Comunello, Mulargia & Lorenza, 2016). While many founders described being aware of the norms associated with different SNS platforms, communitarian (pure and dominant) founders appeared more sensitive to these implicit rules. Pure darwinians described not being concerned with breaking an established platform norm if it helped

them to accomplish a particular goal. Illustrating this distinction, one pure darwinian was reprimanded by all three SNS platforms for being too aggressive in forming new ties but he continued to pursue this strategy. Most missionary founders seemed less concerned with the norms of the platform and more concerned with their authentic presentation of self. In contrast, many communitarians conveyed that they were much more concerned with breaking an established platform norm, and took care to ensure that they were playing within the implicit rules of engagement for the platform. Communitarians with a collaborative networking style appeared to undertake conservative networking actions in an effort to stay within established norms. This is consistent with their self-definition locus towards "known others". Specifically, these founders conveyed being careful to post information that would have high perceived value to, and at a pace that was respectful of, their online communities. Given the above, there is evidence to suggest that founder social identity may impact norm compliance on SNSs, with communitarians being the most compliant. It is also likely that this networking behaviour aligns with adopting a collaborative networking style.

Highlighting another difference, darwinians and communitarians generally assessed that they were "giving more" than they got back on their SNSs, but this study found different motivations for doing so. Darwinians generally assessed that they were "giving more" as a strategic decision to meet a specific purpose. In contrast, communitarians enacting a collaborative networking style stated that they were giving more because it was both consistent with their community connection focus and important for keeping the network healthy. Reciprocity is a key tenant of social exchange theory, and along with trust, is a key driver of exchange on networks (Molm, 2010). The SNS affordance of visibility makes giving behaviour more noticeable in networks online than offline. For communitarians, the norm of reciprocity on SNSs was a key driver in their giving behaviour. Many communitarians mentioned that they would continue to give on their SNSs even if they did not receive any direct, short-term benefits. Research suggests that such actions build norms of reciprocity that, in turn, facilitate value extraction (Molm, 2010). Because founders adopting a collaborative networking style give more, they likely accrue greater intended reciprocity in their networks, resulting in high levels of embedded reciprocity. As a result, they are likely to be more effective at extracting value from their SNSs, compared to other social identity-types. For example, darwinians with an instrumental networking style generally reported being more calculated in their reciprocity actions and mindful of the

necessary return on investment for both their time and the value given. This evidence suggests that networking style impacts reciprocity behaviour on SNSs.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following proposition:

P10: Founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have as a network outcome high levels of embedded reciprocity on SNSs.

Perhaps not surprising given their apparent commitment to their online network of ties, a notable finding of the study is that communitarians spent the most time on their SNSs (average of 4.5 hours/week), compared to darwinians (average 2 hours/week) and missionaries (2.3 hours/week).[27] That communitarians in this study spent almost twice as much time on SNSs is a compelling finding since this time commitment online did not translate into greater resource extraction. Darwinians appear to engage on SNSs with purpose: they do not linger. They articulated that they are sensitive to the return on investment for time spent on SNSs, and that this concern modified their behaviour. Communitarians did not discuss their investment in time on SNSs in this calculated manner. They appeared to linger on SNSs to build community and to be good network participants, aware of, and sensitive to, the needs of others and norms for engagement. Consistent with this analysis, communitarians were found to spend most of their time networking on Facebook. Facebook offers more opportunity than Twitter, with its character limit, and LinkedIn, with its business-focused norms, to connect across personal, social, and economic dimensions. Offline, founders' networks are highly personalized since there are few constraints on their structure and content. Online, different SNS platforms offer different parameters, interfaces, and algorithms that constrain both network structure and networking processes (Comunello, Mulargia & Lorenza, 2016). Current network theory in entrepreneurship does not consider the implication of these platform differences. Given the above, it is likely that networking style may impact a founder's choice of SNS platform. Future research could consider

[27] Note that Darwinian hybrid Founder Kora was removed in determining this average since she is an outlier on time spent on SNSs. She characterized herself as "addicted" to Twitter.

whether certain SNS platforms offer a better fit for certain networking styles. Could certain social identity-types with aligned networking styles, gravitate towards particular SNS platforms? Constrained by the functionality of their platform choice, it is possible that founders' networks and networking processes may become even more distinct from one another. This would be an interesting line of inquiry for a future study.

Veritable Networking Style: While missionary social identity founders did not generally distinguish themselves in the study's findings as being instrumental or collaborative in their networking style, they did stand out on one dimension. Missionaries were found to be distinct in their concern for the authenticity with which they engaged online. Most missionary and related hybrid founders mentioned that they were particularly concerned that they appear to be true to their offline personas when engaged online; with no distinction between their front stage and back stage faces (Goffman,1959). They stated that they made a concerted effort to present their real selves when engaged on SNSs and across platforms. This particular concern for self-presentation alignment was not raised by other identity-types. Missionaries were much more likely to mention words such as "transparency", "nothing to hide", and "true self" when discussing their SNS activities, compared to other founders. This *veritable networking style* is defined as a founders' overarching cognitive focus on authenticity motivations, alignment actions, a truthful self-presentation orientation, and a reflective mindset. It is aimed at using the affordances of SNSs such as signaling, reviewability, and interoperability to convey an online representation of self and their venture that is honest, true and robust, and aligned with their offline self. Noteworthy is that this authenticity focus was not found to relate to the extent to which the founder had a high or low need for personal privacy. Missionaries who rated themselves as having a high need for personal privacy still described a high authenticity orientation. The reason that this might be the case is unclear but a possible explanation may be their perceived risk in appearing misaligned with their public mission, as discussed below. Future research into the psychological characteristics of missionary founders may also help to explain this finding.

Most missionary founders in this study also described making clear distinctions between their personal and business-related SNSs. However, with both their personal and venture-related SNSs, missionary founders adopted a veritable networking style. While it was beyond the scope of this study to confirm, it may be that missionary founders see themselves as the figurehead for their cause-focused ventures. As such, they are aware that anything they "post", "tweet", or "pin" must be consistent with their overall mission or it could jeopardize their professional legitimacy, and their venture's goodwill. Their veritable style becomes an effective strategy to ensure that their actions and attitudes are, and are perceived to be, transparent and aligned to the "cause." However, a possible consequence of this veritable networking style may be that missionary founders consciously minimize their posting activities to help ensure that they don't inadvertently misstep. This may help explain why their reported time spent on SNSs is much lower than for communitarians.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following proposition:

P11: Founders adopting a veritable networking style minimize their time spent on SNSs in order to lower the chances of making an inauthentic post to their online networks.

Missionaries' propensities to not mix personal and professional networks may also have a distinct structural implication. Founders adopting a veritable networking style are likely to have networks with shallow tie embeddedness because the tie content is not multi-dimensional (Hite and Hesterly, 2001). If founders adopting a veritable networking style are aligning social information to personal networks and economic information to business networks, then their personal networks could be expected to be high in personal tie and latent tie types, while their professional networks would be high in competency and functional ties.

This study's findings, the above discussion, and supporting empirical evidence lead to the following proposition:

P12: Founders adopting a veritable networking style are more likely than founders adopting a different networking style to have personal networks high in personal and latent ties, and professional networks high in competency and functional ties as a network outcome.

Findings from this study also suggest that there may be differences in how missionaries manage their networks. Evidence suggests that it is possible that founders adopting a veritable networking style have a greater overlap between their online and offline networks since there is no risk in agreeing to meet someone for the first time face-to-face when you have been totally authentic networking online. Likewise, inviting someone to join your online network poses no risk if they will not find anything on your SNS incongruous with your self-presentation offline. They may be more aware given their alignment to "impersonal others" that "people can't self-servingly present themselves in misleading ways online without facing social ramifications" (DeAndrea & Walther, 2011, p. 819).

Since founders adopting a veritable networking style appear more conscious of being aligned in their self-presentation efforts than other founder types, they may also be more likely to create distinct online networks for close friends versus business contacts, or for weak ties versus strong ties in an effort to avoid posting material that is not appropriate for a given audience. The extent to which this might manifest with these founders building smaller, curated networks[28] where it is easier to manage their veritable networking style is not known. Whether they may have fewer full embedded ties (ties that combine personal and business content) in such curated networks is also not known. While exploring these differences is beyond the scope of this study, exploring these relationships does represent a compelling future direction for research.

[28] This size difference will need to be measured relative to potential size not in absolute numbers of connections.

7.3 Theory Implications of the Research Findings

7.3.1 Implications for Theory of the RQ1 Research Findings

Most founders conveyed extracting primarily information resources from their networking actions on SNSs. Combining their possible SNS-related cognitive heuristic and cognitive bias, many entrepreneurs may possess a simplifying strategy concerning their SNS networking behaviour of, "Use SNSs to build and manage my network and to extract information but not to extract substantive advice, emotional support, advocacy or material resource value where there is a possible risk of negative social judgment." This then becomes a "fast and frugal" shortcut (Zhang & Cueto, 2015) for founders to decide how to behave on their SNSs and what and not to post to their Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn networks, amongst others. Identifying this possible cognitive shortcut is a contribution of this study as no other cognitive simplifying strategies for networking have been presented in the entrepreneurship literature.

While it has been established that entrepreneurs' cognitions can affect their behaviour (Bird 1988, 1992) and are context specific (Koellinger, Minniti & Schade, 2007), this study makes a contribution by uncovering that this applies in particular to networking. Whereas previous research has determined that entrepreneurs seek substantive advice, emotional support, advocacy, and material resources from their networks offline, this study found they are reluctant to do so online. This study provides early evidence that entrepreneurs' networking outcomes are different face-to-face compared to online.

The present study's findings also suggest that simply drawing on current offline network theory and applying it to the online context could result in significant oversimplification. For example, an existing network assumption is that whether an entrepreneur utilizes her network to obtain valuable resources depends on her firm's existing resources (input state), and the availability of these resources on the open market (input state) (Witt et al. 2008 p .954). However, cognitive willingness may also exert a powerful, and as yet unexplored, force on this process.

Another assumption echoed in many previous studies is that large networks are better for entrepreneurs because they contain more resources, with the implication that these resources are then readily tapped. De Carolis et al., (2009), for example, state "our research provides further support to the common perception that entrepreneurs

with many contacts and greater accumulated resources and support from these contacts are better able to launch new ventures" (p. 539). In the online context, a presumed direct link between network size and founders' meaningful access to resources may be a gross oversimplification. This study's findings indicate that a cognitive social judgment bias may impede founders' actions to access network resources, at least online.

The propositions presented here also suggest a re-examination of the "*network success hypothesis*" that asserts "entrepreneurs with larger and more diverse networks are expected to get more support from their network" (Witt, 2008, p. 956). This study's findings suggest that in the online context, this assertion does not hold. Regardless of the size or diversity of her network, the present study's findings suggest that a founder will not seek resources where she deems the negative social judgment consequences to be too high.

The propositions presented here also suggest a re-examination of the value of brokering structural holes online. Current network theory (Burt, 2005) suggests that founders able to broker across different groups reap substantial resources for building their ventures. The findings of this study suggest this assertion may need to be qualified. In this study, most founders were using SNSs simply to gather information. Some, however, were using SNSs to find and connect to strangers, effectively brokering across structural holes, to access information. But with few exceptions (new hires and facilities), most founders were extracting limited additional resources from these connections. They did not feel comfortable in seeking out substantial advice, advocacy, or material resources from these connections online. This effectively limits the value of these brokered ties, something that has not been discussed in the literature. Existing assessments of founders' access to resources based simply on their brokered network positions could grossly overestimate the actual value of their online networks to their ventures. This finding highlights the potential risk of assuming that structural network advantages exist online in the same way they have been shown to exist offline. To what extent founders might migrate their online connections offline to decrease the perceived social judgment risk of resource requests remains unknown but is an interesting area for future study.

Finally, a key assumption in network theory is that differential network positioning has an important impact on resource flows (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003).

However, positioning (a structural characteristic) may have less explanatory power than previously thought if willingness (a cognitive characteristic) is also considered. A founder may have a strategically advantageous position in a network but if she is not willing to access the resources that that position gives her, then resources will not flow as anticipated. This study makes a significant contribution by revealing a moderating mechanism to founders' access to their network resources; social judgment is uncovered as an explanatory cognitive bias mechanism. This finding also answers the call among cognitive researchers in entrepreneurship to "look at the factors explaining why a specific heuristic is adopted and why a specific bias is present" (Cossette, 2015, p. 491; Grégorie, Corbett, & McMullen, 2010).

Table 24: Summary of Propositions arising from Research Question 1

Proposition	
P1	Differential willingness cognitions in the online and offline contexts influence the resources garnered by founders from their networks.
P2	Willingness cognitions influence the network resource outcomes of founders in the online network context.
P3	Most founders extract resource outcomes from their SNSs only if they perceive the social judgment risk to their ventures of doing so to be low.
P4	Through imitation and subsequent norm establishment, a founders' *cognitive social judgment bias* is reinforced on SNSs.

The preceding discussion and the four propositions summarized in Table 24 above address the extent to which and how founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes are found to differ in the online context. These can also be layered together into a new conceptual model (see Model 1, below). This model offers a number of contributions to the existing entrepreneurship literature and networking theory. These contributions can be summarized as:

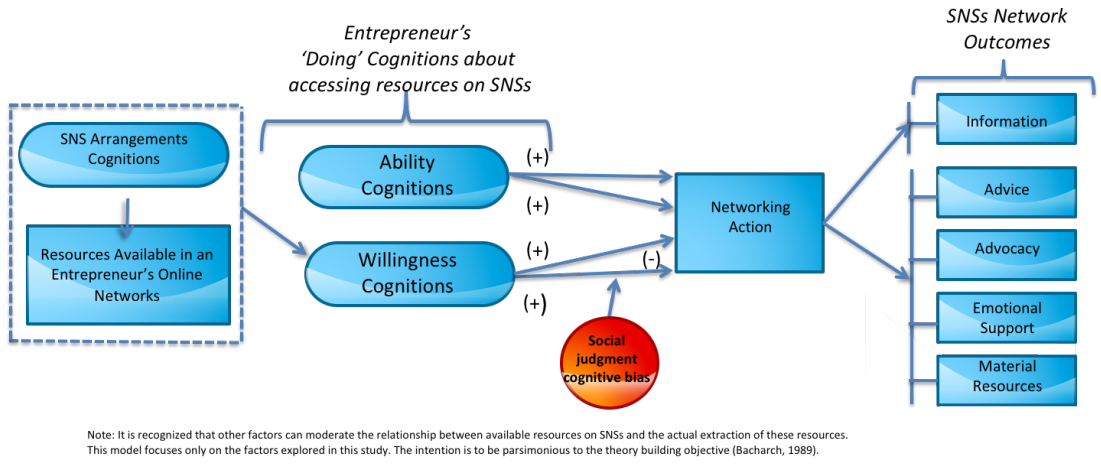
1. Existing network theory in entrepreneurship assumes that there is a direct relationship between a founder's network connections and the resources available to her through these connections. Model 1 suggests how cognitive willingness may moderate this relationship.

2. A founder's cognitive bias to SNS use may moderate her networking behaviour online. Founders may be much less likely to seek substantial advice, emotional support, advocacy, and material resource outcomes from their networks online than current network theory would predict. This calls into question the "network success hypothesis".

3. The source of this cognitive bias is the social judgment risk a founder perceives from seeking resources online. Thus, a specific mechanism for "how it works" has been identified.

4. Founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes may be substantially different online, and the contexts should be considered as distinct.

Model 1: The Impact of Cognitions and Social Judgment Bias on Networking and Network Outcomes by Entrepreneurs



Note: It is recognized that other factors can moderate the relationship between available resources on SNSs and the actual extraction of these resources. This model focuses only on the factors explored in this study. The intention is to be parsimonious to the theory building objective (Bacharch, 1989).

7.3.2 Implications for Theory of the RQ2 Research Findings

The discussion above strongly supports the social-shaping perspective in the use of computer-mediated communications. There is strong evidence that a founder's self concept driven by a salient social identity, likely shapes how she uses the affordances of SNSs and engages in network broadening and network deepening behaviours online.

These behaviours, in turn, may result in significant differences in the structure of founders' networks, by identity type. Thus, this study makes an important contribution to network theory and the entrepreneurship literature by identifying eight propositions, summarized in Table 25 below, that outline to what extent and how social identity likely influences founders' networks and networking on their SNSs.

Table 25: Summary of Propositions arising from Research Question 2

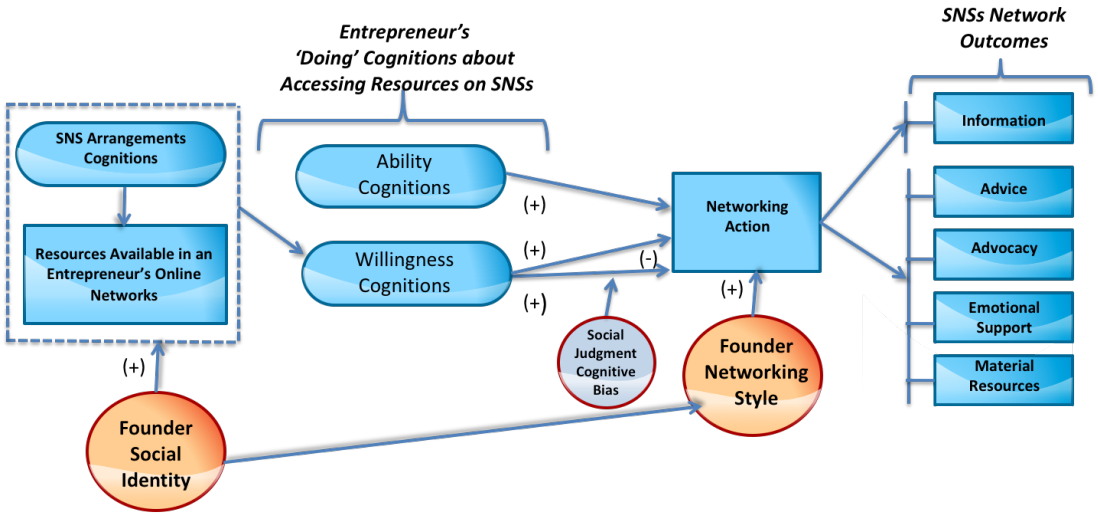
Proposition	
P5	Founders adopting an instrumental networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to engage in calculated network broadening behaviour on SNSs.
P6	Founders adopting an instrumental networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have higher competency, hollow and functional embedded ties as network outcomes on SNSs.
P7	Founders adopting an instrumental networking style on SNSs are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have as a network outcome large networks of weak ties.
P8	Founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to engage in network deepening behaviour on SNSs.
P9	Founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have higher personal, isolated, latent, and full embedded ties as a network outcome on SNSs.
P10	Founders adopting a collaborative networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have as a network outcome high levels of embedded reciprocity on SNSs.
P11	Founders adopting a veritable networking style minimize their time spent on SNSs in order to lower the chances of making an inauthentic post to their online networks.
P12	Founders adopting a veritable networking style are more likely than founders adopting other networking styles to have personal networks high in personal and latent ties and professional networks high in competency and functional ties as a network outcome.

These theoretical propositions also have implications for Conceptual Model 1 presented above. The three founder networking styles of instrumental, collaborative, and veritable identified in this study could affect the cognitions of founders for acquiring network resources online. Busenitz and Lau (1996) identified that

entrepreneurial cognition is influenced by personal variables. Personal variables inform scripts (Mitchell et al., 2000). As an aspect of self-concept, social identity is a personal variable. The findings of this study indicate that darwinian, communitarian, and missionary founders have differences impacting their networking actions. These differences concern their propensity to purposively seek out new contacts, to comply with SNS platform norms, to give more than they get, and to convey different images online, among others. It is likely that these cognition differences influence the extent to which and how founders access network resources online.

Evidence from the present study also suggests that social identity may impact the structure, such as size, and the relational content, such as tie strength and embeddedness, of founders' networks. Such differences likely impact the arrangement cognitions for founders: specifically impacting the extent to which resources are available in founders' networks to access. This study's findings suggest that social identity may be an important antecedent variable or predictor of cognitive willingness and arrangement scripts in the relationship between resources available in entrepreneurs' online networks and the substantive network resources they actually extract. In an augmented Model 1 below, the personal variable of social identity as an antecedent to founder cognitions, and founder networking style as an influence on networking action are added. The addition of these variables is an important contribution of this study, and suggests that social identity is an individual-level difference that impacts entrepreneurs' networking actions, at least online. This offers a refined understanding of network theory by highlighting that network broadening and deepening actions are not homogeneous across actors, and specifying why these differences might arise.

Model 2: Augmented Model 1 – The added Impact of Social Identity on SNS Networking and Network Outcomes by Entrepreneurs



Note 1: It is recognized that other factors can moderate the relationship between available resources on SNS and the actual extraction of these resources. This model focuses only on the factors explored in this study. The intention is to be parsimonious to the theory building objective (Bacharch, 1989).
Note 2: Founder Social Identity is not a cognition. Founder Social Identity is a personal variable of self-concept that effects the opportunity cognitions of Arrangements and Willingness.

This study's findings also contribute to social identity theory by reinforcing the typology of founder social identities proposed by Fauchart and Gruber (2011) and by expanding the sphere of influence of an entrepreneur's social identity to include networks. This is important because networks are significant opportunity structures for successful ventures (Tocher, Oswald, & Hall, 2015). It also answers the call for "more research on the dynamic and reciprocal influence between individual cognition and actions, social networks and entrepreneurial outcomes" (Engel, Kaandorp & Elfring, 2017, p. 36).

The conclusions offered in this section also make a contribution by shedding light on why so many studies investigating the *strength of weak ties hypothesis* have produced such conflicting findings. As outlined in Chapter 2, studies have shown weak ties to be most beneficial to founders (e.g., Stam & Elfring, 2008), strong ties to be most beneficial (e.g., Lee & Tsang, 2001), a balance to be best (Uzzi, 1996), or have found tie strength not to be material (e.g., Batjargal, 2003). It is probable that the social identity composition and networking approach differences in each study's sample has shaped the nature of the responses to network and networking questions that both qualitative and quantitative studies have measured. This study's findings suggest that by controlling for founder social identity future networking studies should produce more consistent results that better reflect practice.

The present study also makes a contribution in adding a more fine-grained understanding to research on embeddedness. A current assertion in network theory is that entrepreneurs actively seek to evolve their networked relationships. This study's conclusions suggest that future studies in entrepreneurship should not assume that all entrepreneurs seek to evolve their ties over time by adding dimensions of embeddedness to their relationships (Hite 2003, 2005). Missionaries networking online may intentionally limit what they share about themselves and keep their personal and business networks separate. This would limit their embedding efforts, and potentially the evolution of weak ties into strong ties. Recognition of a cognitive mechanism that limits founders' embedding behaviour is a contribution of this study, and has significant implications for network embeddedness research.

This study's findings also point to the need to re-examine the literature on network-building processes across stages of firm as put forward by Larson & Starr (1993), among others (see Chapter 2). These models make implicit assumptions about the cognitive frame of entrepreneurs when engaging with their networks. Network evolution assumptions may need to be modified to better consider entrepreneurs' cognitive networking styles. For example, Larson & Starr's theorizing appears to lean heavily on the assumption of an instrumental networking style. How founders' networks evolve as their firms grow has not been explored for founders adopting a collaborative or a veritable networking style. Network research that examines network structure differences by stage-of-firm will be more nuanced when cognitive networking styles are also considered.

The present study also makes a contribution by beginning to unpack the "hybrid" founder social identity, and examining the nuances among dominant and secondary identities. Finding that many hybrids' dominant identities align with the actions of "pure" identity-types informs this developing typology.

The social identity-related findings of this study also contribute to the Computer-Mediated-Communications literature. To date, there has been no recognition in the literature of the role that social identity might play in a user's choice of SNS platform. This study's conclusions indicate that social identity could play an important role in determining which constellation of SNS features and affordances offered by different platforms best fit their identity-type. It also opens up an interesting avenue

for further research that explores whether the characteristics of certain platforms lend themselves more to use by certain social identity types.

7.4 Practice Implications of the Research Findings

7.4.1 Implications for Practice of the RQ1 Research Findings

A significant practical implication of these findings is that founders may be better off building smaller networks with high closure, where all connections are known to one another. Founders would curate the ties they accept (online "invitations") so that the social risk of asking for resources on their SNSs is minimized. In such networks, founders would likely be more willing to seek substantive advice, advocacy, emotional support, and material resources without fear of negative social consequences. These networks would be high in trust, a key ingredient in network exchange (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995).

Another practical implication of the present study's findings relates to how founders manage the overlap between personal and business networks. Many of this study's respondents drew no distinction between their personal and venture SNS networks. Many founders continue to have blended audiences within specific SNSs. If these conflated networks conflict with creating a "low risk" social judgment environment online, then founders may be well advised to create a separate smaller, purpose-built online network with resource acquisition in mind. This network would focus on resource outcomes and founders would need to carefully curate their connections.

Moving forward, creating *trust networks* may be an important strategy to increase the value of online networks to founders. *Trust networks* are defined here as curated online entrepreneur networks that are kept low in perceived social judgment risk in order to facilitate the sharing of venture details amongst node members and the giving and receiving of requested resources.

However, a significant challenge may be creating such networks with weak tie links, where research shows that heterogeneous resources lie (Granovetter, 1975), but

where lower levels of trust are characteristic of these types of relationships. At a minimum, there is some evidence (Teece, 2007) that simply by becoming aware of their cognitive social judgment bias in networking online, founders may be able to overcome some of the possible negative consequences of their (subconscious) networking behaviour.

A third important practical implication of this study's findings relates to reciprocity. If information is the only significant resource being exchanged within founders' online networks, then these networks are likely to be low in reciprocity value. Reciprocity is defined as, "the giving of benefits to another in return for benefits received"(Molm, 2010, p.119), and is a key lubricant to ongoing successful value exchange in networks (Huang & Knight, 2017). *Trust networks,* where social judgment risk has been curated to remain low, will be high in reciprocity since exchange will be facilitated. If a founder wishes to improve her resource outcomes on SNSs without changing her network's composition, she may need to proactively act to increase reciprocity in the network by engaging in highly visible value exchanges. However, this is a chicken-and-egg dilemma for the founder since the social judgment risk of doing so will remain high in the existing (non-trust) network. She may have to find some resource exchange categories that offer lower social judgment risk to begin to build trust and reciprocity across her online network.

One finding from this study, in particular, offers a practical implication for researchers. Differences were noted in founders' willingness to seek and give emotional support for positive affect situations compared to negative affect situations. This finding has implications for the collection of quantitative data about networking online. Moving forward, survey questions and scale measures should be very clearly worded to ensure that distinctions are made between giving and receiving emotional support, and sharing good news and bad news. Failure to do so means that online and offline differences for this networking behaviour amongst entrepreneurs will not be captured.

A final practical implication concerns non-entrepreneurs. Existing research has shown that under the assumption that bigger is better, investors currently place value on a venture's network size in their funding decisions (Khoury, Junkunc & Deeds, 2013). As discussed above, the absolute number of ties that a founder has in her network may alone be a poor predictor of the embedded resource value of her online network. Investors and other assessors of new ventures may be well advised not to

simply consider size. Trust and reciprocity amongst node members may be better metrics to assess the actual resource value of a founder's online network. Alternatively, investors could assess the strength of a founder's cognitive social judgment bias as a way of predicting whether she will readily access her online network for resources. Future research could explore these possibilities and implications.

7.4.2 Implications for Practice of the RQ2 Research Findings

The conclusions of this study suggest that founders may be able to garner a strategic advantage by recognizing the subconscious effects that their founder identity may exert on their networking behaviour and network structure. Specifically, they may be able to consciously work to mitigate any possible negative effects. For example, founders with an instrumental networking style might develop better balance in their networks by making a conscious effort to evolve weak ties into stronger ties through sharing more emotional content or by being less self-serving and ROI-focused in their SNS use. This may be important given that recent research suggests that focusing primarily on growing network size is not an effective long term strategy for founders (Semrau & Werner, 2014). Founders with an instrumental approach could also become more aware of their norm compliance behaviour on various platforms to ensure that they are not undermining their effectiveness.

Founders with a collaborative networking style could become more mindful to set boundaries on how much time they dedicate to their SNS activities, and become more aware of the opportunity cost implications for "giving more" in their online networks. This may be particularly important given that recent research suggests that strengthening ties beyond a certain point is counter-productive (Semrau & Werner, 2014).

Founders with a veritable networking style could recognize the need to consciously work on tie embedding behaviours to help evolve their distinct personal and professional networks online since research indicates this will improve resource flows (Ozdemir et al., 2016).

In general, founders would also benefit from recognizing that they need to take into account their social identity type when considering "best practice" advice for

networking. Not all potential networking strategies will be effective for all founders. Entrepreneurs are most likely to sustain those networking practices that are compatible with their founder identity-aligned networking styles.

Founders also stand to benefit from becoming more aware that some SNS platforms will offer a better fit for their networking style than others. For example, founders with an instrumental networking style may be better suited to the norms of LinkedIn with its strong business focus; founders with a collaborative networking style might be better suited to the affordances and norms of Facebook which fosters community-building; and, with its character limit, Twitter might be the best fit for founders with a veritable networking style who can minimize their chances of being caught out on an authenticity misalignment.

Finally, SNS platform businesses may do well to recognize the opportunity of the social identity "fit" issue, and design and market products to attract those most likely to appreciate the features and affordances they have built into their interfaces.

7.5 Limitations

As outlined in the methodology chapter, Chapter 5, a concerted effort was made to minimize the limitations of this study. However, limitations are inevitable in any research study and these are discussed below.

An overarching limitation is that "by its essential nature, qualitative research is particularistic" (Yin, 2016, p.102). Thus, the generalizability of this study is limited to analytic generalizability to theory. Generalizations to the global population of entrepreneurs are not possible. As well, only a handful of founder characteristics were considered when looking for alternative explanations for behaviours or patterns uncovered within the data. Differences between founders that impacted their actions could exist that escaped analysis in this study. One such difference which research suggests could exert influence relevant to this study is culture (e.g., Drakopulon-Dodd & Patra, 2000; Klyver & Foyle, 2012; Stam et al., 2014). Other potential differences not investigated could be related to industry or founder background (Drakopoulou-Dodd & Patra, 2000). As well, individual differences in networking beyond those related to social identity were not considered (e.g., Burt et al., 1998).

Additionally, not all founders in a social identity category necessarily reported the same networking behaviour, and this is noted in the study. While understanding why discrepancies were observed is important, it is beyond the scope of this study to explain why these differences exist. Investigating the influence that other self-concept, individual, and human capital differences might exert on founders' behaviours in order to better explain all founders' networking actions is important, but has been left to future studies. This remains a limitation of this study.

This study is also limited in not considering the salience activation of individual social identities amongst hybrid identity founders. Specifically, the data collected did not make it possible to determine if there was a pattern evident in when a secondary identity might be salient for a given founder. For example, when would a darwinian-communitarian founder act less like a darwinian and more like a communitarian on SNSs, and what are the networking behaviour and network outcome implications? This line of inquiry promises to reveal new insights on social identity but was not examined here.

Additionally, due to issues of respondent fatigue, this study did not probe respondents on whether they consciously chose to "override" the salience of their social identity in some or all of their networking actions. Better understanding the salience process for founders would improve insights into this study's findings.

A further limitation relates to the nature of the data collected. This study's depth interviews captured founders' self-reported use of SNSs. As a result, the data collected is subject to founders' accurate retrospective recollections of cognitions, motivations, and behaviours related to their SNS use, and "best guess" assessments of their future actions. A longitudinal study that captured "moment in time" data while founders were actually networking on SNSs over a series of months may have offered more accurate input data. Also, expanding the data collected to include information on whether founders migrated an online connection offline over time to actually make their resource request would have added a compelling additional dimension to the analysis. This experience sampling data collection method would have helped to mitigate founder reporting errors, and could corroborate founder self-reported perspectives (Uy, Foo & Aguinis, 2009). However, securing a commitment from time-pressed founders to enter their data daily has been found to be extremely challenging for researchers (Uy et al., 2009).

Finally, this study was also limited in having only considered the extent to which social identity might impact networking behaviours and network outcomes. It was beyond the scope of this study to consider the recursive nature of the online context (Welter, 2011); specifically, this study did not consider the extent to which their networks might impact founders' social identities. Impacts in this direction may have been present but were not detected except in terms of site norms.

Overall, this researcher believes that the value of the contributions of this study outweigh these identified limitations.

7.6 Overarching Contributions Of This Study

As presented in Sections 7.3 and 7.4 above, this study makes a number of contributions to theory and practice that help uncover "how things work" in the online context of founders' social networks. A number of this study's conclusions about networking on SNSs are counter-intuitive which adds to their impact. While the assertions outlined in this study are specific to Canadian founders in the Pacific Northwest who network on SNSs, it is likely that these conclusions also reflect the behaviours of many entrepreneurs more broadly, even if some context conditions are different. The conclusions developed in the present study contribute a number of analytic generalizations (Yin, 2014), and advance network and social identity theory within entrepreneurship. Specifically, this study offers the following overarching contributions:

- 12 propositions (Table 24 and Table 25 above) are put forward that, taken together, offer a comprehensive research agenda aimed at advancing our understanding of the implications of social identity and of the online context on entrepreneurs' networks, networking behaviours, and network outcomes.

- A comprehensive conceptual model (presented in section 7.2) is proposed that outlines the relationships between founders' networks and their networking actions, and network outcomes. Specifically, it maps the possible moderating effect that social judgment bias may have on founders' cognitive willingness to extract resources on SNSs. It also illuminates founder social identity as an antecedent to founder networking behaviour online. The moderator is a new

contribution to network theory and the antecedent is a new contribution to both network theory and to social identity theory. The augmented model specifically highlights how the individual self-concept disposition of social identity, and networking style differences may help us understand (and predict) networking behaviour. The model builds a more robust explanation than currently exists for why founders' networks form and evolve the way that they do – addressing pragmatism's focus on "how things work."

- Today, most networking research in entrepreneurship makes a number of assumptions based on extant theory and literature. This study makes a number of contributions to theory by calling some of these assumptions into question, as outlined in Table 26 below.

Table 26: Theory Assumptions Challenged by this Study's Assertions

Assumption	Extant theorizing	Challenge
1	Founders' personal and business networks are one and the same at the early stage of their ventures (e.g., Bruderl & Preisendorfer, 1998)	This study argues that founders enacting a veritable networking style are likely not to collapse their networks but to keep them distinct, even at the earliest stages.
2	There are three founder social identity types (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011).	This study found a possible fourth identity type – the aesthetic founder.
3	Entrepreneurs access resources embedded in their networks as needed to grow their ventures (e.g., Keating et al., 2014). (*The network success hypothesis).*	This study argues that fear of negative social judgment can impede founders from actually accessing these resources in their online networks.
4	All founders are similarly motivated to add weak ties to their networks (Granovetter, 1975). *(The strength of weak ties hypothesis).*	This study argues that darwinians, more than other identity types, are likely to enact an instrumental networking style that propels them to connect to more unknown others.
5	'Networking' is a generic behaviour engaged in by founders (e.g., Lamine et al., 2015).	This study argues that founder social identity impacts networking behaviours such that "networking" should not be considered a generic activity. Darwinians, communitarians and missionaries may approach

		"networking" differently based on their instrumental, collaborative or veritable cognitive networking style.
6	All founders have an equal likelihood that their networks comprise certain tie types (Hite, 2005).	This study argues that founders will have distinctly different (and predictable) mixes of tie types in their networks based on their cognitive networking style.

The contributions outlined above may also help enrich explanations for findings in previous research on networks in entrepreneurship. For example, Jack et al. (2008) looked at the networking processes of three founders over six years. They uncovered significant differences in these entrepreneurs' networking processes over time. These differences were attributed to a number of elements, key being stage of firm and network perceptions. This study's findings offer an additional explanation. A review of the evidence points to these differences reflecting the different networking styles of founders. Two of their study's founders, Paul and Martin, appear to be communitarians, exhibiting a collaborative networking style that was "underpinned by an explicit belief that a human emotional connection with other people is the primary criteria in developing networks… they also criticized the artificiality of formal business organizations and events, committees, clubs and so forth" (Jack, et al., 2008, p. 148). The third founder in their study, Joan, appears to be a darwinian, exhibiting an instrumental networking style. She "consistently took a much more formal approach, joining so many organizations and clubs that she sometimes ate breakfast, lunch and supper at formal events 5 days a week. She also explicitly targeted key individuals…" (p. 148). The conclusions of the present study point to a valuable alternative explanation for the networking processes observed by Jack et al. (2008).

A second example can be found in the work of Fischer and Reuber (2014). In analyzing founder depth interviews and firms' communicative streams on Twitter, they identified four distinct types of communicative approaches – sparse, distinction-focused, quality-focused, and multi-dimensional. The authors do not offer explanations for the root of these differences beyond possible social competency. However, it would be consistent with the analyses in the present study for the sparse approach to be practiced by a founder with a veritable networking style who minimizes her SNS interactions to avoid breaches of authenticity. As well, it would be consistent for a founder with an instrumental networking style to take the quality-focused or

distinction-focused approach that emphasizes expert management and quality products. It would also be consistent for founders with a collaborative networking style to take the multi-dimensional approach that emphasizes higher levels of activity and affect as well as more of a relational orientation. Confirming this possible relationship between SNS communicative approaches and founder social identity would be an interesting avenue for further research that the present study illuminates.

The Fischer and Reuber study (2014) also highlights another opportunity to leverage the findings of the present study to inform past research results. Axial to their primary line of inquiry, Fischer and Reuber observe that negative sentiment is not used by founders posting to Twitter. The authors do not offer a possible explanation for this finding but a founder's cognitive social judgment bias, as uncovered in the present study, would explain this phenomenon. Through shedding new explanatory light on existing research findings (as above) or on conflicting findings in many networking studies to date (e.g., Quan & Motoyama, 2010), this study makes an important contribution.

This study also offers a number of contributions to practice for entrepreneurs. By developing trust networks, founders may be able to enhance network resource outcomes online. By moving their cognitive social judgment bias from subconscious to conscious, founders will be better able to mitigate any unintended or unwanted network and networking effects. Mindful of the impact of cognitive social judgment bias, founders can proactively curate online *trust networks* to improve their ability to extract value from their online connections. Through understanding differences in their networking styles, founders can proactively choose SNS platforms that match their networking uses and preferences. In addition, founders with an instrumental networking style can proactively prevent unnecessary breaches in site norms if they know in advance that this risk exists. Founders with a collaborative networking style can proactively monitor their time spent on SNSs to ensure that they are not over-committing to their online communities without regard to ROI. Founders with a veritable networking style can proactively curate their distinct personal and business networks when they realize upfront that this is important for successfully managing their SNSs. Finally, the findings of this study offer founders insights on how their social identities and networking styles influence their tendencies to build networks with certain relational mixes of ties. Knowing this, founders can proactively work to manage

the relational mix of their ties and the embedding process on their SNSs to benefit their ventures.

While the findings, assertions, and conclusions in this study offer advances to theory and practice in understanding founders' cognitions and behaviours on SNSs, there is much that we still do not understand. The section below addresses some of the directions for future research that promise to help uncover more about "how things work" at the intersection of social identity and networking on SNSs for founders.

7.7. Recommendations for Future Research

This study offers 12 research propositions that form a comprehensive research agenda to better understand founders' networking actions and network outcomes on SNSs. However, understanding these phenomena is in its very early stages and much more empirical work is needed to gain a comprehensive picture. Below, additional areas to investigate that this study brought to the fore are presented. Possible future research concerning entrepreneurs' networking and network outcomes are presented first, followed by research opportunities for better understanding founder social identity.

7.7.1. Future Research on SNS Networking and Network Outcomes by Founders

There are a number of future research directions that would build on this study's RQ1 findings. To begin, empirically testing propositions one through six would be an important next step. Confirming the predictive value of the RQ1-related findings of this study would advance the field of network theory overall. This work would ideally confirm whether this study's findings are consistent across additional geographic, industry, and resource-munificent contexts, among other contexts.

Future empirical research should also investigate whether founder and venture networks are one and the same on SNSs at the early stage of ventures since this study found evidence that they may not be the same for missionary founders. As identified in this study, care should to be taken to accurately designate multi-dimensional relational ties as belonging to one or both networks. This study also exposed the important role that willingness cognitions likely have in shaping the extent to which founders access resources on their SNSs. Our understanding of the impact of founder cognitions on

networking behaviour could also be enhanced by investigating founders' ability and arrangement cognitions in depth. An interesting line of future inquiry would be to determine whether a heightened sense of social judgment concern impedes a founder's ability to develop her weak ties into strong ties online. Future research could also explore the role that trust has in founders' networks online compared to offline, and how best to use trust to build resource reciprocity into these networks. Specifically, understanding how founders can leverage the advantages of weak ties, with their inherent access to novel resources, in the face of their cognitive social judgment risk assessments would add to existing theory and inform practice.

Finally, a worthwhile line of further study would be to investigate the extent to which founders, enacting different networking styles, migrate their online networks to the offline context to extract resource value for their ventures, and whether this is a conscious decision made to lower the risk of potential negative social judgments.

7.7.2. Future Research into Founder Social Identity

There are also a number of future research directions that would build on this study's RQ2 findings. A productive place to start would be to empirically test Propositions 7 through 12 developed in this study. Confirming the predictive value of the RQ2-related findings of this study would advance network and social identity theories. This study is also the first to consider the impact of founder social identities on networks and networking. Broadening the investigation to include founders' offline networks is a logical next step in deepening our understanding of this phenomenon.

Broadening these investigations even further also offers additional research opportunities. This study investigated to what extent and how founder social identity shapes entrepreneurs' networks and networking behaviours. A new direction of inquiry would be to consider relationships in the opposite direction: how might networks shape a founder's social identity? Podolny and Baron (1997) argue that clear social identities are facilitated in smaller, high closure networks. An interesting avenue for future research would be to investigate whether their different networking styles and network structures impact the intensity and direction of founders' social identity cognitions.

Future research could also delve into the differences observed between the incidence of hybrid founder social identities in the original Fauchart and Gruber (2011) study compared to the present study. An interesting line of inquiry would be to consider whether different cultural, geographic, industry, situational, and economic contexts impact the incidence of hybrid founder social identities. In addition, this study did not consider how changing conditions might influence a hybrid-identity founder's networking behaviour. Investigating the internal and external conditions and contexts that activate the salience of one identity over another would add considerably to our current understanding of founder social identity. Determining whether specific networking behaviours over others are social identity-salient for founders would also add a more fine-grained understanding of the online networking context.

Turning specifically to SNSs, investigating whether and why certain SNS platforms are favoured by certain founder social identifies would help founders choose their best fit. Research applying theories of impression management (e.g., Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011) and self-presentation (e.g., Papacharissi, 2012) could help to shed light on our understanding of the three founder networking styles. This would be a compelling line of future inquiry to add depth to our understanding of founder cognitions and motivations online. Regarding specific founder identity types, a compelling new line of inquiry would be to consider whether founders with a collaborative networking style are cognitively predisposed to develop overly homophonous networks deep in strong ties that inadvertently curtail their access to broad resources. Such a study could also consider whether, countering this, interpersonal affect, which has been shown to impact the flow of social resources (Casciaro & Lobo, 2008), enhances the ability of these founders to access needed resources on their networks online.

7.8 Concluding Remarks

This study evolved into having a broad scope and grew to include the possible influence of founder social identity on entrepreneurs' networking actions and outcomes on SNSs. The lines of inquiry were organized around two distinct research questions:

RQ1: *To what extent and how are founders' networking behaviours and network outcomes different in the online context?*

RQ2: *To what extent and how does founder social identity influence founders' networks and networking behaviour on SNSs?*

The propositions and conceptual model presented here advance network theory and social identity theory in entrepreneurship. The conclusions of this study address calls by many scholars to narrow the gap in our understanding of entrepreneurs' networks, networking, network outcomes (e.g., Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010), entrepreneurial cognitions (e.g., Pryor et al., 2016), and identity (e.g., Powell & Baker, 2017). Importantly, this study's findings and conclusions also offer possible explanations for the inconsistencies found amongst studies of entrepreneurs' networks and networking behaviours to date. Taken together, the findings of this study contribute new and often counter-intuitive insights to our understanding of the structure and content of founders' online networks, and their networking behaviour on SNSs. These are summarized briefly below.

The assertions of this study argue that the content of networks is likely influenced by the online context and by founder social identity. Specifically, the online context may limit the resources actually available in a founder's network. Except for information resources, willingness cognitions likely impede this access, turning available resource content to unavailable.

Social identity also likely influences the relational content of founders' networks. The extent to which strong ties, weak ties, personal ties, latent ties, full ties, embedded ties, functional ties, competency ties, and hollow ties are present is, at least in part, likely networking style dependent. The extent to which emotion, trust, and reciprocity are present in a founder's online network may also be partially driven by her social identity and networking style. The choices of which SNS to network on and what norm appropriate content to post, are also likely influenced by networking style.

This study also uncovered evidence that founder social identities exert influence on the structure of founders' networks. Specifically, differences in the size, and propensity to bridge structural holes can likely be attributed, in part, to whether founders enact an instrumental, collaborative, or veritable networking style.

Finally, this study puts forth a set of arguments to show that founder social identity and cognitive mechanisms influence the networking behaviours of founders. Specifically, it is argued that networking online should not be considered as a one-size-

fits-all behaviour: with propensities to different networking styles, darwinians, communitarians and missionaries are argued to engage in network broadening and network deepening behaviour to differing degrees. As well, the extent to which founders blend their personal and business networks is likely driven, in part, by whether they have adopted a veritable networking style. This study also provides preliminary evidence to suggest that the absolute amount of time spent networking online is at least partially dependent on networking style, with those enacting a collaborative networking style spending the most time on SNSs.

Cognitive mechanisms were also uncovered that likely influence a founder's networking behaviour online. An SNS use heuristic and cognitive social judgment bias may have a profound impact on entrepreneurs' networking behaviours. The heuristic likely encourages networking behaviour online, while the bias dissuades founders from seeking resources from the SNS connections they have built, regardless of their enacted networking style. The bias may also set up a negative feedback loop that further discourages founders' resource extraction behaviours, en masse.

Taken together, the contributions of this study help to shed considerable light on the under-studied phenomenon of entrepreneurs' online networks. These contributions aim to help scholars and entrepreneurs better understand differences in network structure, network content, and networking behaviour in the distinct context of SNSs. They also draw the compelling conclusion that what you bring to the party matters as much as what you do at the party: that a founder's social identity as an element of her self-concept, her cognitive heuristics, and her cognitive biases greatly influence her networking actions as a founder. Much work remains to be done to bring the online context and entrepreneurs' networking behaviours fully into focus, but it is the hope of this researcher that the path forward is now better illuminated as a result of this study.

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LIST OF APPENDICIES

APPENDIX 1: FOUNDER DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introductory Omnibus Question:

I'm not that familiar with your venture. It would be helpful if I understood a bit more about how you started and where you are now?

Social Media Questions:

1. I am particularly interested in your entrepreneurial or business use of social media
    a. What social media tools do you use regularly to further your entrepreneurial pursuits?
    b. How do you use these tools to further your entrepreneurial pursuits?
        i. Activities (probe for each tool and how used)
    c. Why do you use each of these tools?
        i. (What do you hope to achieve using this tool?)

2. Let's focus on social network sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.
    a. What SNS do you use at least monthly?
    b. What SNS do you use the most? Why? [use this in the probe below]
    c. SNS intensity
        i. About how many total [Facebook, Linked-In, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+] from b) above) friends (etc.) do you have? Record actual number given or prompt with category believe close:
            1. 10 or less
            2. 11 to 50
            3. 51 to 100
            4. 101 to 150
            5. 151 to 200
            6. 201 to 250
            7. 251 to 300
            8. 301 to 400
            9. More than 400

ii. In the past week, about how many minutes, on average, per day have you spent on [Facebook, Linked-In, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+] from b) above)]. Record actual unless need prompt:
    1. Less than 10
    2. 10 to 30
    3. 31 to 60
    4. 1 to 2 hours
    5. 2 to 3 hours
    6. More than 3 hours
iii. If not obvious from previous responses - Which would you say is your primary SNS? Why?

3. In what ways do you use xxx (SNS) to further your entrepreneurial or business pursuits?
    i. Activities engaged in now (probe unaided for each resource accessed and how used). REPEAT by SNS.
    ii. When you first started, how did you go about using these sites? What was your approach or strategy? (probe for any differences relating to each site)
    iii. Why do you use each of the SNS that you use?
    iv. What do you hope to achieve using SNS?) {if not discussed above}

4. What are the benefits of using SNS for entrepreneurial advantage? (What motivation? What benefits or value sought?)
    1. Probe for specifics if not already offered:
        a. Accessing resources:
            - To get information or learn how to do things
            - To get business (or other) advice
            - To generate ideas
            - To solve problems

- To get emotional support
- To make decisions
- To access financial resources
- To access human resources (people to help/hire)
- To get the things your venture needs
- To get someone to advocate for you or your business (vouch for you, build legitimacy, support you, put in a good word, …)
- To get someone to provide a personal introduction to someone you need to talk to
- Ask if missed anything

b. Strengthening or maintaining relationships (network deepening) – explore this use

c. Building ties – growing network size (network broadening) – explore this use

5. On average, do you think you give more or get more from your SNS activities (reciprocity)? Why? Why okay if not balanced?

6. Do you see any downsides or concerns in using SNSs for entrepreneurial advantage? Probe if not offered:
    1. privacy concerns
    2. participation concerns
    3. technology concerns

7. If not covered…Do you think there are specific situations/contexts when it is appropriate or inappropriate to utilize SNSs for your venture? (Probe context collapse).

8. If not covered …To what extent are your networks the same online? To what extent is your online network similar or different from your off-line network? Do you make any distinction between your personal and venture-related networks online?
    a. Do you see them as being distinct or the same?
    b. Do you use them differently?
    c. To what extent are you comfortable seeking advice from your on-line network? Why? THEN probe for information, advocacy, emotional support, material resources IF not covered already.

Entrepreneurial Identity – I now would like to ask you some specific questions about what matters to you as an entrepreneur. There are no right or wrong answers and lots of people I've spoken with have given me a wide range of answers.

9. Entrepreneurs create ventures for lots of different reasons. What was your primary motivation for starting your most recent entrepreneurial venture?

    (If one of the following is not identified, probe and ask which of the following best describes their primary motivation)

    D: mainly financial: making money, creating personal wealth, and/or building a business that will be inherited by the next generation.

    C: mainly serving the needs of a specific interest group or community: helping others enhance their performance or satisfaction and/or helping others achieve their goals or attain desired outcomes.

    M: mainly to advance a particular cause: I have a mission to show others to prove the viability of different approaches and thinking.

10. Which of the following best fits what you strive for most in running your venture?

D: I strive to be professional in managing my organization.

C: I strive to address the needs of fellow community members.

M: I strive to make the world, or some part of it, a better place.

11. Which of the following do you value most in running your venture?

D: being professional: demonstrating entrepreneurial competencies and solid business principles

C: being supported: having other community members help move your venture forward or recognize you for your community contribution.

M: being responsible - identifying a problem and doing something about it.

12. Which of the following do you believe is most central to the entrepreneurial process?

D: Being distinct from other firms.

C: Offering products (goods or services) that support a particular community of like-minded people.

M: Leading social change, by example.

13. If you were to start another venture, which of the following best describes what kind of venture it would be?

D: It could be anything with a clear competitive advantage.

C: It would have a strong niche, customer-oriented, focus.

M: It would enhance the well-being of society, as a whole.

To help me understand similarities and differences among founders' answers, I would like to know a bit more about you and your venture/business.

14. What type of venture did you most recently create? (If not already discussed).

- Consumer or B2B
- technology, internet, goods, service

15. What stage of development is your venture? (If not already discussed)

under l year

1 but under 2 years old

2 to 3 years old

over 3 to 5 years old

16. Experience: How many years have you been an entrepreneur? (If not already discussed). Have you had other ventures? How many?

17. Age (under 25, 25-34, 35-45, over 45) – visual identification to select range. Try to get actual number.

18. Gender – visual identification

19. Technical Competency - Discuss how comfortable they are then ask for rating…

On a one to seven scale where seven is very confident and 1 is not confident at all, how confident would you describe yourself in using the technology of SNSs?

Very 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Not at all

20. Personal Privacy - Discuss how comfortable they are then ask for rating…

On a one to seven scale where one is very private and 7 is not at all private, how private about your personal life would you describe yourself?

Not at all 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 Very

12. I really appreciate taking time out of your busy schedule to meet and discuss your social network site use with me. You can see that I'm really interested in understanding how entrepreneurs use their SNSs. Is there anything that we did not cover that you think would be important for me to know to get a complete picture?

APPENDIX 2: VERBATIM DATA SUPPORT FOR FINDINGS ON NETWORKING FOCUS, NETWORKING ACTIONS, NETWORK SEPARATION, AND GIVE-GET BALANCE

Founder: **Darwinian-Identity Types**	**Networking Action Focus**	**Network Broadening** **Network Deepening**	**Network Separation** **Give-Get Balance**
Rob (D) Seniors Services	*Everything [that I do on SNSs] has a reason. Calculated sounds like a bad term but it has a purpose.* *Everything is calculated. Everything I do online I've thought it through.* *Your network is your strength, then use it towards your strengths.*	*I've gotten my hand slapped by LinkedIn and also by Facebook. And I guess now by Twitter. There was a time that Facebook wouldn't let me add any more people because I did it too aggressively… that is what happens when you kind of push the bounds.* *"I have lost a number of friends… They go, 'Dude, lay off all the [venture] stuff. And 'unfriend' me."* *I want to share some information but if I put it out there, it is for a reason. Such as when my [pet] died; the calculations were to get support. And people said I'm so sad to hear about your [pet]…*	*One of the downsides is I don't get to use it as a regular person. And that is my choice. It is Facebook I am really talking about. I think that is why Goggle Plus would be better. Like George Kastanza. His worlds are colliding….And you could live two or three different lives in Google Plus. And you can't really in Facebook.* *Yes, [I give more], but without it I'd be no one. I wouldn't be seen as [an industry expert]. So that is intentional.*

	Purposive	Broadening, Yes; Deepening, Yes	No distinction/ Give
Sam (D) Medical Aid Manufacturer	*As soon as a new social media tool pops up, I try to secure my real estate right away so it can't be taken by someone else. And Twitter sat for 2 years before I touched it. There's a plethora of opportunity and to know where to spend your time is really challenging.* *And, as an entrepreneur, it's really fun getting distracted by fun, new things. But, at the end of the day, it has to return revenue. It has to be a profitable return on your time.* *We started looking at Twitter and a lot of different doctors and influential players are on Twitter and they are very easy to find. Finding a doctor's email address is nearly impossible….We find them on Twitter and engage in a conversation.* *Very conscious effort. And we go specifically after that. We try to find them on Twitter.*	*We try to grow networks… to pull someone in, an industry expert... to engage and secure a relationship…. Who has an offline network these days?* *It's very targeted. And if I could grow to a larger network, we would try to reach out to a larger network.* *[I'd use] LinkedIn to engage in a one-to-one conversation with somebody that has some relevance to that industry…I wouldn't turn to offline. Not anymore.*	*I used to do that, I'd post on my [business] page typically and it goes on my [personal] page too, if it's relevant. You would see my friends and people from my business. I used to promote [company] on my personal Facebook page and got friends to follow both. But not now… I've changed… grouping people.* *Facebook I'm giving. LinkedIn I'm giving. Like, what I do there, sharing our research, giving updates, that's intentional - wanting to be seen as a [industry] leader. Twitter I'm taking.*
	Purposive	Yes/ Yes	Distinction/Give

Josh (D/C) Baby Service	*We do really get out there and talk. We do meet a lot of other companies, sometimes [competitors]. We do leverage it a lot, reaching out to see who we can tap.* *I don't have anything good to say about LinkedIn. It's nice to have but no one really uses it.* *We set it up right away, right at the beginning, even before we incorporated. It really helps on Facebook because our network is now on Facebook.*	*We were primed two years ago that there is a lot of wealth in these loose connections and we do see that's possible.* *It's different than Facebook right? I would consider Twitter a bit more intimate, for sure. But that's just my own friends and family and stuff. I'm not there for business.*	*In most cases, we do filter between what we post on the [company] Facebook and our personal Facebook.* *And that [resource requests] we can do by asking on a personal page. I don't see [our company] asking it on its' own page.* *I don't want to sell out my profile as an individual for the sake of the company.* *With Instagram, there's no downside to sharing more content or more information, in my opinion.* *Those privacy settings are very, very key.* *I would say that we're giving more still.*
	Purposive	Yes/No	Distinction/ Give
Keith (D/C)	*When we started, I thought it does make sense for [venture] to use Facebook as a networking tool.*	*If it is a simple decision then sure, but if it is a complicated decision then I don't want somebody who doesn't know my business telling me what I should do. I think it is a lot deeper and you can't get that level by posting on Facebook.*	*Distinct is important for me. I'm pretty shy. We don't want to mix the two.*

Home Décor Product	*We aren't overdoing it. That is in my own mind because I don't like getting random emails coming in saying that so-and-so is posting this.* *I will generate an inside search of postings. I don't have a high perceived value in a lot of those other [LinkedIn and Twitter] social media things.* *We don't want to bombard people with irrelevant information. We, at least, don't like that and I don't want to impose that… We have clear goals but it's not just about milking our network.*	*I just can't get into the whole status updates and hashtags thing. I'm not comfortable talking about how cold my coffee is on Facebook.* *I'm not comfortable with personal disclosure, personal information. I'm not comfortable at all putting that up.,,,I guess I am not a truly social person. More objective information, yah, I have no problem.*	*I'am pretty careful about what I put up there – I don't put anything that might offend someone.* *Definitely getting more right now. It does not take up much time in terms of labour.*
	Purposive	Yes/No	Distinction/Get
Margie (D/C) Gluten-free Product	*We have thoroughly planned it out and keep on track.* *We are A-type people. We can be picky about some stuff….It wasn't so much of a jump, we knew what we want to do… From working with other businesses, we just knew what would work for us.* *I think that is not even that we just want to do this for people. I think that sometimes we can both be a bit competitive.*	*It is just getting in the way of our everyday routine. Just having to remember to do it. Social media, I think, invites more responsibility. Because you are reaching a wider range of people.* *We haven't focused any of our time or knowledge base into that. We have a community around [product category] but we build up that community offline.* *We have found the resources we need offline.*	*I would consciously keep them separate….No, I would never post anything personal on there [business profile].* *We haven't done that [mix]. I mean, honestly, I would really hope that we wouldn't get that. I wouldn't want to do that.* *If you are expected to give then there must be something to take as well. The give and take relationship is happening all the time*

	Basically, why make something hard when you can set yourself up to do it well. *The budget aspect of it is important… we want it to support our business.* *We are just really excited about what we are doing… Amazing people… we can connect with our community so easily… it's about our network.* *We'll put it out there. Anything that we are getting from the community that is feedback too. Everything ends with us. I think that is so important, be real…. It's all built on trust.*	*Every single time that you put something out there puts yourself in a really vulnerable position. It is a space that I have no comfort in, at all.*	*and so I think if you loose that perspective then you will eventually peter out.*
	Purposive/ Community-Focus/Authenticity	*Yes/No*	*Distinction/Equal*
Shawna (D/C) Restaurant Supplier	*It's deliberate. Because of our new competitors. I use it to [network around our competition]….It is much more self-interested.* *I've been more active on LinkedIn but I'm not creeping as much as I used to.*	*I mean I have 754 'friends', but they are mostly acquaintances. I don't talk to all those people every day… We don't use Facebook much…just the status updates re the business…. I even don't feel comfortable friending someone who is a client of ours.*	*I will post to my [company] page and then I will personally comment too. So I get them both going with each other.* *I haven't been able to remove myself from my company. I share all that...*

	When I'm on Facebook and Twitter I'm "working" my contacts.	*I'll share pictures, or comment on someone's birthday.* *I don't feel that [Facebook] is a proper forum for a [deeper] corporate connection with business. I think that is for places like LinkedIn. That I get.*	*Yah, it's get more.*
	Purposive	Yes/Yes	No distinction/ Get
Cliff (D/M) Content Provider	*I'm not saying I'm an expert on it, but now I can sit back and kind of pull the levers and manage it…. I have this ideal strategy in my head… I don't even use it to the extent that we should be yet, just because we are tight on resources.* *…Whereas, LinkedIn, pretty much everyone, all 500 of those connections are going to be in the professional world in some way or another. So, I just think it's more worth my time.*	*We have more than 14,000 Twitter followers. Just create a Twitter account and then just start curating content - find all the best [connections] in your industry, all the best resources, keep tabs on them.* *I've actually had a couple of guys, a couple of mentors that we've worked with around here who have connected me to someone through LinkedIn.* *Just being able to network there [LinkedIn] is good. So that was when I really embraced it….You can easily reach out to those people again if you don't have their business card or email address.* *No, if I want to take it beyond that then I'll meet with them. Get to know them that way.*	*I don't use Facebook personally - I'm the one guy that doesn't use it. My company has Facebook. Twitter is for business….Personally I am on LinkedIn.* *I think we are probably getting more at this point.*

	Purposive	Yes/No	Distinction/Get
James (D/M) Network Service	*I use Twitter and LinkedIn. That's for business connections… I'm really good at finding out about people there. It's an important strategy for my business. …to learn about them., even around the world….It's a really good way to connect with these people.* *I sign up for different sites prolifically and then try to figure them out…And I never really unsubscribe.* *Twitter and LinkedIn are to try to meet people as needed.*	*A lot of times I am just retweeting stuff. But I follow people on Twitter to learn interesting things and find out what they are up to and find out sites or pages that they like… LinkedIn is more my local business network.* *It is more about growing my network.* *I've Googled different venture capitalists and then I've gotten people to do intros for me through LinkedIn.* *I'm autoattracting different friends, and family and different school relations and stuff like that.* *If you are connected to people on LinkedIn… you can just message them.* *I use [SNS] to help me make business decisions. I have about 15 moms in [the city] that are kind of connected [via SNS] with [my company] and help out in different ways.*	*The online is definitely more expansive, international. More interest driven. I probably get more respect online. Offline it is [my city], it is neighbours, it is family. There are some local business connections but online is far broader, more diverse, more interesting.* *I will share [company] stuff on my personal Facebook… I don't really separate it too much.* *I probably gain, but it is hard to say who is benefiting from me so I would probably say 50/50.*

		That's not what I think of too much. A bit but mostly offline stuff to get to know them more….It's really about growing who I can reach.	
	Purposive	Yes/Yes	No distinction/Equal
Jin (D/M) Online Retail	*You need to know, when it comes down to [SNS use]... How much bandwidth in a day do you have, and how much can you commit to something where you can't actually put an ROI on it.* *So, I've shaped it… It's just like having a toolbox. It depends on what you're trying to accomplish to what you use.* *I'm thinking about posting on my wall. I do use it to solve problems and ideas, sending private messages to large groups of people at a time. So I do, do that.* *I use Facebook all the time.. It's a fun part of my day to interact with people that I know. I've created it to be on purpose. I've created groups where there's quality content being posted … all day long.* *I think that there is a bigger cost in not having it than having it.*	*I asked for an introduction to him through another friend of mine on Facebook. He introduced us and that's where we ended up putting our first office.* *You want to broaden your reach with some of your posts, always expand your network.* *I consider that even well-wishers for your birthday as emotional support. The odd time when I'm just having a hard day or something, your close group of friends jump in there to give you support.*	*I broadcast to everybody.* *I had two accounts and I brought them together.* *Giving I'd say. If I ever feel I'm not getting much out of my Facebook page, it probably could mean a number of things but on a fundamental level, it probably means I'm not putting much into it.* *I'm always advocating on Facebook for other people. Introducing many people on a weekly basis.*

	We brought a team of 6 people on using Facebook.		
	Purposive	Yes/Yes	No distinction/Give
Jordon (D/M) Web Service	*When I use social media it is intentional… to leverage presence - being omnipresent… But to get the advantage there has to be – I like this person – somewhere. And that is what my using social media did for me.* *I really have to have value about what I am saying.* *I am known in the marketplace for being aggressive. Like I get what I want [on SNSs].* *I can take it back to the ROI…. I can connect the dots.*	*I have 1,400 people on LinkedIn.* *I have never used it for [developing weak ties to stronger ties] or for strengthening ties – except relatives. Only relatives… It is sort of like casting a fish hook. That is highly precarious. I have had my eyes bit.* *Emotional support? Never.* *I will never say that it is a sunny day or that I have had a good run. I have no desire about that.* *Because that won't help me. It is all face-to-face. Because the parts that make those decisions cannot be found on social media.* *…we are not bringing ourselves to the social engagement. You can't. You can't. People would run away.*	*Yes, I do have a [company] Facebook page. But that is irrelevant because it hooks in on the personal site. They all hook together.* *It is about providing value - I really need to have value about what I am saying. It's how you get what you need.*
	Purposive	Yes/No	No distinction/Give

Kora (D/M) Natural Foods Manufacturer	*I do learn about that [competitors and trends] through my social networks. In terms of what is going on… I find a lot of service business there in terms of people who [can do things for us].* *I did a lot of research before we started it up [SNSs].* *The best return for us right now is Facebook and Twitter. I got [key supplier] through Twitter. We went back and forth and back and forth on Twitter….I know how to use it.*	*[I was] looking for a caterer to host a [company] party… This woman I've never met before, lives in Victoria, sent me a Tweet saying she used [name] and this is her contact info. And since then we've used [name] every year, and all through Twitter through a woman I've never met.* *I find Twitter really useful for maintaining the business [relationships]. That's part of my plan. I also enjoy it. I find it is a good way to keep in touch with people.* *I'll post things about, it has been a difficult week because such and such didn't go right… or was a night mare... to make it more [personal].*	*Yes, [personal and business SNS] they are different, I do use them differently… So I've kept things separate.* *I decided early on that I would have a maximum of 50 personal friends [on personal Facebook]…I look at people and they spend so much personal time on it to see who is doing what and so on.* *You know [husband] commented that over the years my posts on Facebook and Twitter have become quite different…. I don't think it is one size fits all.* *I give and I get. It is actually a big stress relief for me. I'm like, I need Twitter. I actually enjoy interacting with people on there… It's good for [company]. So I'd go with get.*
	Purposive	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Get

Founder: **Identity Types**	**Networking Action Focus**	**Network Broadening** **Network Deepening**	**Network Separation** **Give-Get Balance**
Joan (C) Environment Service	*I'm trying to remember why I did that [joined LinkedIn]. I didn't think much of it at the time.* *It is more about community.., If you bring community into the picture …you can…find more resources, more products, create more growth and profit and create…more synergies, and it all just becomes very sustainable, innovative, compared to a bottom-line type of process.* *I would say in general, common ground, in the broader context, you can really see who are posting similar things and you can build a bit of a community, within that.* *We are constantly drawing up resources for the community on all our social media… making it the collaborative advantage.*	*Maintaining relationships for sure – lots of people see this [Twitter] interaction so there is value to it… But also strengthening relationships. We can look at who are our social media contacts and we make sure we are being more active with them.* *We'll read their Tweets and reTweet them and just start getting some banter going on with them. I was so shocked in how it leads to a personal connection. Like an actual face-to-face…* *We think of [SNSs] as a relationship maintenance tool. But through others, followers and retweets and all that, we've actually added [weak ties].*	*Yah, our networks are probably the same thing. You could probably Venn diagram it but … I would say probably 50% overlap. And that means the messages are blended. There is a core involved in all of them [platforms].* *We're really focused on value-added stuff….* *Oh, sending more, giving more, in terms of value.*
	Community-Connection	Yes/Yes	No distinction/Give

Boris (C/D) Sports Equipment Manufacturer	*Some people say LinkedIn is a good tool for business development but I don't know how to use it for stuff like that. I am there. I don't check in too regularly.* *It's about being engaged in the industry, in my community.* *I'm not trying to establish myself as a Twitterer. It's more about being engaged… I spend a lot of time on that.* *I don't want to be known for the entertainment value of my tweets, I want to be known for the quality of their content.*	*Using Facebook makes it just a little bit easier to … make more relationships or make my core relationships stronger.* *On LinkedIn and on Facebook I engage in business conversations with people I don't see very often or people who are out of town.* *I do have people who I have never met that I see on Twitter that I have connected with who tweet 25 times a day. But it is just crap. "I just read the paper while making ribs for dinner". I don't care. Who cares?*	*[My business] has a Facebook page. It is attached to my personal Facebook page but I have enough legs that it is an independent page … But probably 80% overlap.* *I am giving more than getting and* *I keep doing it because I am hoping for the best. I am optimistic.*
	Community-Connection	Yes/Yes	No distinction/Give
Brody (C/D) Music device software	*[SNS] doesn't really have a whole lot to do with the core of the business and getting the resources we need to grow. I just think involvement with the local community is where you get introductions to other people, it will introduce you to other people. Yah, in person.* *I signed up to a bunch more just to sort of just to see what it is. I want to be on top of things so I set up some accounts on this or that. To understand the*	*I'll often get invitations to connect in LinkedIn with people I don't know. So, I will almost reject all of those.* *If I go to Toronto and I want to see my friends there, I connect on Facebook.*	*Separate. Just everyone I've been friends with since I signed up to Facebook however many years ago it was. High school, university crowd. Just my friends. Nobody really professionally.* *I don't really like sharing or public. I just don't like it.*

	platform to see how it would be useable. I don't use it very much. But when I've got something to pug into my community, then sure. *The problem is that there is so much noise on [SNSs].*		*I'm not doing much or giving much so I'd call that equal.*
	None	No/Yes	Distinction/Equal
Chris (C/D) Hospitality Service Website	*I guess you kind of feel like you have to be there. Everyone else is there. Everyone else is on social media doing it. If you're not there, it's kind of weird. I think of my friends who aren't on Facebook and I'm like, "Why aren't you on Facebook? That doesn't make sense to me. So, I would probably think the same of a business.* *Our business is always in the context of supporting our [service] community.* *[SNSs] just fits how we want to connect and share…The scale is bigger than just customers.*	*Yah, network building. [LinkedIn] tells you who it thinks you should be friends with based on who you are already connected with.* *I mean we try to maintain the [industry]relationships that we've made. Just seeing them on Twitter, talking to them on Twitter, promoting them on Facebook.* *One of the things that Facebook is really good at is helping keep in touch with people, like, 'Oh, look, so-and-so got married'.* *[With Twitter] we usually do links to our page. Or links to a picture that we had uploaded to our site…It's kind of a soft way in [to connect].*	*We still have that one Facebook page and Twitter for everything.* *We ask for feedback a lot on [all personal and business SNSs]. Just what they think. We also posted a survey and got 150 likes but not many answers.* *We're getting more information than we would have any other way … [but] we are putting a fair bit of energy into it.*

	Community-connection	Yes/Yes	No Distinction/Equal
Natalie (C/D) Marketing Service	*Facebook I see as a very casual connecting community.* *By supporting others and reaching out to give people a hand up if they need it… the intention is to always be a useful contributor in [my venture-related] community.* *Whatever it is, in my definition, the true definition of social media, is using the platform to create community, help others and network in the true sense of the term.* *I've been there for them and perhaps they'll be there for me.* *Each platform has a different twist on how they should be used. I like helping people to use them…. development of community based on wanting to support one another.*	*So I have spent the last three years supporting other people. Looking at what they are trying to do online and then helping them…So there are people that I feel I know really well just because I see them on Facebook.* *I have about 20 Facebook pages.* *I'm on there looking to share information and support people. I could probably use it more to build my connections but I'm busy.* *The way I use Facebook is to connect with people and just take that to a personal level.*	*I also have social media that I use for my own personal self but for my business I keep my message clear and consistent, and it doesn't vary amongst the different platforms.* *…Although, sometimes the lines do blur.* *Giving - I'm trying to think of how I can help others and support others. Whether it is by posting something, sharing information that I think would be useful.*
	Community	*Yes/Yes*	*Distinction/Give*

Ross (C/D) Tourism Service	*It's cool to create connections among people.* *I don't just go in and post and get out. I really like to graze on Twitter… on a deeper common ground on social issues…engage with people.* *Twitter is a way to interact with [partners] or [customers]… We think about what we can retweet that people are going to want to talk about and learn about.* *Twitter is a great way to interact with our suppliers.* *Yah, I've been deliberate about that. Using it for that, to help tap our connections.*	*We are managing a community following and adding to it while keeping our existing followers on Twitter– and the same on Facebook too.* *I accept links on LinkedIn but I'm rarely engaged there.* *I follow a lot of people [Twitter] and they follow me back.* *I think the subtle way [of getting introductions] is best.* *It's easy to share some personal stuff.* *[Connect]on a deeper common ground…*	*We use Twitter a lot for business. I'm pretty clear to keep the two [personal and business] pretty separate.* *Other Facebook friends have blended the line. I decided not to blur the line.* *Giving more… in a course of a year if post one quality thing a day – that has been my strategy.*
	Community-Connection, Purposive	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Give
Tina (C/D)	*It's been good for connecting us to the [industry] community, but not actually for making customers.* *We joined many forums…And, it's funny in the [product] community everyone wants to talk about*	*I do search for people on Twitter… I really reach out to other entrepreneurs.* *I'm finding that Facebook isn't as valuable as it's, it's kind of been hyped up to be [for maintaining*	*Separate. We're still trying to figure that out. One co-founder, for some reason, doesn't want his current job to know that he is doing this business. And I guess he has people from his work on his Facebook.*

Speciality Subscription Service	*[product] and they want to help so they didn't even want anything in return... They are great to help me find supplies. It's a great community there.* *It's about engagement to me [use of SNSs]. More engagement, I guess.* *Twitter has been good to make those initial connections but then it needs to go someplace from there. Actually build into something. It's to connect and to do something together.* *I don't care how many followers I have. I'm interested in other people that are following me. Is it beneficial to them?* *Social media has definitely helped me discover more value in what I have to say because people are following me based on my tweets and they must have some interest in what I have to say.*	*relationships]. I think people are losing a lot of confidence in [the business use of Facebook]. And I think that's affected how people interact with business pages… We have been using it to create content that our [community] would find valuable.* *I do a lot of in-the-moment postings …what I am passionate about. That kind of draws people in. And just relationship building.* *Everything has been through our personal networks or extended networks through Facebook and Twitter.* *Twitter is important on the supplier side. I've found it's easier o connect to people by tweeting them than it is to send them an email. We go back and forth.*	*When [other entrepreneurs] ask me for help, I don't even hesitate,…even though I don't ask other people for help, I will help them…* *…we don't want anything in return.* *And the effort I put in now that's not about what comes back. It's worth it either way.* *And so I definitely see the value in going to my network and saying, "Has anyone used these?" And at the same time, a lot of the questions that I have put out to my social networks have gotten very few responses.* *That it is still early and not to judge things quite yet. And the effort that I put in now will turn around and I will be getting some more if I keep giving.*
	Community	Yes/Yes	Distinct/Give

Founder: Identity Type	Networking Focus	Network Broadening Network Deepening	Network Separation Give-Get Balance
Alejandra (M) Relationship Service	*And so this whole idea about using social networks for buzz, I think it's the wrong reason for doing social networks. It's about being yourself and letting people see that.* *Yeah, I had no goals, nothing.* *I'm going to consciously say I don't really go there to, to think about what I can do with my community….* *Um, basically to have that two-way conversation… And then it also gives other people, um, an open communication. So now everyone can see.* *I didn't do it for Facebook but I researched about Pinterest. I've done a lot of research into the certain types of things that work on Pinterest and don't.*	*It's good for seeing who is who.* *On our Twitter feed, we have maybe 3,000 followers and I would say we have no one that the company interacts with on a regular basis.* *A network online only exists if the network actually exists in real life. Our online network can improve that, um, the idea that it's supposed to improve an offline relationship. Right? At least that's how I see it.* *You sort of feel they're a little bit part of your life when they're not and so it's more noise.* *Either way, I do share personal stuff, that's important.*	*I want to keep that for me. Facebook is a personal thing. So, like, if a business person I met, like at an event, asked me to be their friend on Facebook, I would decline and I would send them an email or ask them to be a friend on LinkedIn or something because I don't want that platform to get confused.* *I consciously keep my friends Facebook list to a smaller group….Even within my group of friends I'm careful to manage it.* *If Facebook only existed for me to give or for me to get, I would like to say I'd go on there to give, but, if I never heard anything back from anyone, then I wouldn't be on there because there is the receiving end. So then I guess it's get.*

	The [SNSs] microphone is so big, that it's almost unfair sometimes… and business if you are going to make a mistake online, it's going to get blown up. *For us, it's just helping people have these better lives.*		
	Authenticity	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Get
Max (M) Sports Equipment Manufacturer	*I think the authenticity piece is very important to us because we're passionate about what we're doing and there's a reason for it…you can't speak on something the way we do if they don't think you're being real with them.* *Navigating online - We've had to learn on the fly whatever I didn't know so ….. Now I'm tweeting. Not shying away from anything.* *We just believe so wholeheartedly in what we are doing …creating something that will leave a mark.* *I consistent and people know what to expect from me and I realize how important that is in business.* *Conversation is what we are after… people can recognize that and they jump onboard.*	*We're not on [SNSs] spending all day typing away trying to maintain relationships that are kind of empty anyway, right? The people you have around you are going to be the ones that are going to keep you lifted up, I imagine, but, if you don't, that's too bad. Cultivate some [offline]. Maybe not, maybe you've got all you need.* *[SNSs] it's ubiquitous. Everyone is using it. We just respond to requests. It's not really where we spend too much time.* *Our network is there but if we need something we pick up the phone. We're old school.*	*We do have Facebook and Twitter for our business – just not for ourselves. LinkedIn is me not the business.* *Yah, both [give/get].*

	I communicate the same online as offline. Everything is very direct and short. Each one of our emails whether email, text or phone call is boiled down to a point. Very direct, very short. So, it's all consistent.		
	Authenticity	No/No	Distinction/Not given
Nole (M) Sports Equipment Reseller	*[SNS use] is not something that I premeditate about.* *There is no hidden agenda to it. It is very easy and open. I have nothing to hide…As far as Facebook goes, I have no qualms about opening up to people.* *I got into it for a bit and then I was a bit wishy-washy for a bit.* *Some of my entrepreneur buddies say social media is about their community, about your image as being part of a community. That's not it. It's a labour of love for us. It's not about the money. We just try to lose the ego. It's about how do you build common ground and connect with [industry players and influencers].*	*It is something I turn on when I get here. And so just to be online - I don't discriminate. If someone wants to be my 'friend' I guess I just add them. I just leave it on throughout the day. I get people asking me stuff throughout the day…* *You are interacting on this different level there- when they are doing something and you comment on something they have done. It kind of changes that whole interact and it goes beyond. Yes, subconsciously, little things you may have commented on or seen in their lives and they now have a connection with you.*	*I hold it pretty tight [personal site membership].* *So I guess it's a give and get kind of thing.*
	Authenticity/Community-connection	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Equal

Anna (M/D) Marine Manufacturer	*I really use LinkedIn specialized groups, like, 5 different [industry] groups I'm involved with. They're all really active… And I've had more professional people from random parts of the world that I've never met, they are like, oh, we're talking about [industry] and they add me as a connection. So, I think that is pretty awesome and valuable.* *I just made friends with like 10 venture capitalists all across North America right there. And then [on LinkedIn] you get to see their connections and how you are connected. I just like the way it lays out all of that. So that is how I use it. I wouldn't post many things, I just collect [potential] relationships.* *Yah, we always have to make [SNSs] look perfect.* *I don't have anything to hide on there. But at the same time, I make it very – I understand that, like, pictures I put up could surface at any time in my life.* *I'm more comfortable typing my personality than I am interacting directly.*	*I get emails every day from LinkedIn about what is happening in those groups. I see what is happening that way.* *I do creep people, but I don't know if I would add someone I've never met.* *With Facebook. I would say how is it going kind of thing, new job and that. Sometimes it doesn't interest me and sometimes it does.* *I would post my comments and things about that and get other people's feedback, because it is valuable getting experts' opinions from around the world…* *And I've had more profession people from random parts of the world that I've never bet, they are like, oh, we're talking about [industry] and they add me as a connection. So I think that is pretty awesome and valuable.*	*Personally on Facebook (1002 friends) but the business is not on Facebook. I use my personal LinkedIn for business connections and participate in industry forums.* *I'm always aware of keeping things separate.* *I'd like to say 50/50. I don't like to update pictures and that that much but I do contribute and liking or commenting on things just as much as people do with their things.*

	Purposive	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Equal
Bart (M/D) Tourism software service	*I do think the whole thing, it should be as open and transparent as possible.* *I don't like over-sharing but it has to be, always be who you are, that reaction is there. I'm pretty conservative on there because it has just gotten out of hand for many people.* *That's the type of thing that face-to-face contacts provide that social networks don't seem to… I haven't seen any really positive results that would make me want to use it a lot more. The problem is there is so much noise on social media.*	*People change positions quite frequently so often that is how you would get in touch with someone is through LinkedIn…you don't have their personal email so that is there.* *[About SNS use]. I don't dash off communications…. I mainly decide things by myself. I don't go there, over-sharing like I said.* *Meeting people and going to these things has always been where it all happens and will continue to be where it all happens.*	*Everyone in my personal network would be in my LinkedIn network.* *Getting more. I don't give much back. That's the information resources…and I get quite a bit out of it and I don't give very much.* *But I pay it forward helping people out being a connector. It gets back to you in that way…*
	Authenticity	Yes/No	No Distinction/Get

Javiar (M/D) Clothing Retailer	*I'm a connector and so it's just become naturally for me to utilize these tools.* *So transparency is key. I try to keep every single profile the same. There is no division of the two because my value in the world is based on my authenticity.* *So my authenticity is my openness. My ability to go out and have no fear about connecting with others because it is my fundamental belief that we are human kind and humans want to connect.* *I believe I have a social side and some people get that. So whether it be offline or online I am going to do that.* *It's not a freefall where I can upload stuff and have no consequences to using social media.* *I'm constantly updating all my social media to reflect all the successes and downfalls I've had. So I am always trying to ensure that the information on my profiles is as accurate as possible.* *It it doesn't matter for me if it is offline or online, for me it has to be the same.*	*When Facebook first started coming out I friended people…. they'd see if I was legitimate, have me on a friend list, they would hook me up to their world. This would also allow me from a business development perspective to really get to know them. So if I was on a call with them I'd be like "hey, how are the kids?" as opposed to "hey, let's do this deal".* *So I use Twitter to provide me with advice without me seeking it… Advisors are really key for me with LinkedIn.* *As the world gets more complicated as an entrepreneur becomes more public it's also important to figure out who you are dealing with and I think Facebook allows you to get that access.* *I use LinkedIn and Facebook messages to connect with people.* *LinkedIn groups historically is the place where people are trying to find out information and work with entrepreneurs whenever possible. To me LinkedIn just fit basic sites I'm using to connect with people.* *And it's just easy and over time, it just makes getting to know people better easy, across the world.*	*I'm seeing Facebook more and more as a professional tool than as a social network for my friends and family.* *I have different lists for doing different things… my content is very specific to the targets in my professional world. I consciously manage that.* *It's get. I get a lot.*

	It is part of a strategy. Social networks are a foyer into other people's worlds. It's probably the best mechanism to present yourself…the profile is a really go intro to you. *In Canada it takes three business calls to close a deal. Typically you would utilize LinkedIn and Facebook in those two ways to create a better understanding to close the deal.*		
	Authenticity, Purposive	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Get
Maxine (M/D) Clothing Manufacturer	*We aren't using LinkedIn to actively connect with people in the [industry] business. Some of the people on there – not to be not nice – but some of the people we haven't had good interactions with out there in the world. It hasn't worked out, so we are always surprised that so-and-so is on there [our SNSs]. We aren't sure how credible it is or perhaps predatory.* *It's kind of instinctual. You know when it's right. I'm guided by my feelings. I am very ethical. That's important to me on social media too. It's that compass. Be who you are, true to yourself, even online.*	*I think we could enhance [our online presence] for sure. I know that if you want to meet large investors, angels or whatever, then you do need to be out there… I am very on baby steps. I don't want to risk everything so I take my time.* *We are relying on income from the company instead of investors. We can't grow too fast because we realized we couldn't manage that. So this is why we don't go out [on SNSs] more – reach out more.* *I have done [google] searches to find people who have the [raw materials] we need and then connected….I'm more comfortable with using email.*	*Separate? No. I have them linked to [Facebook business page].* *[I] as the business am on LinkedIn, but I do not use it much.* *My personal Facebook is just family and friends.* *Not really. Not yet*

		I try to do it [post to LinkedIn] periodically just to gain some interest – you have to do that in order to keep it prominent but I find that I am working so hard on the business that I don't have time.	
	Authenticity	No/No	No distinction/Equal

Nivin (M/D) Car After-market Manufacturer	*You have to have an authentic appeal if you are ever going to get that level of trust.* *At the game level I'm trying to play at, who is crazy enough to join in my mission, right, it's about transparency to me. That group of mad men and women that are going to breach that wall so to speak. That's got to go to your social media too.* *You need to be more than a one-dimensional person…The interaction has to be personal between individuals.* *Yes, my top tool is LinkedIn. I've use LinkedIn primarily as a research tool, and actually LinkedIn has a great hunt capability… I think I have close to 500 connections on LinkedIn. It is quite rare that I would have more than 3 degrees of separation to just about anything…. It*	*I use LinkedIn to build connections.* *Whenever I visit a city.., I look and say who do I need to reconnect with.* *I do admit that I have a closer, tighter group that I'm in more constant contact with. Not on face-to-face, but an online basis, and then ones that are more on the fringes of interest, and so on.* *It has been a place where you can go and quickly validate things that you are struggling with internally.* *It is a place where you can send very short updates, very frequently, to a very large group of people.*	*In my 20s there was no separation between work and play, my friend and work circles were the same. And it was actually a fairly difficult experience when the tech industry collapsed, when everyone was hurting, everyone kind of went their own ways. You know you loose both your colleagues and your friends at the same time. So, probably not consciously, I started to separate my work life from my play life.* *I'm aware whatever you post goes everywhere, so it is not like there is anything embarrassing on there but its just about that separation.* *This is personal, post to Facebook, professional, post to LinkedIn.*

	shows the intermediaries leading to that person. Knowing who the intermediary is, you are halfway there. *I became [through other startup] acutely aware of how important it is to have a good [SNS] network. It's a harder problem than building a brand. You have to work at it.*	*The other nice thing is LinkedIn tells you if there is a change in someone's life. If they've moved on to a new company or position and so on, so always an opportunity to connect.*	*Based on what we've talked about, yah, for sure get.*
	Authenticity	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Get
Rohan (M/D) Medical Service	*We've tended to avoid to really try any community-building. Because we just think it cheapens our brand a little bit.* *In my opinion, social media is just about getting out there and being honest. Being yourself. And whoever follows you, follows you because who you are is a value to them.* *And they hire these outside firms to be their social media, but the whole point of social media, I think, is about radical transparency. And, like, how do you give people a window into who you really are.*	*I think [social media] frankly, detracts from our relationships in the real world… you'll spend a bunch of time connecting and conversing with people in such a low bandwidth, low emotion-type connection. So, there are people that I maintain a relationship with, but they are physical world contacts that I know from the real world that the only way I communicate with them now is online. That if I didn't have Facebook, I just wouldn't talk to them. So, is that a waste of time or is there any value in it? I'd argue it's a bit of a waste of time.*	*On my personal Facebook I am invisible unless you're my friend, and if I add you as my friend, I'm not concerned about photos of me having beer or anything like that. Whereas, my LinkedIn is totally business.* *I have personal Twitter but I only follow people who only post what I think are intelligent, well-reasoned posts.* *I could only say it's even. Because great things have happened, but I also take time to post a lot of stuff and a lot of people say, "Wow.. This is great," or "This is inspiring." I get a lot of, "Wow.*

			You post a lot of inspiring stuff feedback from a lot of people."
	Authenticity	Yes/No	Distinction/Equal
Abigail (M/C) Event Planning Product	*All you have is you. The real you. That's what matters.* *In the beginning, yes, you would build a relationship. You would get to know others. You would know about their updates and you would send about their updates so there's more to gain in the beginning. But I feel like once your business has gotten to a certain stage, there's not much more to gain out of social media except stuff like press and wooing press and wooing other partners or building relationships with other companies and getting customers.* *I used to be on Twitter but I don't any more just because I don't have the time…. I think the most painful thing is the constant updating. I feel like I don't have a clear line of what I want to tell and what I don't. And most of the things I'm doing right now I wouldn't want to share.*	*So, what I find good about LinkedIn is you do make that connection, if you will, with somebody when you probably just ended the conversation with a business card exchange. So, what I find good about LinkedIn is you kind of push the [connection] envelope a little bit right? Without being creepy about it… I liked that, so you're just adding people and …you're passively putting on some updates and it's a way to update somebody without bugging them.*	*At first I actually didn't want to add anybody who was work-related to Facebook because I thought there was a distinction between the two… And then by first year, that boundary started getting a little bit blurry because you would have friends, like [name], who, very soon, became a friend. Then, it's kind of silly not to add him on Facebook because he is work-related. So, it started crossing the line, right? And then a lot of them were the same. We would have entrepreneurs who would go to movies with, we would talk about work with, we would have drinks, we would go snowboarding with, like, that line from work and personal life just crossed, right? So and I would love for them to be on my Facebook , it's just that they also know me as an entrepreneur. So, anyways, that line started getting a bit blurred and people started being added because of the friendships and one day it just became, well, okay, this line is no longer serving this purpose because I am no longer able to not talk about silly things because there are people who are work related here so I might as well put a little filter on what I might put on Facebook, keep it*

			respectable and not as silly as I might want it to be and just add people on Facebook. *Both. I'm definitely with both sides.*
	Authenticity	Yes/Yes	No Distinction/Equal
Martin (M/C) Sports Product	*What I see happening over the next 10 years is that people are going to become more authentic in terms of their posts and the information and content they are putting out there on the social networks just because people are going to realize they can't hide anymore. Everything is being watched and everything is recorded and there is no way people can delete that information from the web.* *The main tools we are using is our Facebook page to build an online community. Twitter as well. And probably what we use most is our blogs.* *I'm actually starting to move away from some of that social media stuff, spending less time… And focusing more time on building deeper connections there and I would rather have some trusted sources for information and go to people on my network, go to community connectors and building up strong relationships.*	*LinkedIn – very little new content goes up on LinkedIn. I use it more like a phone directory so when I need to connect with someone I'll use LinkedIn to either get a referral to connect with that person or contact them directly. And then I'll also use LinkedIn as an information source so I get a regular email from LinkedIn. I'll join different discussion groups and use it to learn about different industries or markets.* *I just see Twitter as a lot of spraying of messages.* *I read business advice on there [LinkedIn].* *Using Facebook makes it just a little bit easier to access that person or to be able to communicate with that person which helps to strengthen the relationship. It also provides additional information that I might not have like their birthdate, which friends we share in common and what subjects we*	*Personally, I'm on Facebook just to connect with friends for networking reasons. I'll use LinkedIn for professional connections and for referrals. I do also have my own blog called [name] and that is really for more – to help inspire other people but also for a personal branding perspective.* *I've learned they need to be separate.* *I'll always continue to give through social networks. In terms of the amount of resources that I put into it – that may change. It should be pretty balanced over time really.*

		might relate on…keep my core relationships or make my core relationships stronger.	
	Authenticity/Community	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Equal
Roscoe (M/C) Restaurant Franchisor	*[My business] becomes me. My personality that has to come through. And if they contact me, that's who they are dealing with. My business and me that's the same there.* *I'm all over the place [on SNSs], I don't have a problem with that… If I'm doing something stupid in public then I can accept that.* *I don't want to make it very professional. It's more loose. We're just human beings and whatever I post it's more part of my life.* *I don't like to be the boss. I want to seem touchable, reachable, personable. I'm the same person I always am.*	*People on LinkedIn send me connections but I don't get the purpose of it [just collecting ties]. It's just a bragging show. I don't want to play that game. I add some but ignore a lot.* *I do this now because I like people. It's not grabbing attention.* *I like to use it to get people involved. I'm really involved, engaged. I reply and retweet people's stuff. That's the word. I show I care about different aspects of life. But don't kid yourself, I don't really get to know them the same just online as you can do face-to-face. It doesn't work like that.*	*I try to keep it separate because I'm shuttering people off from some of my personal stuff. On my business page, I'm me, I just don't talk about everything.* *I keep the difference between acquaintances and friends… I barely click anybody as a friend because then they're too close…. More and more I'm aware of how sensitive these things are.* *I really have to be careful. Business-wise there are topics I can't touch, like politics, religion, military spending. I made mistakes. Now that's just on my own Facebook page.* *I don't know, it's just not that big a deal for me. Let's say pretty equal, I guess.*
	Authenticity	Yes/No	Distinction/Equal

Spencer (M/C) Home Improvement Service	*I try to be honest to me. If I'm representing myself, all aspects of myself, even the personal fun party guy side, I'll still put it on there… I like to think that they understand that everybody has a little bit of that side to them and if they are the type who is going to make a big judgment based on one weekend or one little comment, then I don't really want them, I don't want to be involved with them anyway. That's the way I approach it anyway.* *When I'm posting I have me in my mind.*	*LinkedIn is a really good source to find people… I get a lot of information there.* *Facebook, I have a lot of connections.* *I take it offline, to a coffee meeting or that kind of thing to really create useful business connections. That's just what's worked.*	*I'm definitely one of those people who's not, and I'm like this with everything. I'm not protective or worried about privacy or worried about security or any of those kinds of things. For some reason, I'm just not like that. If somebody "friends" me, I'll go sure, I'll just say yes.* *Spencer likes all the same things and posts a lot of the same things that [the venture] does.* *Twitter. Me, personally, no. But the business [marketing] is hardcore Twitter.* *I'm definitely getting more from social media. Yeah, considering we don't pay for it, getting more.*
	Authenticity	Yes/No	No distinction/Get
Tess	*I think you can still be authentic. It doesn't matter where I'm posting.*	*Twitter, I use more for connecting with other people that I'm involved with in business. …finding out about vendors' new products, or building*	*The personal page [on Facebook] I don't really use at all, to be honest. The only reason I have a personal page is*

(M/C) Food-related Manufacturer	*I don't use it as a sales tool… more engaging conversation with [my community].* *I don't want to use social media in a way that is overwhelming to people. I want to be quality driven, not quantity. And sometimes I see that as a fault in social media, it is about a number of posts and followers. I don't care how many followers I have. I'm more interested in other people that are following me – how can I help them.* *I don't want it to be a cold, static thing.*	*relationships with other vendors. So I mostly use it for staying in touch with other [industry players].* *If I see a chance to connect, I will.* *Soliciting new distributors, I would probably send them a tweet first, then connect by phone.* *I'll use it if I have to connect with somebody and I don't have their information.* *I'm not a poster.* *It [Facebook] is a place where we share. It is more about education and information within the industry community… more engaging conversation with them.*	*because you have to have one to have a business page.* *Twitter is all business.* *I would say getting more. Just the way people share with us.*
	Authenticity/Community	Yes/Yes	Distinction/Get
Ashton (D/C/M) Transport Service	*Basically we have goals [SNS] to interact with people who are interested in our company… in the communities involved in what we are doing… You have to think that through.*	*We are building new relationships with this, with other businesses and [individual] people as well. We've been maintaining relationships [too]…. I guess in maintaining relationships we are… doing good.*	*[Separate networks?] Not really, no. My company is me now [on SNSs].* *[SNSs] are more me + business. It is two people in one.*

	Using [SNSs] we are hoping to gain a general awareness of what we are doing and be a part of the community – long term – with everything that we are doing… working in a collaborative effort with everyone to be better at what we do. *They say social media is free but we all know it isn't.* *I know there are people who pay people to do their social media stuff but I think it's important, really important, to really keep it a personal thing with your community.*	*We try to make [posts] relevant so we are not bugging people too much… we want to get our core values in.* *I've never used it to get a personal introduction to someone I want to get to know for [company].* *Emotional support] Yah – definitely. Sure. Through just comments and stuff. Positive feeds. Way to go. Keep it up… it can be positive support.*	*It's hard to tell at the moment… It is hard to track how much value is there. So, I couldn't tell you right now.* *And if it turns out that I'm giving more than I'm getting that wouldn't change my use of it.*
	Purposive/Community-connection/Authenticity	Yes/Yes	No distinction/Not given