Building and breaking identities: How adversity shapes entrepreneurial motivation

Ishara Maharaj

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Supervisor: Professor Ralph Hamann,
Graduate School of Business, University of Cape Town

Co-Supervisors: Professor Ted Baker, Rutgers Business School, Rutgers University & Assistant Professor Erin Powell, Poole College of Management, North Carolina State University

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There are years that ask questions and years that answer.

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

- Zora Neale Hurston

Abstract

Entrepreneurship research has begun to recognise the role of people's lived experiences and significant life events prior to their venturing. Still, little is known about how adverse events shape founder identities and entrepreneurial motivation. My study uses an identity theoretical lens to consider the influence of founders' adverse life experiences on their venturing efforts. I asked the research question: *How do adverse life events shape entrepreneurs' identity construction efforts and their venturing motives?* Using a qualitative, grounded theory approach and life course methodology, I collected and analysed in-depth life story data of nine founders over the course of three years. These founders came into venturing under exceptionally adverse conditions in an informal economy context in Cape Town, South Africa. I found that adverse life experiences prior to venturing intentions or activities led to disconfirmed identities. The interplay between these disconfirmed identities and salient social identities played an integral role in founders' self-esteem and identity construction strategies in their efforts to restore a sense of coherence in their lives. These identity dynamics gave rise to distinct pathways resulting in different motives for establishing their ventures. My study enriches the literature on founder identity by detailing the significance of multiple forms of adversity on founders' identity construction and behavioural responses. By illuminating the relationship between the sources of adversity and salient social identities, I demonstrate the far-reaching consequences of adverse life events prior to venturing on founders' identities and entrepreneurial motives. It challenges the widely-held notion that founders in contexts of poverty are a homogenous group of entrepreneurs motivated by their basic needs. My study offers novel insights into the lived experiences of township entrepreneurs and contributes to scholarly knowledge on entrepreneurial adversity, identity and motivation in an under-researched context of poverty.

Key Words: Township entrepreneurs, founder identity, adversity, entrepreneurial motivation, adverse life experiences, informal economy

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

"He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how." – Friederich Nietzsche.

An abundance of entrepreneurship literature elucidates the challenges associated with being or becoming an entrepreneur. Venturing under adverse conditions presents further challenges. While previous studies highlight the role entrepreneurship plays in response to economic adversity (Powell & Baker, 2014), natural disasters (Williams & Shepherd, 2016) or physical trauma (Haynie & Shepherd, 2011), there is a tendency to view adversity as a single or episodic event (Shepherd, Saade & Wincent, 2020). Yet, there exist individuals who live in chronic adversity – "negative conditions that began long ago, continue in the present, and are unlikely to end passively (or even with modest effort) in the future" (Shepherd et al., 2022, p. v), such as two-thirds of the global population who endure poverty in Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) economies earning less than $2, 50 per day (Prahalad, 2012).

People in impoverished conditions have known no "pre-adversity" time, such as those born into war-torn countries or refugee camps (Shepherd et al., 2020), yet they go on to become entrepreneurs. This suggests that entrepreneurship often emerges from enduring hardship and within social structures which are beyond the control of marginalised individuals (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017). The role of adversity, defined as "an unfortunate event or circumstance or the state of serious and continued difficulty" (Tian & Fan, 2014, p. 252), requires further exploration in terms of how it may shape entrepreneurial behaviour and motivation. Much of the research on entrepreneurial motivation – "the motivation that is directed toward entrepreneurial goals" (Baum et al., 2007, p. 93) – has focused on specific phases in venture development, viz. starting, growing or exiting a business (Murnieks et al., 2020).

However the life circumstances surrounding the formation of venturing behaviours and motives, particularly for entrepreneurs in emerging markets with their dual formal and informal economies, remains an under researched area in entrepreneurship studies. My study focuses on the South African emerging market and the entrepreneurs that are largely considered informal within the unique setting that is the township economy. A recent editorial from the Academy of Management Review highlights the promising value present in building theory from the emerging market context, which is defined as "countries that lack strong formal institutions around business development but possess strong informal institutions that allow for unique forms of business development" (Morris et al., 2023, p. 2). In South Africa, townships, also known as informal settlements, were historically created on the peripheries of urbanised areas under the apartheid government to maintain racial segregation whilst creating cheap black South African labour for the white government and businesses (Urban & Ndou, 2019).

Whilst entrepreneurial activities were prohibited in townships under the apartheid government, the post-apartheid government has recognised the role that township ventures play in supporting economic growth (Mahajan, 2014). In this setting, informality is a characteristic of townships where formally registered ventures co-exist with informal ones such as grocery shops run out of resident's homes known as spaza shops (Charman et al., 2020). Townships have seen an increase in the number of business incubator and accelerator programmes as well as government-led entrepreneurial development initiatives (Masutha & Rogerson, 2014). Thus the township is a unique research context with a diverse range of both formal and informal entrepreneurs, of which entrepreneurship scholarship is limited.

With over five hundred townships that is home to approximately 40% of South Africa's urban population (ASPEN, 2021), and a variety of ventures that range from

informal necessity-based to prosocial and technology ventures with growth aspirations (Scheba & Turok, 2020), minimal scholarly research explicates the lived experiences of township entrepreneurs and their motivations. Hardships and environmental contexts shape individuals and motivate their actions, yet the life events that facilitate identity-shaping in becoming an entrepreneur under multiple forms of adversity have received minimal attention (Powell & Baker, 2014). Little is known about how prior life events that may disrupt or reinforce particular identities shape venture activities and motives.

My study aims to build on previous work on entrepreneurs' identity construction efforts by considering how prior life events influence venture creation and motivation. I gathered and analysed in-depth life story data of nine founders who came into venturing under particularly adverse conditions in an informal context. Exploring founders' life stories enabled me to capture the finer nuances and complexities (Larty & Hamilton, 2011) of their adverse life events and to understand how and why they established different types of ventures. By adopting an identity theoretical lens, I found that adverse life events prior to venturing in combination with salient social identities played a crucial role in shaping founders' identities, which motivated their venturing activities.

Recently, entrepreneurship scholars have recognised that different types of adversity are experienced by founders under varying circumstances. Notably, Shepherd and Williams (2020, p. 2) went on to define episodic adverse events as "low probability, high-impact negative shocks or jolts to a focal individual's or organisation's environment that is potentially highly disruptive to well-being." In contrast, they defined persistent adversity as "a continued cumulative process of downward pressure that imposes an ongoing and persistent threat to well-being" (Shepherd & Williams, 2020, p. 2). Our understanding of what comprises adversity

and what it means to be a founder under episodic or chronically adverse conditions remains limited, particularly in the emerging market context (Morris et al., 2023).

The occurrence of adversity has direct consequences for entrepreneurial action and motivation, particularly in settings where chronic adversity such as poverty is enduring (Shepherd et al., 2022). Since poverty is enduring and unlikely to be easily resolved, people living in such conditions have been motivated to employ entrepreneurial initiatives to improve their lives (Shepherd et al., 2022). Identity is a mechanism that influences thoughts and behaviour (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021), thus it is inextricably linked to entrepreneurial motivation.

Adversity in episodic or chronic states, can influence the identities which entrepreneurs are able to enact or to which social groups they can claim to belong since adverse contexts can constrain the kinds of roles a person is expected to inhabit or limit the types of relationships in which individuals can engage. This further emphasises the need to understand the interplay between identity, motivation and context. For example, the South African township setting represents a site of chronic adversity for its residents. It is characterised by a lack of basic services such as electricity and clean water or sanitation (ASPEN, 2021). To add to this, residents are plagued by high unemployment rates and criminal elements suggesting that episodic adversity is experienced in addition to chronic adverse conditions. Despite these multiple forms of adversity, townships residents represent the largest population of individuals engaged in entrepreneurial activities in the country (Charman et al., 2020). However, we do not fully understand how adversity affects their identity construction efforts nor do we know enough about what motivates them to establish ventures under such conditions of adversity. Without this knowledge, any interventions aimed at ameliorating their challenges could be futile.

The motivation to engage in entrepreneurship in developing economies has often been portrayed as necessity-based by a homogenous group of entrepreneurs who are pushed into venturing due to a lack of other employment opportunities (Shepherd et al., 2022; Weber et al., 2022). The notion of homogeneity attenuates potential opportunity-seeking motivation and behaviour that may exist within such contexts (Dencker et al., 2021). Apart from the problematic necessity-opportunity dichotomy in entrepreneurial motivation, traditional economic research assumes the primary motive for venturing efforts is financial in nature (Carsrud & Brannback, 2011). However, recent literature suggests the importance of other non-financial motives, such as the intrinsic motives of social entrepreneurs (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Ruskin et al., 2016). My findings corroborate the above assertions made by Decker and colleagues (2021). I found that entrepreneurs in township contexts are anything but a homogenous group and instead have multiple motives for pursuing their ventures, including opportunity-seeking and compassion-driven motives in their attempts to create coherence in their life stories and across their multiple sets of identities that comprise their founder identity.

Identity has been regarded as a promising area within entrepreneurship research. Identity is a mechanism that influences founders' thoughts and actions (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). For example, identity has been linked to how entrepreneurs assess opportunities (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011) or how they respond to economic adversity (Powell & Baker, 2014). Identity has also been a useful lens in understanding entrepreneurial motivation, for instance, in how founder aspirations motivate opportunity discovery behaviours (Farmer et al., 2012) or in decisions to establish prosocial ventures (Ruskin et al., 2016).

My study builds on previous research on identity and entrepreneurship, specifically on the founder identity construct, which Powell and Baker (2014, p. 1409)

define as "the set of identities that is chronically salient to a founder in her or his day-to-day work." Founder Identity Theory (FIT) is built on the foundations of two prominent social psychological theories: Role Identity Theory (IDT), which foregrounds the significance of our multiple salient roles and the expectations that others have of us in these roles, and Social Identity Theory (SIT), which recognises the social categorisations and group memberships that influence individuals. I have drawn from both theories in attempting to explicate the founder identities of township entrepreneurs. Both IDT and SIT claim that people have many identities, only subsets of which are salient at any given time in any given activity (Baker & Powell, 2020). This implies that multiple identities may be at play in enacting founder identities and that identities do not exist in isolation. The interrelatedness of multiple identities has consequences for how they are enacted (Bataille & Vough, 2022) when some identities come under threat.

By incorporating both IDT and SIT to explain founder identity, I introduce the identity disconfirmation construct in my identity process model that emerged from the data. Here, identity disconfirmation refers to the role and/or social identities that were not accepted by others during founders' experiences of adversity. This disconfirmation in turn affected their levels of self-esteem. The combination of multiple forms of adversity and disconfirmed identities prompted distinct identity construction strategies from reconciling or reconstructing previously disconfirmed identities to releasing identities and reconfirming them in new social environments. The identity literature states that when identities are verified by others, this produces feelings of competency and worth in a role or approval and acceptance within a social group (Cast & Burke, 2002).

However, when identities are disconfirmed, individuals seek opportunities to increase their self-esteem and will avoid contexts or groups that disrupt identity

confirmation (Swann, 1990). Importantly, the literature connects identity construction strategies and behavioural responses to motivation. Swann and Bosson (2008) explain that individuals learn to navigate their identities in ways that minimise distress between their needs for agency (enacting identities to make themselves unique from others), communion (enacting identities that connect them to others), and for coherence (enacting identities that fit with their perceptions of self). In my study, adverse life events and others involved therein resulted in disconfirmed identities for all founders prior to their venturing efforts. Yet their disconfirmed identities played a significant role in their motives to establish different types of ventures. This suggests that identities can be powerful drivers of entrepreneurial action at different points in time over the life course and in the venturing process (Foy & Gruber, 2022; Murnieks et al., 2020) and highlights the consequences of disruptions to some identities on further identity construction efforts (Bataille & Vough, 2022).

There have been a growing number of calls for research to consider how identity is socially shaped within context since scholars have given limited attention to changes in founder identities over time and in relation to their socio-cultural contexts (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2019). Through lived experiences, individuals come to internalise their identities and behave as they would like to be (Powell & Baker, 2014; Cardon et al., 2009). My study aims to connect the constructs of adversity, founder identity and entrepreneurial motivation by considering how adverse life events shape identity construction efforts and venturing motives for entrepreneurs in an informal, developing context. Thus, I asked the research question: *How do adverse life events shape entrepreneurs' identity construction efforts and their venturing motives?*

1.1 Research Approach and Findings

Taking a social constructivist epistemological stance and using a grounded theory approach, I purposively selected the township context as the research setting to answer my research question. Townships, also known as informal settlements, are typical sites of resource constraints within the South African economy. Township residents live in chronic adversity as they lack access to essential utilities such as water, electricity and proper sanitation services (Charman et al., 2020). They are also plagued by high unemployment rates, pervasive criminal activity, and political unrest. This means that they are doubly disadvantaged in terms of both episodic and persistent adversity that is part of township life.

My research design adopted a life course methodological approach. It used life course research tools, viz. lifelines and social network maps, to capture the life stories of my sample of nine township entrepreneurs. Given the dearth of research in the lived experiences of township entrepreneurs, Life Course Theory and research tools were deemed appropriate for this study as it emphasises "that no period of life can be understood in isolation from people's prior experiences, as well as their aspirations for the future" (Mortimer & Shanahan, 2007: xi). The life course approach, which is rooted in sociology, guided data collection of participants' life stories within their adverse contexts and revealed the role of various life events and social relations in founders' identity construction efforts, actions and motivations.

My findings illuminate the relationships between identity, adversity, and founding motives in interesting ways. Firstly, the interplay between salient social identities and other disconfirmed identities extended across the life course. Adverse life events prior to venturing led to disconfirmed role and/or social identities. Salient social identities were fundamental causal mechanisms that played an integral role

in subsequent identity construction and behavioural responses evident in founders' venturing efforts. Secondly, I found that township entrepreneurs experienced multiple forms of adversity. Not only did they exist in chronic states of adversity, i.e. where there was seemingly no end or solution to their poverty, but they also experienced adverse life events of varying duration, i.e. episodic and/or persistent adversity. These combined forms of adversity revealed the pivotal role of the sources of adversity on founders' identity construction efforts. For example, when adverse life events emerged from within family sources, this caused some founders to develop negative perceptions of their family social identities and prompted them to abandon these identities and later reconfirm them in new social environments.

Lastly, I found rich variance in founders' motives that went beyond necessity factors commonly associated with founders in contexts of poverty. Founding motives were closely linked to salient social identities. For example, the collectivist attitudes, values and behaviours of founders with salient communal-spiritual social identities resulted in prosocial venturing motives. Positively perceived family social identities helped founders deal with adverse life events and led to redemptive founding motives. In contrast, negatively-perceived family social identities that led to the release of disconfirmed identities resulted in emancipatory founding motives, as some founders chose to create new social identities in new social environments to escape their past adversity.

1.2 Contributions and Implications

My study makes several contributions to the entrepreneurship field. Firstly, it contributes to research on adversity and entrepreneurship by providing insights into the implications of multiple forms of adversity on founders' identity-shaping efforts. My study finds that entrepreneurial pursuits enable people to improve their lives

despite the combination of chronic adversity experienced in impoverished township communities and adverse life events such as family abuse and xenophobia. My study shows that it is not the kinds of adversity that shape founders' identities and behaviour but the proximity of family social groups to adverse life events. Specifically, founders' behavioural responses and motives were differentiated by the familial versus external community sources of adverse life experiences and the presence or absence of supportive social structures to deal with multiple forms of adversity. This highlights the embeddedness of founders in multiple social structures and socio-cultural contexts and the role of others in shaping identities and founding motives.

Secondly, it extends the work of Powell and Baker (2014) by elaborating on the interplay between role and social identities that helped founders to construct coherence in their lives. When salient roles or valued social identities were disconfirmed through adverse life events, founders responded in different ways within their specific contexts. My study highlights the integral role that prior identities play in shaping founder identities and reiterates the reciprocal nature of identity and behaviour (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021) in an under-researched developing context.

Lastly, my study addresses calls for greater explication of the venturing experiences of founders from informal contexts (Bacq, Nason & Gras, 2018) and challenges the assertion that entrepreneurs from developing contexts are a homogenous group of necessity-based founders who are pushed into entrepreneurial activities to meet their basic needs (Chatterjee et al., 2022). I found evidence of varying motives that were linked to how founders perceived their identity disconfirmations. While some founders were driven by their spiritual and community beliefs to establish prosocial ventures, others founded ventures to redeem themselves in the face of adverse life events that disconfirmed salient

identities, and others chose to emancipate themselves from family social identities that were the source of their personal adversities. Apart from the rich variance revealed in founding motives, this study highlights the role of family relations in adversity and identity construction efforts. My study thus connects adversity to founder identity and entrepreneurial motivation in a developing context. It attempts to make these contributions whilst adopting a "bold and entrepreneurial" research method (Baker & Welter, 2020) to capture rich data through life course methodology and research tools.

It offers some practical implications. Having been privy to the in-depth life stories of township entrepreneurs, it was evident that their venturing efforts were challenged beyond typical resource constraints, along health, education and socio-economic dimensions. These constraints form part of the chronic adversity that typifies township communities where individuals have to contend with a lack of access to basic facilities or services and unstable environments (Charman et al., 2020). This occurs in conjunction with adverse life events, such as abuse within family structures or threats to safety and security (Irene, 2018). Such challenges negatively impact township entrepreneurs' psycho-social well-being and represent substantial barriers to any form of entrepreneurial education or programming that is introduced within township economies. Entrepreneurial programming requires a new approach that is tailored to meet these constraints in township economies if it is to have an impact on the lives of township entrepreneurs.

While my study primarily focused on single-founder township entrepreneurs, the role of family social identities and social structures prior to founders' venturing efforts was significant in shaping their identities. Entrepreneurship scholars have a limited understanding of the various forms of the family unit or their impact on the individual's venturing efforts in contexts of poverty. Future studies in adverse settings

could continue my work on founder identity by considering township teams, particularly cross-generational family co-founders and the identity dynamics within idiosyncratic family structures such as female-headed households.

South African townships comprise ventures that operate informally as well as formally registered entities (Charman et al., 2020). Much of the previous literature on informal entrepreneurial contexts suggests that most informal ventures are illegal but legitimate within their contexts (Salvi et al., 2022). My study contained a mix of both formal and informal ventures and demonstrates that these types of ventures operate alongside each other in township settings. Future research could further unravel this problematic contextualisation by comparing different informal contexts to extend insights into this diverse group of entrepreneurs.

1.3 Structure of Dissertation

The rest of my dissertation is structured as follows. In chapter two, I present extant literature on entrepreneurial motivation before focusing on previous studies of founder identity and the social-psychological roots of Founder Identity Theory. I then examine the work on entrepreneurial adversity before addressing the gaps in the literature to connect adversity to founder identity and motivation. In chapter three, I introduce my study context in greater detail before outlining life course methodology and the research tools chosen for my research design. Next, I explain my data collection and analysis strategies and discuss the steps I took to maintain my study's ethical requirements and rigour.

I present my findings in chapter four by first introducing the process model I derived from data analysis. I then share three exemplary life stories representing the three pathways found in my model before describing variations across each construct. In chapter five, I discuss the three main contributions from my data in

extending previous work on adversity, founder identity and motivation. I also discuss the limitations of my study, the implications of my findings, and make recommendations for future research. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with a summary of my findings and reflections on my work in the broader entrepreneurship field.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Almost a century ago, Joseph Schumpeter introduced the concept of entrepreneurship and highlighted the significance of the entrepreneur as the epicentre of "creative destruction" who drives new, innovative goods and services into the market to advance capitalist economies (Schumpeter, 1934). Entrepreneurship research built on this perspective and has been strongly associated with economic growth, with the entrepreneur portrayed in a heroic sense (Murnieks et al., 2019). However, venture creation is an inherently social activity (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011), and entrepreneurs impart their individual identities onto the social activities related to their venture creation (Leitch & Harrison, 2016). Identity can therefore be seen as a bridging construct between the individual entrepreneur (who am I?) and the social construction (how should I act?) of a new venture. The study of the identity of entrepreneurs has been recognised as an important construct in entrepreneurship research (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021); however, we still know very little about how founder identities emerge (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Powell & Baker, 2014; Mathias & Williams, 2018). Even though the literature on entrepreneurial motivation points to an array of motives to begin a venture (Murnieks et al., 2020), less is known about founders' lives and identities prior to venturing that may inform their founding motives.

My research question is: *How do adverse life events shape entrepreneurs' identity construction efforts and their venturing motives?* I consulted seminal theoretical literature and empirical studies on entrepreneurial motivation, identity and adversity to understand what had been previously explored. I delved deeper into the tenets of two fundamental theories that root Founder Identity Theory (FIT) – Identity Theory (IDT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). I further explored the literature

on entrepreneurial motivation. Given the context of informality chosen for my study, I consulted the literature on informal entrepreneurship to examine what previous scholars have written about adversity within informal contexts. This chapter begins with an introduction to studies that focus on identity-based explanations of entrepreneurial motives. I then describe IDT and SIT as the foundations of FIT before examining empirical studies on identity in entrepreneurship and connecting founder identity to contexts of adversity and informality. I conclude the chapter by discussing the gaps in the extant literature, which I aim to address through my study.

2.1 Entrepreneurial Motivation

Motivation is considered a key antecedent to founder behaviour (Mahto & McDowell, 2018). Previous research has presented various entrepreneurial motives to explain why founders establish ventures, yet this remains a vastly disparate area of study (Murnieks et al., 2020), particularly for founders in developing contexts. Shepherd and Patzelt (2018, p. 51) describe motivation as "the behaviour-triggering force, which directs behaviour and increases persistence with a course of action" and explain that entrepreneurs can be motivated by both economic or extrinsic and non-financial or intrinsic factors. Entrepreneurial motivation has been defined as "motivation that is directed toward entrepreneurial goals" (Baum et al., 2007, p. 93), such as exploiting specific business opportunities.

Traditionally, entrepreneurship research grounded in Schumpeterian economics posited that entrepreneurs' financial motives are their primary motives in establishing and operating ventures (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018; Carsrud & Brannback, 2011). However, recent literature points to other motives such as the growing study of social entrepreneurs' intrinsic motivations to serve others with empathy or compassion (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Ruskin et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2012) or

the study of entrepreneurial passion (Murnieks et al., 2014; Cardon et al., 2009), as the driving force behind entrepreneurial pursuits.

While research on non-financial motives has contributed to novel insights on entrepreneurial motivation, scholars have called for an integration of financial and non-financial motives (Murnieks et al., 2020; Powell & Baker, 2014) since both can interact in leading entrepreneurial action and behaviour. It has become evident that there is variance in an individual's willingness and ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities because people are different (Shane et al., 2003). The identity perspective is a useful outlook to understand the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

2.1.1 Entrepreneurial Motivation – An Identity Approach

In addressing the dearth of research on entrepreneurial motives, Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) posited that entrepreneurial identities are salient to founders, thus motivating their behaviour. Identities can be powerful drivers of entrepreneurial action at different points in time over the life course and in the venturing process (Foy & Gruber, 2022; Murnieks et al., 2020). Prior identities play a pivotal role in shaping founder motivation as they may demarcate boundaries in role expectations and behaviour that one is willing or able to enact (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020). Fauchart and Gruber (2011) created typologies of founder identities using social identity theory. Founders in their study differed in their motivation to operate ventures based on meanings associated with their self-concepts; for example, founders with a Darwinian identity operated their ventures based on economic self-interests, whereas Communitarian founders were motivated to support their communities through their ventures (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011). The values, beliefs and attitudes associated with salient social identities extend across multiple social

structures. This may regulate the kinds of identities that individuals are motivated to enact. For instance, the social identity of a church member and the beliefs and values associated with the teachings of the church community likely influence the contexts and kinds of people with whom an individual socialises within and beyond the church (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020).

Studies have further pointed to the significance of aspirational identities, such as Hoang and Gimeno's (2010) work on role transition, which explains that an individual has to give up a current work role to take up the role of founder through imagining possible role identities. They argued that the extent to which a founder role conflicts with other identities and the degree of novelty, i.e. new skills, knowledge or abilities associated with being a founder, can hinder a successful transition from a current work role (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010). However, the aspiration that one could become a founder, i.e. a possible self (Farmer et al., 2011) and the subjective importance given to the founder identity can motivate behaviour toward turning a possible identity into an actual one (Hoang & Gimeno, 2010).

Powell and Baker (2014) found that social identities were aspirational in terms of how founders operated their ventures. In response to economic adversity faced by their ventures during the Great Recession of 2008, founders enacted salient role identities through their ventures to express valued social identities. Differences in these identity structures and how founders defined their adverse situations led to different strategic responses to adversity. Having observed that founder identities comprised combinations of role and social identities, Powell and Baker (2014, p. 1409) defined founder identity as "the set of identities that is chronically salient to a founder in her or his day-to-day work."

More recently, Foy and Gruber (2022) questioned the implicit assumption within entrepreneurship, theorising that a founder's identity aligns with their

sociocultural context. They examined the (mis)alignment of identity structures within social structures for founders in Taiwan – a society characterised by contrasting traditional and contemporary social structures that produce tensions for founders with differing perceptions of their society (Foy & Gruber, 2022). They found that variation in founder motivations either challenged the status quo in socio-political terms when founder identities and social structures were misaligned or highlighted a temporal orientation that enhanced the value of ventures for founders with aligned identities and social structures. Thus, for founders with misaligned identities, selling to consumers in rural regions while educating them about social issues challenged the current political climate. In contrast, founders whose identities were aligned with the sociocultural context chose to preserve traditions or invent a new future through their products (Foy & Gruber, 2022). Their study connects the entrepreneurship context to identity by highlighting the tensions that could arise when founders challenge the status quo through their ventures to transform societies. Transformative motives are often depicted in prosocial ventures, such as Muhammad Yunus' motivation to transform the micro-credit financing system in his home country Bangladesh and his establishment of the Grameen Bank for impoverished micro-enterprises (Yunus, 1999).

Studies on identity and entrepreneurial motivation have extended to specific facets of particular groups of entrepreneurs, such as Yitshaki and Kropp's (2016) study on the passion and identities of high-tech and social entrepreneurs. By comparing identities and passion across different types of entrepreneurs, they found that passion and identity create a feedback loop that reinforces each other. Corresponding to theoretical assertions made by Murnieks et al. (2014), they discovered that high-tech founders in their sample were motivated by their passions to create new and meaningful innovations rather than money. Their passion served

as energy to persist with challenging activities in their ventures. Similarly, social entrepreneurs' passion enabled them to make changes to help others; however, their passion was driven by prior life events that sparked awareness of and compassion for the plight of others (Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016).

Social enterprises are said to be hybrid organisations with competing institutional logics, combining social welfare and commercial logics (Battilana & Lee, 2014). York et al. (2016) studied environmental entrepreneurs and found that they were motivated by identities based in both economic and environmental logics through identity coupling. Founders' identities were hybrid in that they coupled features with potentially conflicting logics, which motivated how they established their environmental ventures and the differences in how they involved stakeholders (York et al., 2016). Some founders were motivated by financial gains, while others' motives were dominated by confronting environmental challenges, and a third blended group was equally motivated by their financial and ecological identities (York et al., 2016). This study makes an important contribution to research on hybrid organising and reveals that founders can have multiple motivations even when competing logics are present in founders' identities.

In a world that is increasingly diverse as a result of global migration, entrepreneurship research has begun to consider the motives of diverse groups of individuals, such as immigrants (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017), war veterans (Haynie & Shepherd, 2011) and refugees (Shepherd et al., 2020). Dheer and Lenartowicz (2018) added the study of bicultural entrepreneurs – individuals who identify with two or more cultures – to this body of work. They argued that changes to how individuals perceive and enact multiculturalism play a pivotal role in their venturing efforts. They found that the belief that one's multiple cultural identities can be integrated and exist harmoniously can positively influence venturing motives (Dheer & Lenartowicz,

2018). While the list of diverse sets of entrepreneurial identities grows within the field, further attention is required to explicate entrepreneurs' motives in contexts of poverty and the informal economies therein to build robust theories on founder identity and motivation.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial Motivation in the Informal Economy Context

Entrepreneurship scholars have increasingly argued for a greater focus on context in research. Jones et al. (2019, p.4) describe context as "the socioeconomic environment consisting of institutions, norms and culture as well as availability of finance, knowledge creation in the surrounding society, economic and social policies, the presence of industry clusters, and geographic parameters." Since identities are socially situated and dependent on social interactions with others in society, the identity-context nexus is critical to developing a greater understanding of founder identity.

Turning to informal contexts, there is a paucity of research on entrepreneurs within these ecosystems, such as South African township entrepreneurs. Limited knowledge of the extent of the challenges and the very nature of such informal contexts hampers our ability as entrepreneurship scholars to understand how founders may define, adjust or abandon various identities in relation to motivations to pursue entrepreneurial activities. Since salient identities act as filters that bring particular opportunities in a given context into focus (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021), it is crucial that the identity-context nexus is examined in the informal context to gain further insight into the various identities that result in venturing efforts.

In this study, I refer to the term informal economy or context, which "consists of economic activities that occur outside of formal institutional boundaries but which remain within informal institutional boundaries for large segments of society" (Webb

et al., 2013, p. 598). I specifically focus on informal economies in developing or emerging contexts. Several studies refer to developing contexts using economic terms such as the Global South – a term coined by The World Bank in reference to less developed economies outside of North America and Europe (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020), or the Base-of-the-Pyramid (BoP) – approximately two-thirds of the world's population who live close to or below the poverty line and earn less than $2, 50 per day (Prahalad, 2012).

Welter et al. (2015) explain that the informal economy concept has been referred to using several labels such as black, grey, shadow or irregular economies that exist in all countries worldwide. They define informal entrepreneurship as: "income earned from activities that take place partially or fully outside government regulation and laws, taxation, but inside a normative institutional frame which is based on implicit mutual understanding of society and communities of what is acceptable and tolerable" (Welter et al., 2015, p. 294). While informal economies in developed countries complement activities in formal economies to a small extent, they contribute up to 60% in developing economies and provide approximately 72% of employment opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa (Webb et al., 2013). In South Africa, the informal economy has grown alongside the formal economy in township contexts, and the state has encouraged entrepreneurial activity in light of contractions in the formal economy (Urban & Ndou, 2019). This highlights the significance of the informal economy to the overall South African economy and the micro-enterprises that operate within these settings.

The South African informal economy is unique in the sense that it has developed across different historical regimes. The apartheid townships of the past were designed on the principles of racial segregation and as a means of black labour to service the white minority (Mahajan, 2014). The post-apartheid township

was formed as part of the democratic government's housing reform programme on the peripheries of urban areas, and informal settlements refer to make-shift residential structures known as shacks that are built alongside existing townships and on vacant land in parts of major city centres as citizens from rural parts of the country (including migrants from other countries) move closer to city centres in search of better opportunities (Scheba & Turok, 2020). Despite these differences in the emergence of South African townships, they generally share similar characteristics such as: poor economic infrastructure, little to no access to basic utilities (electricity, water, and sanitation services), high levels of crime (drug abuse, gangsterism, xenophobia and gender-based violence), and increasingly high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth populations (Scheba & Toruk, 2020).

Informal entrepreneurship research within developing countries has largely viewed entrepreneurship as an effective poverty alleviation mechanism (Chant & Pedwell, 2008) or development tool that is driven by necessity motives. However, the entire sub-field remains under-researched, particularly in Sub-Saharan African contexts (Weber et al., 2022). Necessity entrepreneurship is the most common form of entrepreneurial activity in developing contexts. It generally refers to "entrepreneurial activity arising out of need due to a lack of employment alternatives" (Dencker et al., 2021, p.60). A recent discussion on necessity entrepreneurship questions the dichotomous approach of studies that compare necessity entrepreneurs to opportunity entrepreneurs (Dencker et al., 2021).

This dichotomy is based on the push-pull framework and argues that while opportunity entrepreneurs are pulled into venturing due to the attractiveness of opportunities that they recognise, necessity entrepreneurs are pushed or forced into venturing activities in the absence of alternative options for income generation (Weber et al., 2022; Dencker et al., 2021; Coffman & Sunny, 2021). Focusing on this

dichotomy and viewing all necessity entrepreneurs as a homogenous group fails to address critical variations among necessity entrepreneurs, including variations in their life experiences before venturing and their motives for establishing ventures (Dencker et al., 2021).

Dencker et al. (2021) argued that entrepreneurial processes of necessity entrepreneurs are primarily motivated by the need to fulfil basic needs and that within this motivation, they also participate in opportunity identification and exploitation. In their paper, the boundary condition of basic needs fulfilment corresponded to the two lowest levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, viz. physiological needs such as food and water, and safety needs such as basic security (Dencker et al., 2021). Coffman and Sunny (2021) countered that this implied that the three higher levels of Maslow's hierarchy, viz. the need for belongingness, the need for esteem or psychological needs, and the need for self-actualization of self-fulfilment needs, were reserved for opportunity entrepreneurs (Coffman & Sunny, 2021).

They argued that entrepreneurial motivation might not follow such a linear path adding that even Maslow admitted to his hierarchy not being as inflexible (Coffman & Sunny, 2021). Importantly, Maslow (1987) maintained that behaviour could be simultaneously driven by multiple motivations, which implies that entrepreneurs across contexts could potentially be motivated by multiple needs to establish their ventures (Coffman & Sunny, 2021). However, this requires further research. Dencker et al. (2021) suggest that entrepreneurs who establish ventures to address a combination of needs are likely to produce different outcomes from their entrepreneurial efforts.

Weber et al. (2022) argue that variation between countries in terms of institutional conditions and constraints placed on entrepreneurs is substantial, which

suggests that there are likely constellations of variables that could explicate the outcomes of necessity entrepreneurs, yet entrepreneurship scholars largely overlook this. While Weber et al. (2022) employ a capability approach to explain variance in necessity entrepreneurship among Tanzanian entrepreneurs, there remains a paucity of research that describes the variance in informal founders' motives. The following section introduces identity theory and empirical studies within entrepreneurship.

2.2 Founder Identity Theory

Founder Identity Theory (FIT) emerged from foundational social psychological theories that entrepreneurship scholars have drawn on in various ways (Baker & Powell, 2020). Founder identity is primarily rooted in two prominent identity theories based on cognitive schemas – Social Identity Theory (SIT), which recognises the social categorisations and group memberships that influence the individual; and Role Identity Theory (commonly referred to as Identity Theory) (IDT), which foregrounds the significance of our multiple salient roles and the associated expectations of others within those roles as deemed acceptable in societies (Greene & Brush, 2018). Examples of a social identity could include environmental or political activist, whereas a role identity could be a mother or entrepreneur.

Albeit with different foci, both SIT and IDT represent identity in relation to the self and society. Both theories assert that individuals have many identities, only subsets of which are salient at any given time or in any given activity (Baker & Powell, 2020). For example, from an SIT perspective, individuals self-categorise as members of social groups and take on what they see as the prototypical characteristics of other members in the relevant in-group (Powell & Baker, 2017). Implicit or explicit comparisons with members of out-groups are commonly seen as

strategies to perceive oneself in a more positive light and to improve one's sense of self-esteem (Hogg, 2016). From an IDT perspective, role identities are built through interactions with others who hold behavioural norms and expectations that define the role and what constitutes acceptable performance in that role (Stryker, 1980). In the following sections, I summarise the key features of IDT and SIT and describe entrepreneurship studies that have previously employed an identity lens.

2.2.1 The Sociological Roots of FIT – Identity Theory (IDT)

While the term identity has been used in an astonishing number of different ways across various disciplines, identity theorists within the field of sociology draw on the work of Mead (1934) and symbolic interactionism, i.e. the symbolic meaning that individuals ascribe to themselves, other people, objects and events in the process of interacting with others in society, and what Stryker and Burke (2000, p. 287) referenced as a simplified form of Mead's framework: "Society shapes self shapes social behaviour." The symbolic interactionist view of the basic nature of society contends that it is a system of interpersonal communication and interaction with the product of society being the basic nature of the individual (Stryker & Serpe, 1982), and social interaction being the fundamental mechanism that bridges self and society (Stryker, 1980).

Adopting the symbolic interactionist view of the reciprocity of society and self, IDT considers society "a multifaceted mosaic of interdependent but highly differentiated parts - groups, institutions, strata - whose relationships run the gamut from cooperation to conflict" (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 205). In IDT, the individual self is seen as a complex entity, drawing on James' (1890 in Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 206) argument that "people have as many selves as there are others who react to them."

Stryker (1980) framed IDT and how we, as individuals, define situations in terms of roles and expectations. Defining a situation requires us to name the world around us, including ourselves and others. The term role refers to the expectations attached to role positions - a socially recognised category of actors in society (Stryker, 1980). In other words, the position that we hold by taking up a role in society is labelled as such and comes with expectations from others in terms of how we are expected to or ought to behave in that role or position in society, for example, a teacher is expected to guide students in the classroom in a school setting. These are the expectations of the school principal who hired the teacher, the students who look to the teacher for knowledge, and their parents who expect their children to be educated, but also the expectations that the teacher may expect of themselves.

In the above example, the others described in relation to the teacher represent counter roles, i.e. "a role associated with one social position that is defined by its relation to a role associated with another social position" (Stets et al., 2020, p. 197). Or, as Stryker (1980, p.57) explains: "there can be no employer without employee, no mother without child, no professor without student." He then introduced several concepts to explain social behaviour, starting with identity, identity salience and commitment. Role identities are defined as "parts of self, internalized positional designations. They exist insofar as the person is a participant in structured role relationships" (Stryker, 1980, p. 60). Thus the individual can be a mother, daughter, wife, artist and entrepreneur, and all of these roles can collectively make up the self.

In answering the question: why would one role identity be enacted over another in a given situation? Stryker (1980) used the concept of identity salience and the salience hierarchy to explain behavioural choice. He explained that identities are organised into a salience hierarchy, and the likelihood of an identity being

invoked across different situations depends on its position within the salience hierarchy. Thus identities higher up on one's salience hierarchy are more likely to be invoked more often and in varied social settings, than lower-ranked identities. Importantly, the enactment of a salient identity also depends on the characteristics of a situation as well as characteristics of the self, such as a sense of self-esteem (Stryker & Serpe, 1982).

Commitment within IDT is considered from the interactional and affective dimensions. Interactional commitment refers to the number of ties and interactions an individual has in a particular identity. Commitment to an identity is said to increase as the size of a social network and, by association, the number of social interactions increases. Affective commitment is an evaluative dimension whereby individuals assess how others perceive them in their role identity. Affective commitment increases if an individual perceives that others have a positive evaluation of them in a particular role identity. On the other hand, people become distressed if they are not able to enact a specific identity and are no longer able to interact with others (Stets & Serpe, 2013).

IDT was particularly useful in helping me understand how individuals adopt particular identities in terms of the broader social structure and how they deal with competing role identities. Stryker (1980, p. 62) states that we come to know the expectations of others through a role-taking process, defined as "the process of anticipating the responses of others with whom one is involved in social interaction." Through this process, individuals in their particular role identities come to learn about the expectations from others and socialisation within their roles, which motivates actors' behaviour in two ways:

- People seek out identity confirmation or validation by enacting their roles in ways that would elicit validating responses from others.

- In general, people want to think well or positively about themselves. Self-esteem is thus related to behaviour in an identity. When an identity conforms to societal norms and values, it is esteem-producing (Stryker, 1980). Role-taking and socialisation encourage the development of meanings that people attach to their role identities, and this is learned through social interaction with others.

Ultimately, people seek identity confirmation from those in counter roles within their social networks. Stets and Serpe (2013, p. 35) describe this as identity verification, which "is individuals perceiving that others see them in a situation in the same way they see themselves." A negative emotional response is produced when identities are not verified or disconfirmed. This further motivates individuals to alter their behaviour or the expectations of others to restore congruence between self-perceptions and reflected appraisals (Stets & Burke, 2014).

As life comprises complexities in social interaction, having multiple identities and various sets of expectations from the different social networks to which one belongs introduces the potential for role conflict and role strain. Stryker (1980, p. 73) defines role conflict that "exists when there are contradictory expectations that attach to some position in a social relationship" and role strain as "a felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations." In terms of energy and resources, it is not always possible to meet others' expectations across multiple roles (Stryker, 1980, p. 75). Resolving such conflict depends on the definition of the situation, how free one is to reject others' expectations, and how committed one is to those network relationships. The creative alteration of expectations or the total withdrawal from relationships that produce the conflict are other possible strategies to overcome conflict (Stryker, 1980).

2.2.2 The Social-Psychological Roots of FIT – Social Identity Theory (SIT)

While IDT focuses on the individual within the group, SIT considers the perception of the group within the individual (Greene & Brush, 2018). SIT was initially proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) in the late 1970s. It is a social psychological theory of intergroup relations and the social self (Hogg et al., 1995). Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 40) describe a social identity as "those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging". Social category memberships manifest in people's minds. The theory posits that individuals have a collection of discrete category memberships with varying degrees of relative importance for one's self-concept (Hogg et al., 1995). Three theoretical principles were derived from early SIT research, known as the Minimal Group Paradigm (Hogg, 2016).

- "Individuals strive to achieve or to maintain positive social identity.
- Positive social identity is based to a large extent on favourable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and some relevant out-groups: the in-group must be perceived as positively differentiated or distinct from the relevant out-groups.
- When social identity is unsatisfactory, individuals will strive either to leave their existing group and/or to make their existing group more positively distinct" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40).

The principles point to social identities as self-evaluative and that groups and their members engage in behaviour that would maintain or achieve a favourable perception of the in-group and self compared to relevant out-groups (Hogg et al., 1995). As the theory gained traction, two underlying socio-cognitive processes developed within SIT, illuminating the dynamics of social relations and internal belief

systems, viz. Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) and the Self-Esteem Hypothesis (SEH), which I briefly describe below.

2.2.2.1 Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT)

Whilst Tajfel and Turner (1979) co-created SIT, Turner, together with his students, went on to develop Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) out of the SIT tradition (Turner et al., 1987). They proposed the hypothesis that social identity is the driving force of group behaviour that applies to conceptualisations of the self at different levels of abstraction, e.g. at the personal, group or human level (Turner et al., 1987). SCT became known as the social identity theory of the group. It posited that individuals have multiple and varied group and personal selves that occur in many comparative contexts (Spears, 2011). It recognises people as both group members and individuals and explains how and when they would come to define themselves as such.

According to SCT, people define or categorise themselves at different levels of abstraction: the interpersonal level, where self is defined as a unique individual relative to available others for social comparison; the intergroup level, where self is defined as an in-group member relative to a relevant out-group; and the superordinate level, where self is defined as a human being in comparison to other life forms. Intra-personal comparisons result when self is defined in relation to other in-group members (Turner & Reynolds, 2012).

At the individual or group level, self-categorisation is a dynamic, context-dependent process that forms and shifts reflexively as people perceive themselves and others through changing social realities. The process of categorising self has an accentuating effect. Individuals perceive similarities between themselves and others belonging to the same category, while differences are perceived between self and

others belonging to different categories. This accentuation effect is a vital sensemaking tool that creates subjective meaning for individuals and ultimately defines social identity (Hogg et al., 1995).

Self-categorisation and defining self with the ideal version representative of a group is known as the group's prototype. A group prototype is defined as "a fuzzy set of attributes that capture those perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours that define the group and differentiate it from relevant other groups" (Hogg et al., 2017, p. 572). Thus prototypes influence our self-perceptions in line with how we are expected to behave within the group. Salient out-groups also influence prototypes in an individual's context, making social identity highly dynamic as changes occur in the salience of relevant out-groups (Hogg et al., 1995).

In turn, as people strive to behave normatively or prototypically, Turner et al. (1987) referred to the depersonalisation of the self as the basic process underlying group phenomena such as social stereotyping, cooperation and other collective behaviour. Depersonalisation refers to contextual changes in the level of identity from unique individual to a group member. However, it does not imply a loss of individual identity. It simply refers to the transformation in contextually relevant in-groups from individuality into group behaviour that occurs through self-categorization (Hogg et al., 1995).

In seeking meaning in a specific context, individuals evaluate social groups and categorise what is readily available and what best explains differences and similarities among people. Categorisation-based depersonalisation occurs when the individual deems to have made sense of these attributes of the group prototype (Hogg, 2016). Hogg et al. (1995) explained that people actively negotiate their self-perceptions concerning others within the in-group and in comparison to relevant out-groups to attain a favourable self-categorization in their multiple social identities.

The desire to achieve, maintain or enhance a positive social identity is closely connected to positive self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998), as described below in the Self-Esteem Hypothesis.

2.2.2.2 The Self-Esteem Hypothesis (SEH)

In keeping with one of the basic premises of SIT, which proposed that group members are motivated to imbue their group with a "positive distinctiveness", the Self-Esteem Hypothesis (SEH) was introduced as a motivational hypothesis by Abrams and Hogg (1988). The motivation behind the positive distinctiveness goal within the in-group was thought to be driven by the need to achieve, enhance or maintain a positive social identity and, by association, positive self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). The SEH consists of two corollaries derived by Abrams and Hogg (1990, p. 33) as follows:

"1. Successful intergroup discrimination enhances social identity and thus elevates self-esteem. Self-esteem is a dependent variable, a product of specific forms of intergroup behaviour.

2. Depressed or threatened self-esteem promotes intergroup discrimination because of a need for self-esteem. Self-esteem is an independent variable, a motivating force for specific forms of intergroup behaviour."

Changes in self-esteem are thought to be incremental, driven by discrimination between groups. Previous research had shown that individuals with high self-esteem related to particular social identities were more likely to show stronger in-group bias and out-group derogation when their social identities were threatened (Martiny & Rubin, 2016). However, when group members process negative external appraisals of their group, which are not congruent with their own

group appraisals, they engage in identity management strategies to correct inconsistencies (Martiny & Rubin, 2016).

When group members cannot restore a positive group appraisal, they experience negative affect (Martiny & Rubin, 2016). Individual mobility is one coping strategy to deal with unfavourable intergroup comparisons. Introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1979), it refers to the literal departure from a group in search of a more favourably evaluated new social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It can also refer to an individual's psychological distancing from a negatively-appraised group to restore or increase positive self-esteem (Martiny & Rubin, 2016).

Thus, achieving positive self-esteem entails raising an initially low level of self-esteem to a higher level; maintaining positive self-esteem refers to attempts to retain original levels of high self-esteem throughout an identity-threatening life experience; and enhancing positive self-esteem involves increasing an already high level of positive self-esteem (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998). Individuals are motivated to make these choices depending on prior levels of self-esteem, the social identity threat, as well as socio-structural conditions (Martiny & Rubin, 2016).

Abrams and Hogg (1988, p. 326) point out that there are very few studies which have considered how in-group social approval or disapproval affects members' self-esteem when they state:

> *"Self-presentational concerns may well moderate the association between discrimination and self-esteem. It may be possible to elevate self-esteem not so much by discrimination, as by eliciting favourable evaluations from others. Thus, it is not only self-enhancing social comparisons with the out-group but also the social approval gained from in-group members which elevates self-esteem".*

This suggests that social approval *within* the group is an area that has received little attention in evaluating levels of self-esteem for in-group members.

While SCT focuses on social categorisation, i.e. social cognitive processes, SEH pays attention to the motivation underlying social identity phenomena. Stets and Burke (2014) claim that self-esteem can be understood across role, social and personal identities through identity verification. Verification of social identities or groups can elicit a sense of being found worthy or valued; verification of role identities creates a sense of competence or efficacy; and verification of person identities can create a sense of authenticity and being true to one's self (Stets & Burke, 2014). Taking into account the fundamental tenets of both IDT and SIT, I approached the literature within the field of entrepreneurship that incorporated identity theoretical lenses, as detailed in the next section.

2.2.3 Building FIT – Previous Studies on Identity and Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship scholars have typically used either IDT or SIT in their studies. However, there are growing calls for the use of a combination of both theories in constructing founder identity (Baker & Powell, 2020; Fauchart & Gruber, 2020). My examination of the entrepreneurship literature on identity indicates that whilst many previous studies focused on either IDT or SIT in relation to a host of other constructs, the combined use of these two seminal identity theories remains scarce. In my reading, I have noted the use of other identity-related constructs and theories, such as the role of entrepreneurs' personal identities in relation to authenticity (O'Neil, Ucbasaran & York, 2022), the consideration of FIT in relation to alignment with socio-cultural context (Foy & Gruber, 2022) as well as a growing stream of literature on entrepreneurs' identity work (Harrison & Leitch, 2018; Chasserio et al., 2014). This bodes well for broadening scholarship on founder identity, as there have been a growing number of calls for entrepreneurship research to recognise and further

examine the interplay of multiple identities (Baker & Powell, 2020; Fauchart & Gruber, 2020).

Identity work has gained popularity in organisational studies over the past decade. It refers to the construction of an identity through the interplay of cognitive, affective and social interaction processes in a particular socio-cultural context (Vignoles et al., 2006) or the relation between an individual's 'internal' self-identities and their 'external' social identities (Watson, 2008). In entrepreneurship studies, it has been adopted to explain how entrepreneurs negotiate and construct their identities (Harrison & Leitch, 2018; Swail & Marlow, 2018; Leitch & Harrison, 2016). Having noted that it has sometimes been defined in reference to personal identities and at other times with social identities, I chose not to adopt this construct in my study, as I agree with Lepisto et al. (2015, p.12), who state that it remains " 'loosely affiliated' without an orienting and integrating structure."

Instead, I used IDT and SIT as theoretical bases for this study. In my review of the literature, it became evident that entrepreneurship scholars have yet to settle on a uniform term for studies of identity and entrepreneurs, with some scholars referring to "entrepreneurial identity" and others using the term "founder identity". In this chapter, I use the term as indicated by each author as they have used it in their studies to reference the identity or identities of an entrepreneur or founder. The following sections review previous entrepreneurship studies that incorporate identity. I review studies that have exclusively used IDT or SIT as well as in combination before considering work on founders' identities in developing contexts.

2.2.3.1 Entrepreneurship Studies Using IDT

One of the earliest studies of entrepreneurship using an identity lens by Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) explored IDT in relation to conceptualising

entrepreneurial role identities and individuals' motivations to act as entrepreneurs. They highlighted the social embeddedness of the entrepreneurial role in pointing out the counter roles construct and the effect of self-verification on individuals' sense of self-esteem, as explained in IDT (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) hypothesised that entrepreneurs who maintained multiple identities in addition to their entrepreneurial identity would be better able to balance their self-concepts and regulate their emotions.

In their study of entrepreneurial passion, Cardon et al. (2009) connected identity meaning and salience to three role identities: (1) inventor, where entrepreneurial passion is related to the invention or exploration of new opportunities; (2) founder, where passion related to establishing a venture and the exploitation of opportunities; and (3) developer, where an entrepreneur's passion lies with growing a venture once it has been established. Using IDT's salience hierarchy construct (Stryker, 1980), they argued that entrepreneurs might hold any one or a combination of the three role identities salient at any given time in their venturing efforts, and this motivates the activities in which they engage as well as their associated affective (passionate) responses (Cardon et al., 2009).

Mathias and Williams (2017) considered the various role identities that entrepreneurs enact, describing them as the different "hats" they wear. They posited that these different hats affected founders' decisions about venture opportunities. Building on this study, they argued that venture growth was influenced by decision-making changes as founders took on new role identities and proverbially "gave up the many hats" they initially wore during the early stages of their ventures. Founders' decisions regarding which roles to give up and which to enact influenced venture growth (Mathias & Williams, 2018). A recent study categorised founder identities in relation to founder's motivation by studying start-up companies in the nascent air-

taxi industry (Zuzul & Tripsas, 2020). They found two distinct conceptualisations of founder identities: (1) revolutionary founders who considered themselves as radical market disruptors; and (2) discoverer founders who focused on capitalising on market opportunities rather than revolutionising the air industry (Zuzul & Tripsas, 2020).

Entrepreneurship scholars have begun to recognise the role that entrepreneurship plays in addressing socio-economic issues through prosocial entrepreneurship (Shepherd, 2015). Scholars have utilised IDT to explain the tensions between the often-conflicting social, other-oriented goals and self-oriented, financial goals of social entrepreneurs that create social enterprises. Wry and York (2017) posited that such conflicts in social enterprise creation are identity conflicts and that the value of social and financial goals varies based on different salient identities. In other words, given that founders have multiple, salient role identities, these may more closely align with social welfare or commercial goals, which, in turn, influence how social enterprises are established (Wry & York, 2017). Conger and colleagues (2018) sought to explain how prosocial category membership validated individual founders' salient identities. In their study of prosocial ventures that underwent a rigorous B-Corp certification process, they found that the process closely aligned with founders' needs to confirm their salient identities (Conger et al., 2018).

2.2.3.2 Entrepreneurship Studies Using SIT

Compared to studies using IDT, relatively fewer papers within entrepreneurship research have exclusively employed an SIT approach (Sieger et al., 2016). One of the earlier studies on the social identities of ethnic minority women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands (Essers & Benschop, 2007) considered the intersection of gender, ethnicity and entrepreneurship as women varied in their

degree of conformity to traditionally feminine identities within their Turkish and Moroccan migrant communities. Essers and Benschop (2007) found that whilst these women could not ignore social identifications prescribed by their communities and the dominant Dutch culture, some women were able to form hybrid identities that blended the best of both cultures to enact a reshaped entrepreneur identity that differed from the masculine version traditionally associated with entrepreneurs (Essers & Benschop, 2007).

Similarly, Chasserio and colleagues (2014) studied French women entrepreneurs who balanced the traditional feminine social identities of mother and spouse alongside being an entrepreneur. They also discovered that some women entrepreneurs accepted conventional norms and social expectations in holding multiple social identities. In contrast, others challenged these norms by redefining them or proposing new norms along which to enact their entrepreneurial social identities (Chasserio et al., 2014).

Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) study on founders in the sports and apparel industry is a widely cited paper that draws on social identity theory. Using their sample of 49 founders, they created a typology of founder identities to illustrate the variation in meanings which founders employ to create their firms. They identified three pure types of founder identities: (1) Darwinians - founders who direct their attention primarily to building profitable ventures based on sound business practices; (2) Communitarians - founders that are focused on contributing to their communities through their ventures and who value their community support and recognition; and (3) Missionaries - founders concerned with making a powerful impact in society, particularly in response to causes for change, such as social or environmental causes. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) explained that founders with one of these identities or with a hybrid form that combined more than one pure type would utilise

different strategies to operate their ventures based on the salience of these social identities.

Building on Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) typology, Sieger et al. (2016) developed an SIT measurement scale to advance further research on founders' social identities. They argued that with a valid SIT scale, the focus of entrepreneurship studies could move away from the focus mainly on IDT perspectives. Since venture establishment is an inherently social activity and organisations are social constructions, entrepreneurship research benefits from measuring founders' social identities (Sieger et al., 2016).

Moving away from types of social identities, scholars have considered the social identities of entrepreneurs alongside personal identity, referred to as one's unique sense of self (Gur & Mathias, 2021), where they have highlighted the tensions that entrepreneurs face in navigating the need for independence through enacting one's personal identity, and the need for belongingness through one's social group memberships. Gur and Mathias (2021) found that the salience and centrality of founders' social identities differed in terms of whether they were novice or more experienced entrepreneurs, the latter choosing to focus on targeted collaborations with select social groups and the former on discovering their personal identities through broader interactions within social groups.

Pan and colleagues (2019) argued for the valuable contribution that SIT could make in studying social entrepreneurship in response to Wry and York's (2017) study that used IDT and personal identity to examine opportunity identification among social entrepreneurs. Pan et al. (2019) explain that variations among founders' social identities are closely linked to deeply-held convictions that may have been formed early on in founders' lives through significant life experiences or events. These critical

life events from formative life stages and related social identities implicitly motivate founders' choices and decision-making (Pan et al., 2019).

Some entrepreneurship scholars have considered SIT in relation to entrepreneurial self-efficacy (ESE), defined as "the strength of a person's belief that he or she is capable of successfully performing the various roles and tasks of entrepreneurship" (Chen et al., 1998, p.295). Brändle et al. (2018) posited that founders' ESE enabled them to cope with and perform under the pressure of uncertain environments, which is characteristic of venturing. Their study showed that considering founders' social identities led to a better understanding of variation in founders' ESE levels.

Hand and colleagues (2020) built on Brändle et al.'s (2018) work to demonstrate that there are multiple routes to ESE, with other factors such as entrepreneurial learning and activity playing a central role in ESE rather than just founders' social identities. They found that identifying as an entrepreneur was associated with greater ESE, but only in conjunction with other cognitive factors (Hand et al., 2020). This suggests that the effect of social identities on self-efficacy cannot be viewed in isolation from other contextual and cognitive factors and makes a case for using more than one identity theory when examining entrepreneurs.

According to Chasserio et al. (2014), identity can be constrained by social institutions and circumstances since social identities are socially defined, and one must subscribe to prescribed norms to gain acceptance or recognition. It has been posited that identity drives behaviour (Stryker & Burke, 2000), but it is also co-created over time through social relations and internal belief systems (Harrison & Leitch, 2018). As social beings, individuals acquire multiple identities over the course of their lives. The roles linked to these social identities are constructed through social

interaction with others via social networks (Chasserio et al., 2014), further highlighting that identity is not a static construct. It continuously evolves as one moves through different life stages (Leitch & Harrison, 2016).

2.2.3.3 Entrepreneurship Studies Using IDT and SIT

Entrepreneurship studies have referred to entrepreneurial identity in various ways; some defining it in the singular (Murnieks & Mosakowski, 2007) and others as multiple identities, all of which have created a lack of clarity around its exact definition (Wagenschwanz, 2021; Mmbaga et al., 2020; Crosina, 2018; Drencheva & Topakas, 2018). For this study, I have adopted the term 'founder identity' defined as "the set of identities that is chronically salient to a founder in her/his day-to-day work", as offered by Powell and Baker (2014, pg. 1406) in line with the development of my contribution to Founder Identity Theory (FIT). As FIT has gained traction, the combined application of IDT and SIT in entrepreneurship studies has highlighted that individuals possess multiple identities, only some of which are enacted at any given point in time (Baker & Powell, 2020). While entrepreneurship research has typically drawn on IDT or SIT, there are growing calls to use both theories to explain entrepreneurial constructs and activities (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020; Baker & Powell, 2020; Powell & Baker, 2014; 2017).

In their efforts to understand the differences in response to adversity for founders in the US textile industry, Powell and Baker (2014) were the first entrepreneurship scholars to employ both IDT and SIT in their study. They discovered that social identities were aspirational in creating founders' role identities. Founders' responses to adversity were shaped by the verification of salient identity structures, which they used to define their economic adversity in distinctly different ways (Powell & Baker, 2014). A striking finding of this study relates to the varied ways in

which adversity was viewed in relation to identity structures. Some features of the adversity were foregrounded in founders' definition of the situation above others in accordance with salient role and social identities. For example, some founders saw the situation as an opportunity and thus embraced the adversity by creating role identities that enabled them to enact previously suppressed social identities (Powell & Baker, 2014).

Building on the combination of IDT and SIT, Powell and Baker (2017) focused on organisation development by founding teams of nascent ventures. They found that the patterning of each co-founder's role and social identities shaped early venture processes and ultimately, the firms' collective identities. This study contributed to theorising on early founder identity processes in multi-founder ventures, an area that remains largely under-researched within the entrepreneurship field (Powell & Baker, 2017).

More recently, Musona et al. (2021) applied Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) social identity typology and Cardon et al.'s (2009) role identity typology to founders of sustainable ventures who operated at the BoP. Given the dearth of research on founder identity in emerging contexts as well as in sustainable entrepreneurship, defined as entrepreneurship focused on creating social, environmental and economic value (Musona et al., 2021), this Kenyan study illuminated the heterogeneity in sustainable venture motivations as a result of founder identity differences. This influenced how founders structured their commercial, environmental and social goals within their sustainable enterprises. For instance, founders with hybrid communitarian and missionary social identities and multiple salient role identities derived self-worth from the generation of several ideas which addressed specific social and environmental challenges in their contexts (Musona et al., 2021).

As Founder Identity Theory has grown as a sub-discipline of entrepreneurship research, several scholars have reviewed the body of work on identity and entrepreneurship, pointing to future research directions on how identity is socially shaped within context (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Recognising the importance of context in examining founder identity and behaviour, Jones et al. (2019, pg. 4) specifically asked the question: "what are the new ways of understanding context in entrepreneurship research?" They recognised the influence of knowledge sharing and socialisation on identity shaping. They argued that research has given scant attention to the changes to entrepreneurs' identities over time in relation to socio-cultural contexts and the impact of these changes on venturing (Jones et al., 2019).

Leitch and Harrison (2016) pointed towards a shift in focus from the composition of identities to the processes by which entrepreneurial identities are formed and shaped and how such processes may influence venture organisation. Drencheva and Topakas (2018, pg. 3) argued that identities influence the outcomes of venture creation processes for founders, and they "colour their lived experiences of entrepreneurship and how others respond to them." Indeed, entrepreneurs' identities have been shown to impact how founders think, feel and behave, all of which affect how and why ventures are formed (Drencheva & Topakas, 2018).

Fauchart and Gruber (2020) noted that identity theoretical perspectives have been favoured in explaining variances among entrepreneurial processes and outcomes. To better understand how founder identity forms, they acknowledge the integral role that prior identities play in shaping founder identity. Social identities determine which social norms and behaviours are valued in social groups, restricting the range of possible identities an individual can enact. Similarly, role identities may limit the extent to which an individual enacts different roles based on the expectations of others in society. The combination of an individual's multiple role

and social identities position them in a specific context where socialisation occurs. This results in engagement with certain specific others, such as a church member engaging with other members of her church community (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020).

The literature tells us that it is plausible that the relationship between founder identity, when considered as a set of multiple identities, and entrepreneurial behaviour, is reciprocal. Identity is a mechanism that influences founders' thoughts and actions (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021). Thus, if identity shapes behaviour and behaviour shapes identity, it is also plausible that ventures can be pursued proactively or reactively as a defence against past trauma (Shepherd et al., 2019) or in response to broader challenges such as persistent poverty (Masika, 2017) or prejudice (Essers & Benschop, 2009). This reiterates the integral role of context on identity processes and enactment.

2.2.4 Identity Studies in Developing Contexts

In their review of the state of research on entrepreneurial identity and context, Jones et al. (2019) reiterate the need for entrepreneurship scholars to apply well-established theories from disciplines such as psychology to better explain identity within context as founders are embedded in multiple social structures (Musona et al., 2021). Further research from new contexts and cultures other than traditional Western ones is integral to developing the entrepreneurship field (Radu-Lefebvre et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2019). A handful of notable work has begun to research identity in developing contexts.

Slade-Shantz et al. (2018) questioned why entrepreneurial projects designed to alleviate poverty in rural Ghana often failed to achieve the desired entrepreneurial outcomes. They found that others' expectations of entrepreneurs within dense, closed networks limited the number of opportunities that these

entrepreneurs had to innovate in their ventures. Prior identities and obligations, such as providing goods on loan to other entrepreneurs or mentoring newcomers to the social group, took precedence within this collectivist society over individual aspirations to improve or innovate within ventures (Slade-Shantz et al., 2018). Slade-Shantz et al.'s (2018) study described how collectivist social networks could have a negative impact on founder innovation and aspirations. Trivedi's (2018) study of a community-based labour organisation in Gujarat, India, which aimed to uplift rural women entrepreneurs out of poverty through social network building, revealed the positive impact of social networks on their entrepreneurial identities.

Trivedi (2018) found that rural women who lived in abject poverty were most concerned with providing for their family's basic needs and immediate community rather than expanding their ventures for further profit. Their newfound social capital created through the community-based training intervention connected women entrepreneurs to other women from different villages creating weak social ties that positively influenced their venturing efforts. Taking each other's advice, they changed how they operated their ventures but only to the point where they were satisfied with their incomes (Trivedi, 2018). Her study highlights the significance of considering cultural and socio-economic factors in understanding what it means to be an entrepreneur in the context of poverty.

Staying with women entrepreneurs in under-researched contexts, Masika (2017) studied the entrepreneurial identity of women street traders in Uganda through their use of mobile phones in their ventures. She illustrated the value of mobile phones in promoting gender equality and alleviating poverty. She studied necessity-driven female street traders in a Ugandan patriarchal culture that limited the extent to which women could grow their business capabilities (Masika, 2017).

Within Ugandan society, women's ventures are seen as immoral, and women's street trading is considered survivalist within the informal sector.

Masika (2017) found that women entrepreneurs' mobile phone usage mirrored and internalised entrenched gender ideologies and power relations within Ugandan society. The women suggested that their mobile phone usage was less extensive than male entrepreneurs since men were considered to be in higher positions of power than women (Masika, 2017). While mobile phones enabled them to successfully trade with others in their ventures, the lack of education afforded to girl children translated to constraints in how these women used mobile phone technology for business. For instance, the women traders were afraid to use all the functions of the mobile phone due to being unable to read due to incomplete schooling. The lack of basic education and the prioritisation of motherhood and childcare roles limited the extent to which some women could transact on their phones for their ventures (Masika, 2017).

Considering the idiosyncratic South African township context and our limited understanding of the socio-cultural contexts that shape identities and entrepreneurial motivation, the combination of IDT and SIT offers the opportunity to discover how and why specific role and social identities manifest and how this may influence the pursuit of particular venturing opportunities in a space which is often assumed to be the realm of purely necessity-driven ventures (Masutha & Rogerson, 2014). Since identities shape behaviour, more research is necessary to understand the entrepreneurial behaviour of township entrepreneurs and the context which may constrain or promote particular sets of identities in relation to venturing efforts. Much of the work on founder identity relates to life experiences. The events and the internalised life story that an entrepreneur creates through lived experiences

provides a window into the emotional journey of becoming and being a founder (Baron, 2008).

Entrepreneurship research has often studied positive emotion-laden constructs such as entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al., 2012; Cardon et al., 2009) and entrepreneurial well-being (Wiklund et al., 2019). While a growing body of research has begun to focus on negative affect related to entrepreneurial failure (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2018; Shepherd et al., 2016), research has not considered negative affect in relation to identity. Linking emotion to founder identity requires a deeper understanding of the adverse life events over founders' life courses. The following section examines entrepreneurship studies on adversity.

2.3 Adversity and Entrepreneurship

The nascent body of work on adversity, defined as "an unfortunate event or circumstance or the state of serious and continued difficulty" (Tian & Fan, 2014, p. 252), has notably been studied by Shepherd and his colleagues, who have described entrepreneurial activities in various contexts, such as in the aftermath of Australian bushfires (Williams & Shepherd, 2016), in the slums of Mumbai (Shepherd et al., 2020), in long-term refugee camps in Lebanon (Shepherd et al., 2020), and among women who endured domestic violence in Bangladesh (Shahriar & Shepherd, 2019) among other studies.

Much of the research has been concerned with understanding what causes entrepreneurs to create ventures under challenging circumstances. Some studies have pointed to personal factors such as resilience and self-efficacy as significant factors enabling entrepreneurs to overcome adversity (Bullough & Renko, 2013). Shahriar and Shepherd (2019) explored the resilience of women entrepreneurs in the impoverished conditions of rural Bangladesh. They described the personal adversity

experienced by these women in the form of domestic violence, which diminished their intentions to pursue new ventures as a result of decreased self-efficacy. These women's fears of business failure due to the psychological trauma endured through physical and emotional violence in their homes resulted in them questioning fundamental assumptions about themselves and their capabilities (Shariar & Shepherd, 2019), pointing to the damaging effects of personal forms of adversity.

Shepherd and colleagues (2020) further questioned why some individuals were more resilient than others in overcoming adversity. Examining the Beddawi refugee camp in Lebanon as a context of substantial adversity, they shifted the approach to adversity as a short- to medium-term event to a more persistent state. Refugees born into camps have known no pre-adversity stage, and thus entrepreneurial action likely plays an integral role in entrepreneurs' resilience (Shepherd et al., 2020). Similar to Powell and Baker (2014) and Haynie and Shepherd (2011), they found that identity drives responses to adversity. In their study, entrepreneurial actions enabled refugees to adapt their combination of identities so that their Palestinian and Lebanese identities were invoked in different situations with different social groups (Shepherd et al., 2020).

Significant differences were noted in diverse contexts of adversity, including natural disaster events that generated different founder responses. Shariar and Shepherd's (2019) study in the patriarchal societies of rural Bangladesh found that environmental disasters aggravated the impact of domestic violence on women entrepreneurs. In contrast, Williams and Shepherd's (2016) study of the Black Saturday bushfires in Melbourne, Australia, found victim-initiated venturing efforts to be transformational for entrepreneurs who chose to use their human resources to help other victims recover from the adverse event. This suggests that adversity can

produce both positive and negative outcomes in different contexts and brings into focus the various forms of adversity in entrepreneurship research.

The emerging body of work on entrepreneurial adversity led Shepherd and Williams (2020) to theorise a generalised model of the role of entrepreneurship in response to different forms of adversity. They argued that the function of entrepreneurial action differs depending on whether the adversity experienced is an event or a persistent state. Venturing efforts in relation to adverse events, defined as "low probability, high-impact negative shocks or jolts to a focal individual's or organisation's environment that is potentially highly disruptive to well-being" (Shepherd & Williams, 2020, p. 2), performed an equilibrating or balancing role that returned individuals facing such events to pre-crisis states of being. In contrast, they claimed that venturing efforts had a disequilibrating role in relation to persistent adversity, defined as "a continued cumulative process of downward pressure that imposes an ongoing and persistent threat to well-being" (Shepherd & Williams, 2020, p. 2). Thus, entrepreneurial activities led to changes that improved people's well-being in persistent adversity such as extant poverty.

Miller and Le Breton-Miller's (2017) underdog framework of entrepreneurship claims that adverse personal circumstances can lead to adaptive responses necessary for entrepreneurship. Recently, researchers have extended this framework by explicating childhood adversity in relation to entrepreneurship. Cheng et al. (2021) studied the Chinese Great Famine (1959 – 1961) to demonstrate how adverse childhood events, such as famine, facilitated adaptive strategies that supported the establishment of entrepreneurial pursuits. Yu et al. (2022) continued with a focus on childhood adversity as a contributor to entrepreneurial success outcomes. Using data from the US-based MIDUS study, they found that a low to moderate level of adversity resulted in more resilient and successful entrepreneurs. Notably, they point

out that war and famine are exceptional circumstances of adversity that may not be as prevalent as other types of childhood adversities such as abuse, parental divorce and the daily struggles associated with endemic poverty (Yu et al., 2022). This nascent stream of research bodes well for incorporating the broader lived experiences of entrepreneurs prior to venturing, as well as the role of the family in venturing efforts.

Although previous work on adversity has contributed to foregrounding a variety of diverse contexts in which entrepreneurs exist and has begun to account for variations in the kinds of adversity experienced, very few studies (notable exceptions being Shepherd et al., 2020 and Powell & Baker, 2014) have considered the impact of multiple forms of adversity on founders' identity dynamics and motives, with even fewer studies doing so in informal contexts. Specifically, informal contexts in developing countries are the sites of chronic adversity, such as enduring poverty. Such adversity has no end in sight, yet entrepreneurial activities can improve founders' lives in these contexts (Shepherd et al., 2022). In some cases, entrepreneurial action in impoverished contexts can improve founders' lives but harm others in the process (Shepherd et al., 2022). We know little about the dark side of such venturing actions. This encourages new research studies to contribute to work on the idiosyncrasies of entrepreneurial adversity, as discussed in the next section.

2.4 Addressing gaps in the literature

The practical significance of further research on informal entrepreneurs cannot be overstated (Welter, Smallbone & Pobol, 2015). Given that the BoP consists of more than four billion people, the vast majority of entrepreneurial actors in the informal context are represented worldwide through this context. While

entrepreneurship has been advocated as a win-win solution for emerging economies in BoP regions, fostering economic empowerment and uplifting communities in poverty (Chant & Pedwell, 2008; IFC, 2018), the ways in which adverse life experiences influence and shape how individuals become founders in the Global South, remain under-researched.

Since entrepreneurship is a deeply, socially embedded phenomenon, further research outside of a purely economic perspective is necessary to better understand founder identity development in light of adversity, particularly in informal contexts (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020). Thus, my study aims to use an identity theoretical perspective to understand how adverse experiences prevalent in an informal economy setting shape founder identities and venturing motives for township entrepreneurs.

While previous research in developing countries has presumed that entrepreneurs are a homogenous group who establish their ventures out of necessity, scholars have begun to question this assertion (Dencker et al., 2021). Particularly, the comparison to opportunity entrepreneurs in more munificent contexts implies that entrepreneurs in developing countries are not likely to pursue their ventures based on opportunities or other motives. This assumption is problematic since it fails to consider the myriad distinguishing factors present in informal contexts in developing economies, which could give rise to multiple motives (Dencker et al., 2021). Considering the variance in informal ventures within the South African township contexts, my study aims to examine this assertion by studying the entrepreneurial motives of township entrepreneurs.

Reflecting on the chaos created by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic – a particularly adverse global event that continues to generate mass disruption (Shepherd, 2020), it is not a far stretch of the imagination to assume that adversity is

the 'new normal'. As entrepreneurship scholars, it is thus necessary to understand adversity and founders' responses to diverse types of adverse conditions and states. This is particularly pertinent in the current South African informal economy, which has suffered greater losses that have widened the inequality divide with the formal economy (Rogan & Skinner, 2022).

A helpful lens to understand adversity is an identity perspective where prior identities have been shown to play an integral role in shaping founder behaviour and motivation. Yet, little attention has been directed toward the actions and motives of entrepreneurs in informal contexts and how this shapes identity, which my study aims to address. If adversity is experienced differently based on contextual factors (Shepherd et al., 2022) and this likely has consequences for identity construction and founding motives, further insights are greatly needed, yet lacking in under-researched informal contexts.

Several scholars have stated that identity is a fluid and dynamic construct rather than a fixed, unchanging one and that it is embedded within historical, political and socio-cultural contexts (Harrison & Leitch, 2018; Chasserio et al., 2014). Carrim and Nkomo (2016, p. 274) recognise that "identity formation is an iterative process of reconstructing and renegotiating aspects of the multiple sources of one's identity over the life course." My study intends to contribute to the work on founder identity by considering the life course of township entrepreneurs and how adversity, which could occur persistently over time and/or episodically, influences the way identities emerge or evolve in relation to entrepreneurial motives.

Addressing the calls of several scholars (Baker & Welter, 2020; Jones et al., 2019; Baker & Welter, 2017; Welter, 2011), I give credence to context in relation to identity dynamics since previous research has rarely focused on changes to founder identities over time and the impact of these changes on venturing efforts in informal

contexts. Previous research has paid little attention to the sources of adversity, particularly concerning significant others within social structures such as among family members. Thus the role of family dynamics on entrepreneurial action requires further examination (Chatterjee et al., 2022).

Since identities change over time within specific contexts and social structures, and adversity as an episodic or persistent life event can disrupt people's lives in different ways (Shepherd & Williams, 2020), the outcomes of adversity depend on the context in which a person is located as well as the identities which they claim as part of their self-concepts. My study examines the nexus of entrepreneurial adversity, founder identity, and entrepreneurial motivation in a context that is largely under-researched in entrepreneurship studies. The following chapter describes in detail my chosen research methodology and study context, as well as the process I followed in gathering and analysing my data.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology and Study Context

In this chapter, I describe the research approach on which my study is based including my philosophical stance. I then elaborate on the research settings chosen and how I sampled my participants in each location. Life Course Theory (LCT), which underpins the research design, is explicated, including the specific LCT tools I employed for the study. I then provide the detailed steps I took in terms of data collection and analysis. Lastly, I address ethical considerations.

3.1 Philosophical Stance

The epistemological standpoint I took was a social constructivist one. I believe that, as humans, we construct our worlds through social interaction with one another. Taking an interpretive stance, there is no single reality or truth. Individuals create reality in groups. Therefore, it needs to be interpreted to discover the underlying meaning of events and activities within a context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The study employed a variant of qualitative research known as grounded theory to understand research participants' social constructions as the research process unfolds (Charmaz, 2008).

Glaser & Strauss (2006:1) define grounded theory as "the discovery of theory from data." Grounded theory facilitates the eventual derivation of emergent categories during data analysis "from the bottom up" (Yin, 2011:309). Scholars have highlighted the value of using inductive methods and grounded theory to study hard-to-measure constructs such as identity, as the deep immersion in participants' lives can generate insightful theory (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). My study aligned with Corbin & Strauss' (1990, p.9) view that states:

> *"The aim [of grounded theory] is ultimately to build a theoretical explanation by specifying phenomena in terms of conditions that give rise to them, how they are*

expressed through action/interaction, the consequences that result from them, and variations of these qualifiers."

Given this standpoint, I adopted a life course theory approach and explored the lived experiences of a sample of participants as they pursued their entrepreneurial paths using a multiple case study design. Life course theory studies the social pathways of human lives in their historical time and place, and the subjective meanings humans ascribe to the social events and transitions they may experience (Elder et al., 2003). The life course perspective was deemed appropriate for this study as entrepreneurial activities cannot be viewed separately from individuals' lives, including their families and household contexts (Chasserio et al., 2014; Jennings & Brush, 2013). Furthermore, it has been posited that our multiple identities evolve over time as people age and experience different life stages (Chasserio et al., 2014).

It was the aim of this study not only to understand how founder identity emerged or shifted in the face of specific challenges facing township entrepreneurs, but also to place a spotlight on the roles that family and social networks played in founders' lives while they were doing entrepreneurship. This included the potential effects of multiple levels of disadvantage, such as gender and ethnic inequality that may be experienced over the life course in a resource-constrained environment. Using life course theory and tools thus contributed to learning founders' meanings of their lived experiences (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). Given the limited understanding of emerging market entrepreneurs such as the township entrepreneurs I chose for this study, I considered LCT and its tools, with their focus on the individual, appropriate to illuminate the life stories of my research participants.

3.2 Research Context

As alluded to in the previous chapter, the South African township has been referenced using many terms, such as informal settlement and township, which are often used interchangeably. Regardless of nomenclature, the township represents an idiosyncratic research setting. Mahajan (2014, p. 1) captures the essence of this setting as follows:

> *Conceptually, they are relics of the country's special past, but the politics of postapartheid South Africa have inadvertently kept their contemporary reality alive. In many ways, the townships and especially the informal settlements are similar to the slums in much of the developing world, although never was a slum formed with as much central planning and purpose as were some of the larger South African townships. Informal settlements in particular contain masses of people compactly huddled together in grim living conditions, evoking images of many a large urban slum. They are also a destination of choice for aspiring urban migrants wanting a foothold in the urban job market. Water, sanitation, electricity connections, and access to public health and education are still highly problematic in the South African township and informal settlement (T&IS), although not as much as in the urban slums of other countries. And yet, there is something distinct about the T&IS. They are not rural, not fully urban, lying somewhat in limbo.*

Researching the South African township offers a spotlight on a unique space of economic activity that has emerged out of what was originally conceived in apartheid South Africa as temporary residential locations for black South Africans who were considered cheap labour for the ruling white minority population at the time (Charman et al., 2020). For the purposes of my study, townships represent the location of a variety of entrepreneurs who remain under researched. From an entrepreneurial perspective, townships present the juxtaposition of street traders alongside formal businesses in shopping malls.

Scheba and Toruk (2020) explain that whilst many township ventures are borne out of necessity and remain informal in nature, some businesses have aspirations for growth and expansion, although they are limited by governmental

and regulatory hurdles. National and provincial government as well as private sector organisations have recognised the impact of township enterprises on economic growth and job creation potential. This has given rise to the establishment of several networks of business incubators across the country's townships (Masutha & Rogerson, 2014), including the townships that I chose as the research settings in this study.

Two peri-urban informal settlements located in Cape Town, viz. Philippi and Imizamo Yethu (IY) in Hout Bay were chosen for my study. These sites were purposively selected since they represented typical sites within the South African informal economy and presented a clearer understanding of the challenges experienced by founders operating ventures from and/or within township communities. They also contained a variety of entrepreneurs that formed part of my final sample.

3.2.1 Philippi

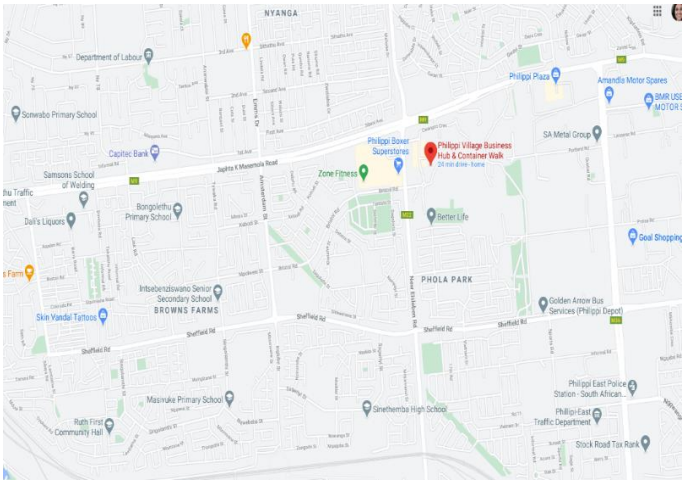
Philippi is a large township in Cape Town formed in the 1980s, located on what is known as The Cape Flats (See Figure 1 below for a map). While a variety of small-scale farms exist in the area, it is increasingly spatially challenged as the demand for housing has increased. Philippi has been the site of many uprisings related to South Africa's segregationist apartheid policies. These uprisings continue in relation to the lack of service delivery and provision of housing for residents in democratic South Africa.

Residents experience high levels of crime, overcrowding as well as pressure for residential space, unemployment and poverty. Philippi is home to an increasing number of micro-enterprises and large-scale projects in agriculture, waste management and construction (PEDI, 2016). In terms of population statistics, Philippi

is made up of 90% of Black African people. Gender is evenly split, and almost 60% of the population is unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

FIGURE 1

Map of Philippi



Source: Google Maps, 2021

FIGURE 2

The view of Philippi

Source: Ntsoma, 2019

3.2.2 Imizamo Yethu (IY)

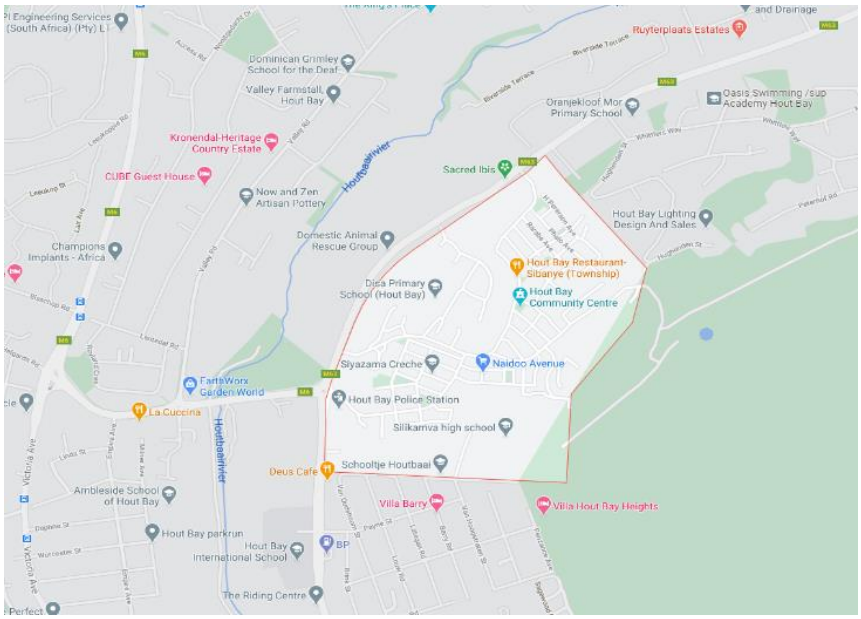
Imizamo Yethu also emerged in the 1980s and is located on the side of mountain slopes in Hout Bay (See Figure 3 for a map of the area). It comprises both formal and informal (approximately 60%) housing and an array of micro-enterprises

ranging from shebeens (casual bars), spaza or house shops, food takeaway stalls, hair care services, liquor sales, and street traders. 92% of the population is Black African, and 46% are female.

Approximately half of the population consists of African immigrants, while the other half comprises inland migrants of Xhosa ethnicity. Unemployment levels are significantly lower in IY at 35%. This is a result of its proximity to the affluent neighbourhoods in Hout Bay with formal businesses and accompanying work opportunities. (Charman et al., 2020). Its proximity to the affluent neighbourhoods in Hout Bay presented an interesting site for interaction between diverse population groups' entrepreneurial activities.

FIGURE 3

Map of Imizamo Yethu



Source: Google Maps, 2021

FIGURE 4

Images of Imizamo Yethu taken during observations

Source: Author

3.3 Sampling Participants

While there are no specific guidelines for sample size in qualitative research (Eisenhardt, 2021; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2011), the final sample size of nine participants was deemed appropriate for a grounded theory study. A smaller number of participants may not yield enough variance in the data to make an insightful contribution to academic literature or for practical recommendations. A larger sample size may not allow for gathering a greater depth of information for each participant (Creswell, 2014). Since this study employed life course theory and methods to capture richer life story accounts over an extended period, the sample of nine participants met the requirements for intensive data gathering to discover the pathways to founder identity development and the founding motives of entrepreneurs.

As my study progressed, my research question evolved. The initial research question was: *How do the founder identities of women entrepreneurs form or change in response to the unique contextual factors in the BoP that challenge their entrepreneurial pursuits?* I initially focused on women entrepreneurs and wanted to

understand how their founder identities emerged or evolved in relation to gendered challenges of the township context. It was then revised: *How (and why) do the founder identities of women entrepreneurs in the BoP form or evolve over the life course?* With further reading, it was evident that many women entrepreneurs in informal contexts across the globe experienced similar contextual challenges.

Thus, the focus sharpened on founder identity dynamics. The research question was finally revised as data analysis progressed: *How do adverse life events shape entrepreneurs' identity construction efforts and their venturing motives?* Through continued analysis, I discovered that adverse life events resulted in disconfirmed identities across the gender dimension. The final research question revision sought to understand the identity dynamics at play as all founders dealt with adversity within their township contexts. Still, their motives for venturing appeared to differ.

Considering adversity over the life course not only attempted to provide a unique contribution to both entrepreneurship and life course research but also served to recognise the participants of the study as whole individuals who experienced unique contextual challenges in pursuit of their ventures. Thus participants were recruited based on being residents in one of the two identified townships, and they conducted their businesses from these townships, i.e. within an informal economy. But they also had to be willing to share their unique life stories.

Any business was considered as long as it operated from one of the two townships. The choice of more than one township setting, each with its own set of idiosyncratic socio-economic challenges, provided the study with potentially contrasting instances in terms of founders' life experiences, thereby increasing confidence in the consistency of findings (Yin, 2011). An exploratory exercise conducted in May 2018 led to my meeting with initial participants. Through this

exercise, I made tentative agreements with three entrepreneurs that expressed interest in being part of my study.

3.4 Participant Selection

To examine the lived experiences of township entrepreneurs, I included both men and women entrepreneurs in the sample because I wanted to understand what the entrepreneurial journey within the context was like for both genders. In this way, I could distinguish if there were significant differences in how each gender experienced and approached the environment, leveraged or expanded their networks, and began or grew their business ventures.

Table 1 below depicts when and why each participant became a part of the total sample of 14 entrepreneurs. Recruiting and working with participants was a dynamic process that spanned three years. In 2018, an exploratory exercise in Philippi and Hout Bay led to recruiting the first three participants: Foodie, Green Fingers and Masseuse. Three of the second group of participants – Science Guy, Prop Man and Music Man, signed on in March 2019 through my interactions with the Graduate School of Business Solution Space in Philippi Village. Science Guy and Prop Man were based at the Solution Space. They conducted their online businesses from that location, whilst Music Man regularly attended workshops, and his music recording studio was situated on the outskirts of the Philippi Village amphitheatre. I met Beauty when she was distributing pamphlets for her mobile beauty business at the Solution Space. The final participant in the second group of participants of 2019, Tour Guide, was from IY, and I heard about her tour guiding business through a fellow doctoral student.

In February 2020, I met the third group of participants, except for Hairdresser, at a group meeting in IY through my interactions with the project coordinator of a

non-profit organisation, Hout Bay Partnership. Gogo, Baby Shoes, Fashion, BBQ and Make-up all agreed to be a part of the data collection process at this group meeting held in February 2020. The final participant of the sample, Hairdresser, was recruited in IY when I visited her hair salon while I was waiting to meet Fashion for her second interview. These individuals freely shared their life stories, as described in Table 1. Further details of each round of participant recruitment are outlined in the data collection section below.

3.4.1 The Final Sample

Despite each participant's life stories presenting interesting events and journeys to entrepreneurial ventures, the final sample of nine participants was chosen based on the completion of the rounds of interviews necessary to create lifelines and social network maps, as well as for the richness and depth of data. After several fruitless attempts to contact Foodie and Music Man to review their lifelines and create their social network maps, I excluded them from the final sample for lack of completeness in the data set. Compared to the participants from 2019, some of the 2020 participants were less forthcoming with information. Perhaps this had to do with the fact that I entered their homes, and on many occasions, neighbours or customers would walk in and interrupt the interviews. Or it could have something to do with the fact that I had a resident of IY (an intern from the Hout Bay Partnership) accompanying me, which may have made them less willing to share personal information at length. Despite these challenges, I completed a full round of interviews with these six participants, including conducting some observations.

Although I completed lifeline and network map interviews with Make-up, I learned that she was Fashion's sister during her network mapping interview. Thus, there was some overlap in their life stories from childhood. In addition, she was not

very forthcoming with information. I had language-related problems with BBQ and Hairdresser. In BBQ's case, she struggled to understand my questions or articulate responses in English. In Hairdresser's case, her first language is French, and misunderstanding the questions I posed led to further communication problems. This left me with the remaining nine participants and their completed sets of interviews (The greyed-out columns in Table 1 represent those participants that I excluded from the final sample). While participants across the two research settings shared similar contextual challenges, such as lack of access to space and finance, their life stories represent significant variations in life events and trajectories. Table 3 below provides some details depicting variation across the cases.

Some scholars may question the validity of the sample given its relatively small sample size. However, previous studies that have employed a multiple case study design to build theory have used even fewer cases, such as Zuzul and Tripsas' (2020) study of identity and inertial behaviour in four start-up organisations in the nascent air taxi industry. Battilana and Dorado (2010) focused on the organisational identity of two microfinance organisations in Bolivia, whilst Littlewood and Holt (2018) focused on the importance of institutional environments for six social ventures in a South African context. Furthermore, there is significant value that can be attributed to the depth and richness of the data gathered over a longer data collection period, in this case, over three years. Yin (2011) states that spending more time in the field enables the opportunity to repeatedly revisit participants through several interviews and observations. This proved to increase respondent validation in my study (Yin, 2011).

TABLE 1

List of Participants

No	Name, Age, Gender	Location	Venture Type	Date Recruited	What was interesting about this participant to consider inclusion?	Interactions per Participant	Duration (Total)	Lifelines & Social Network Maps Created
1	Foodie, Male, 32	Philippi	Street food vendor	May 2018	Foodie's business focused on making street food 'cool again' since there is a negative connotation with those who sell on the streets in the township. There are also religious nuances in terms of his social motivations to help township youth that potentially contribute to shaping his founder identity.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview	29:48 1:48:49 (2:18:37)	Lifeline - draft
2	Green Fingers, Female, 39	Hanover Park - Philippi	Compact food gardening & seedling nursery	May 2018	This mother of four was at the brink of poverty when she decided to grow vegetables in her backyard to feed her family. This led to her business idea being recognised through several incubator programs and the growth of her nursery seedling business.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview Networks interview Observation	08:37 1:35:55 43:48 30:00 (2:58:20)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
3	Masseuse, Female, 50	Imizamo Yethu	Massage stall & soy candle manufacturer	May 2018	From being a domestic worker to summiting some of the world's highest mountain peaks which eventually led to her massage venture. Masseuse's story reveals her ability to leverage her social networks to achieve her aspirations.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview Networks interview Observation Post-Covid first-wave interview	15:03 1:25:44 1:30:44 15:00 43:49 (4:10:20)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
4	Science Guy, Male, 25	Philippi	Online science learning platform	March 2019	Born and raised in Philippi, Science Guy's online learning platform tech-venture attempts to improve access to information for township youth. It combines technology with a social purpose but it also stems from his own learning experiences.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview Networks interview	13:25 1:32:24 1:44:27 (3:30:16)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
5	Music Man, Male, 30	Philippi	Township music recording studio	March 2019	Music Man believes in harnessing the musical talents of township youth by providing them with the equipment housed in his recording studio. He uses music to bridge divides amongst people across continents.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview	11:40 49:07 (1:00:47)	Lifeline - draft
6	Prop Man, Male, 28	Philippi	Online property trading platform	March 2019	Prop Man came to Philippi as an Angolan refugee at the age of 3 years. He has used business opportunities as a means to improve his and his family members' lives and brings the refugee experience to the sample.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview Networks interview Observation	36:49 1:06:22 2:14:47 26:38 (4:24:36)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
7	Tour Guide, Female, 43	Imizamo Yethu	Township tour guiding	March 2019	As the first independent and registered tour guide provider in Imizamo Yethu, Tour Guide is a repository of information about the township and is passionate about tourism. She also has a non-profit organisation dedicated to youth development stemming from her faith-based motivations.	Introductory meeting Lifeline interview Networks interview Observation Post-Covid first-wave interview	25:00 59:23 1:26:54 2:00:00 39:16 (5:30:33)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
8	Beauty, Female, 24	Philippi-Nyanga	Mobile beauty therapist	April 2019	Beauty willingly shared many traumatic experiences during our first interview. Beyond typical contextual challenges, I was intrigued to learn how she had moved past her childhood traumas and how she pursued a mobile beauty therapist venture.	Lifeline interview Observation Networks interview Follow-up interview	52:14 31:00 1:42:57 1:10:44 (4:26:91)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3

No	Name, Age, Gender	Location	Venture Type	Date Recruited	What was interesting about this participant to consider inclusion?	Interactions per Participant	Duration (Total)	Lifelines & Social Network Maps Created
9	Gogo, Female, 52	Imizamo Yethu	Home-based fast-food takeaway	February 2020	Gogo opened up about her childhood traumas in our first meeting. Although she shed tears as she shared her life story, she was warm and welcoming to my presence at her fast-food takeaway. I also got a glimpse of her daily life as she served her regular customers and interacted with her neighbours.	Lifeline interview Observation Networks interview Observation	36:05 15:00 51:10 20:00 (2:02:15)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
10	Baby Shoes, Female, 31	Imizamo Yethu	Shoemaker & crafter	February 2020	Baby Shoes eagerly showed me photos of her shoe creations and displayed her passion for crafting hand-made creations. As a mother of a new-born baby, I was interested to learn how she managed her entrepreneurial activities with her motherly responsibilities.	Lifeline interview Observation Networks interview Observation	27:13 10:00 39:08 15:00 (1:31:21)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x2
11	BBQ, Female, 34	Imizamo Yethu	Braai meat seller	February 2020	BBQ described her difficult path that eventually led to her selling barbecued/braai meat from her shack. Her story highlighted the struggles of unemployment with which many residents have to contend.	Lifeline interview Networks interview	17:58 34:03 (52:01)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x3
12	Fashion, Female, 37	Imizamo Yethu	Home-based clothing sales	February 2020	Fashion shared the journey that led to her operating several ventures simultaneously. I was intrigued by her ability to seek entrepreneurial opportunities and her relationships with other residents in IY.	Lifeline interview Networks interview Observation	20:18 44:40 20:00 (1:24:58)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x2
13	Make-up, Female, 29	Imizamo Yethu	Cosmetics sales	February 2020	Make-up was one of a few participants who was able to pursue tertiary qualifications but chose to engage in entrepreneurial activities related to her cosmetics venture.	Lifeline interview Networks interview	14:53 31:32 (46:25)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x2
14	Hairdresser, Female, 22	Imizamo Yethu	Hair salon	February 2020	Hairdresser landed in Cape Town after she illegally crossed the Namibian border from Angola when she was a pregnant 17 year old. She operates a hair salon with her older sister and gave me a glimpse into the life of a foreign resident in IY.	Lifeline interview Observation Networks interview Observation	23:07 10:00 24:43 10:00 (1:07:50)	Lifeline Social Network Maps x2
Participants shaded in grey rows are participants who were not included in the final sample.							**Total time: 36:08:83**	**Total number of transcribed pages: 392**

3.5 Research Design: Life Course Theory and using Life Course Theory Tools – Lifelines and Social Network Maps

Since the research question attempted to explicate the identity construction efforts over the life course of entrepreneurs in informal settings, Life Course Theory (LCT) formed the basis for the research design. LCT was particularly suited to this study since it addressed broader questions around how human lives play out in historical contexts, which in turn influence how human lives are lived. Psychological, sociological, historical and demographic concepts are weaved into LCT (O'Rand, 2013). Notably, the central paradigm emphasised in LCT is: "that no period of life can be understood in isolation from people's prior experiences, as well as their aspirations for the future" (Mortimer & Shanahan, 2003: xi).

The life course perspective has its roots in sociology, but it has grown as an interdisciplinary theory that consolidates research from various disciplines, such as anthropology, economics, and developmental psychology, to study the progression of human life. The life course paradigm was most notably proposed by Elder (Elder et al., 2003) and represents a theoretical orientation that guides research on human lives within context. He conceived five principles to guide life course research (Elder et al., 2003, p. 11-13):

> *1. The principle of life-span development: human development and ageing are lifelong processes.*
>
> *2. The principle of agency: Individuals construct their life course through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstances.*
>
> *3. The principle of time and place: the life course of individuals is embedded and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime.*
>
> *4. The principle of timing: the developmental antecedents and consequences of life transitions, events, and behavioural patterns vary according to their timing in a person's life.*

5. The principle of linked lives: lives are lived interdependently, and socio-historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships.

LCT was applied to this study as a methodological approach. In its broadest sense, a life course perspective brings together all aspects of human life from birth to death and everything in between that is relevant to our existence as social beings (Levy, 2005). Mayer (2009, p. 414) outlines several key criteria specific to the life course perspective. The following criteria were particularly relevant for my study:

1. Changes that occur in human lives are considered over a longer period of time, e.g. from childhood to old age, and not just specific episodes at a single point in time. Importantly, there is an acknowledgement of prior life history influencing later life.

2. Life changes are considered across life domains such as work and family, and this lends itself to an interdisciplinary approach.

3. Development over the life course is considered not just from an individual perspective but also from an institutional and cultural perspective, incorporating micro-, meso-, and macro-structural levels.

4. The collective context, such as families, work colleagues and other relationships, encompasses human lives, indicating the social embeddedness of our lives.

While many sub-disciplines tend to "slice up the lives and contexts of 'whole individuals'" (Levy, 2005:4), such as life-phase specific disciplinary specialities, for example, childhood sociology, a life course perspective favours a cross-cutting, integrative approach to view humans as whole individuals over time. Levy (2005) adds that LCT can conceptualise time within social, cultural and individual constructions, emphasising the subjective and objective nature of human existence in a socially constructed place and time.

Within entrepreneurship research, LCT is gaining recognition as a suitable approach to studying the lived experiences of entrepreneurs. Davis and Shaver (2012) found differences in high growth intentions for men and women

entrepreneurs over the life course. In their study, the profile of a woman choosing to pursue a high-growth venture was a well-educated parent. In contrast, the profile of a man was a young individual with no experience in the firm's industry, i.e. two different life stages with differing needs, strengths, and weaknesses. Jayawarna et al. (2011) considered entrepreneur motivations in career, household and business life domains to create motivation clusters linked to life course contexts.

More recent publications have called for the incorporation of the life course perspective into entrepreneurship research (Poggesi et al., 2016). Baker & Welter (2017) draw attention to the significance of the life course and identity research agenda. They state that while contexts influence present situations for entrepreneurs, they have also impacted their life course and identity. Taking these assertions into account, my study employed two life course tools to capture the lived experiences of participants in Philippi and IY.

Following a grounded theory case study approach, my study attempted to combine multiple data collection methods (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). I conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with each participant to understand their journeys into entrepreneurial pursuits. During the interviews, two life course research tools were employed to gain a clearer visual illustration of the critical life events, transitions and turning points for each entrepreneur. A round of observations followed this. I also planned to conduct interviews with individuals identified (and willing and available) by participants as significant others in their life stories. The first tool, the Lifeline Interview Method (LIM) or lifelines, is a visual timeline with a horizontal axis representing life events along one's chronological age and a vertical axis depicting affect related to each life event (Schroots & Assink, 2005). The second tool is a social network map, a visual representation of the relationships that exist for an individual in different sectors such as household, community and work spheres.

The relationships within these sectors are divided into zones that indicate levels of proximity, such as closest, close or distant relations (Altissimo, 2016).

Lifelines were deemed valuable resources for the study as they can depict life events and turning points that impacted each participant's life in both positive and negative ways (Elder et al., 2003). Lifeline illustrations captured the details of life events from birth to current life stages for each entrepreneur. It also moved beyond the present age to capture the future aspirations of each participant. Schroots and Assink (2005) report that lifelines are generally closer to the informant's personal truths than other questionnaire types of life story methods. The visual creation of the lifeline on paper engages participants to co-create their life stories, further contributing to inductive theory building (Eisenhardt et al., 2016).

Social network maps were included as the second LCT tool since they enabled participants to express the importance of particular relationships that could be useful for follow-up interviews and further theorising (Altissimo, 2016). Once compiled, the lifelines and social network maps were shared with each entrepreneur in follow-up interviews where they had the opportunity to clarify, change, or make additional contributions to their life story depictions. Using a story-building approach, the emphasis was on the co-creation of their narratives through the interviews and research tools. Other LCT tools, such as event history calendars and time diaries, were considered. However, these were ultimately not selected for use in the study.

Event history calendars retrospectively report on events from participants' past. The focus on the timing of events assists participants in remembering the context of events, which is said to improve the reporting quality of participants as opposed to standard interviewing techniques (Belli et al., 2011). Using a calendar format, events are recorded by marking an X in appropriate grids. This tool tends to suit an accompanying survey or questionnaire. As this study adopted a qualitative

approach, the event history calendar, which simply records changes in events or transitions, would not have captured emotive nuances and interpretation of events that participants narrated as part of their lifeline interviews.

Time diaries focus on the present and track how participants spend time in various activities over a set period, such as in a day or week. They capture 'snapshots' of daily events comparable to journaling about one's day or week, except that the researcher specifies times to explore specific behaviours or activities. Whilst these diaries could help understand how entrepreneurs juggle responsibilities outside their businesses, such as in childcare or conducting their business activities, I believed it would be challenging for my participants to log consistently. Previous studies have shown a low response rate from participants, which threatens the validity of the data (Belli et al., 2011).

Thus, lifelines and social network maps were used as complementary tools to interviews in my research. An interview alone would allow me to elicit a sense of how events had played out in participants' lives. Using the visual LCT tools enabled my participants to share their interpretations of events and relationships in historical time and place. This included affective responses and how each event influenced their choices and decisions on a deeper level. Not only did it provide greater perspective in terms of context, but also in terms of how decisions were rationalised along the life course.

Research using a life course perspective suggests that events and experiences at every life stage influence experiences, transitions or turning points in subsequent life stages (de Vries et al., 2017). Since my research aimed to understand how identity dynamics played out over time, I needed to utilise a method that would elicit interpretations of events through participants' recounts of life events. Lifelines have been used successfully in qualitative research, particularly with

research participants in challenging circumstances or contexts (Gramling & Carr, 2004; Davies, 1996).

One of the fundamental tenets of the life course perspective is "linked lives" (Elder et al., 2003), i.e. the interdependence and socio-historical influences expressed through networks of shared relationships. Social network maps that depict different points in an individual's life not only point to the interdependence of lives through social relations but also show how these relations may have influenced actions and subsequent motivations for the next life stage. The use of social network maps within the interview scenario, where participants were at ease talking about their lives, enabled me to explore the significance of their various relationships at different life stages on a much deeper level than simply using an interview question or a survey method.

I acquired the meaning attached to social relations, thereby providing richer data through network maps creation. Previous studies have also acknowledged that the visual elements of social network maps stimulate further conversation and thinking about relationships within contexts (Pirskanen et al., 2015; Altissimo, 2016). LCT and the life story approach has been considered an appropriate method to build theory as it enables an understanding of entrepreneurs' sensemaking around their actions and motivations (Gartner, 2008). Since actions are derived from the perception, construction and maintenance of multiple identities, I found it suitable to use LCT tools to answer my research question.

Furthermore, considering the dearth in research on entrepreneurs from informal contexts and the Global South in general, a life course approach provides a deep dive into founders' lived experiences where entrepreneurial activities take place. Since my research question was concerned with the identity construction efforts that shaped founders' motives, the lifelines and social network maps that

were created during data collection provided greater understanding of how founders' identities emerged or evolved as significant life events occurred in their contexts of adversity. The data revealed how founders constructed coherence and highlighted the multiple adversities that informed their motivations to establish different kinds of ventures. Given the lack of prior knowledge of township entrepreneurs' life stories and identities, the inductive approach offered by LCT was in alignment with my case study theory-building approach (Yitshaki & Kropp, 2016).

There have been relatively few examples of entrepreneurship studies from developing economies that have used a LCT approach to understand identity and motivation in contexts of adversity. In fact, the concept of time is a largely under researched area in entrepreneurship studies with the exception of processual studies and work on family businesses (Levesque & Stephan, 2020). This further highlights the significance of time in terms of studying individuals' circumstances. Scholtes and colleagues (2018) used an LCT approach to understand how entrepreneurs in Kampala, Uganda, who exist in contexts of adversity similar to South African townships, made choices in terms of their micro-enterprises. They connected to the necessity-opportunity dichotomy in understanding founders' motives to establish micro-enterprises and found that their decisions were not based purely on a lack of other opportunities. Albeit at a low level, some agency was involved in their decision-making (Scholtes et al., 2018).

In summary, using lifelines and social network maps provided a complimentary picture that produced greater clarity than simply conducting interviews with each participant. Both tools were administered using paper and pencil to allow participants to intuitively engage with the construction of their life stories (Altissimo, 2016), but also for ease of use and researcher safety against potential criminal elements involved in petty theft in the township setting.

To corroborate participants' accounts of their entrepreneurial journeys, I had planned to interview individuals close to each participant (significant others) after the rounds of interviews with all participants. These interviews would have provided a broader representation of each participant, as significant others could provide additional details about participants' lives from an external (but relatively personal) perspective. Unfortunately, due to several events that hindered my overall data collection process, I could not gather this additional data. These events are elaborated on in greater detail below in section 3.5.1.

The collection of interviews with participants was followed by a period of participant observations at the places of business for some entrepreneurs, where detailed field notes were taken to support interview transcriptions, social network maps and lifelines data. I was only able to observe some of my participants for the same reasons as above - events such as protest action and barricaded roads that barred access into the townships prevented me from observing all of my participants. Nonetheless, this set of methods enabled me to understand the adverse events and significant relationships that have shaped each participant's identities over time and how they may have changed as they became involved in entrepreneurial activities. Interview data were recorded using my smartphone and transcribed primarily by myself and a transcription service. I also engaged in memo-writing after every interaction with participants to gather my personal impressions in the practice of reflexivity.

3.5.1 Data Collection

"Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans" – Allen Saunders, 1957.

While I planned my research design at the proposal stage in my first year as a PhD student, events that transpired during the execution of the design within my

chosen research contexts presented a different scenario. Early on, I realised that participants, given the nature of their entrepreneurial activities and other life responsibilities, could not dedicate several continuous hours to my research process. As a result, I took a completed round of data collection to mean the completion of an introductory meeting, lifeline and network maps interviews, and observation for each participant. Table 2 below illustrates the rounds of data collection from 2019 to 2021.

The first round of data collection commenced in March 2019 once I had obtained ethical clearance from the University of Cape Town's Ethics in Research Committee. I began with a field visit to the Graduate School of Business Solution Space, a permanent satellite centre based in the Philippi Village complex in Philippi. I met the first group of entrepreneurs: Foodie, Green Fingers, Science Guy, Music Man, Prop Man and Beauty. Two entrepreneurs, Foodie and Green Fingers, were initially interviewed in 2018 as part of a testing phase and verbally agreed to continue with the formal interview process.

The data collection process began after obtaining verbal consent, with an introductory interview with entrepreneurs from Philippi who were based or worked from the Solution Space office. Introductory interviews explained the aims and objectives of my study, the requirements of participants' time and elicited basic information about their businesses. Fortunately, they were all willing to share their life stories, and I continued to conduct the first lifeline interview after reconfirming verbal agreement (See Appendix A for the interview protocol). During this interview, I learned about life events and trajectories from participants' birth to the present. All events, whether deemed to be negative or positive in nature, were recorded using my smartphone as well as through my hand-written notes.

The final two participants for 2019 – Masseuse and Tour Guide, were from IY, one of whom (Masseuse) I met during 2018's testing phase. The year ended with an introduction to the coordinator of an NGO based in Hout Bay, Hout Bay Partnership, who works with women entrepreneurs in IY. She provided an insider's perspective on some of the challenges that entrepreneurs faced in IY and offered to assist me with introductions to potential new participants to continue my study in 2020.

Thus, in 2020, after renewing my ethics clearance from the university and with the help of a resident guide (an intern at Hout Bay Partnership), I met and recruited new entrepreneurs to the study. I held an introductory group meeting with six women in IY at the beginning of February 2020, where the study was explained, and they were invited to participate. The first interviews were held in their homes around IY in February (lifeline interviews), followed by social network mapping interviews in March 2020. A total of six new women entrepreneurs were interviewed, bringing the sample up to fourteen participants in total, as illustrated in Table 1. Table 2 below depicts the number of participants recruited and interactions with participants over the three-year period.

TABLE 2

Rounds of Data Collection

Year	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
No. of participants recruited	8	6	-
No. of interactions with participants	23	21	7
No. of observations	5	7	-

The last component of the lifeline interview included a section for future aspirations. An aspiration was defined as "*something desired that is not currently possessed*" (Farmer et al., 2011). Lifeline interviews lasted an average of an hour. If participants were not too clear about the exact dates of events or did not provide sufficient detail about events, I asked further questions for clarity. I then went away

and created a draft lifeline on paper, using the information they provided. Once I reviewed the draft lifelines, further questions came up, which I saved for the next time I met with participants. The questions generally related to gaps in their timelines, for example, asking for clarity on periods between completing high school and starting a first job as well as the emotional impact of significant events or transitions on participants.

During the second round of interviews, I first reviewed the draft lifelines with participants. They were given the opportunity to fill in any further gaps, correct dates of events, or add additional events which they may have left out in the first lifeline interview. We then moved on to the following LCT tool – the social network map. Social network maps allowed me to understand the role different people, places or institutions such as schools and churches may have played in participants' lives over time. Participants were told to use as many maps as necessary to split their life stories. In this way, their individual stories dictated how many network maps were needed. For example, if a participant moved to another province after primary schooling, the place, people and institutions would have changed as they entered high school. Therefore, this required a new network map detailing the new social networks in their lives.

Social network mapping interviews lasted an average of an hour and a half, as participants spent more time explaining how particular individuals at various stages in their lives were connected to them in both favourable and unfavourable ways. Participants completed an average of three social network maps. Together, we reviewed how their social networks had changed from childhood to their current maps, where business ventures emerged and expanded. I then went away and created final lifeline depictions and social network maps, which were reviewed in subsequent interviews held in 2020 and 2021. This was planned in accordance with a

longitudinal study to allow for any changes to participants' life stories especially concerning their business ventures, to be incorporated into the final data set. After every interview, I wrote extensive memos about my interactions with each participant, comments about the interview environment and interactions that I had with those around the participants' locations. I also gained insight into the challenges facing township entrepreneurs through informal discussions with other township residents such as the Hout Bay Partnership intern who accompanied me to Imizamo Yethu.

Data collection also included participant observations in 2019 and 2020. During observations, I spent time in some participants' workspaces and documented the environment's characteristics and interactions between the participants and others. Where relevant, I captured the details of the products or services they offered (See Appendix B for the observation protocol). After I left the observation sites, I made notes on my reflections and composed questions that arose through my observations for follow-up interviews with participants. The longest observation lasted two hours as I accompanied Tour Guide on a township tour of IY, whilst shorter observations were ten-minute sessions in cases where I could not directly observe participants at work, such as Masseuse, who had to close the curtains of her massage stall to perform massage therapies on her clients.

3.5.2 Using Life Course Research Tools

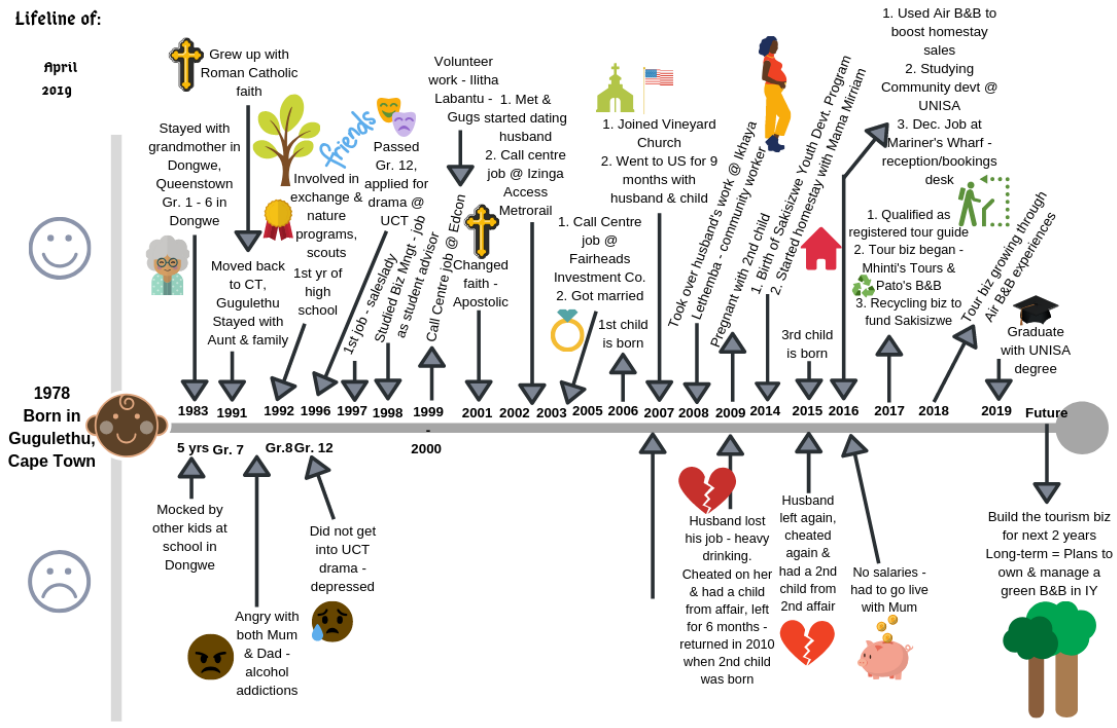
Both lifelines and social network maps were administered in a paper-pencil format and were easily understood by all participants. All participants warmly accepted the tools, particularly the lifeline. In fact, upon seeing their final versions, some of the participants teased about making a movie, writing an autobiography,

or even simply framing their lifelines on a wall in their homes. A few issues arose from using the tools as they are after the round of interviews in 2019.

Firstly, the lifeline, which adds an emotive layer in the form of the y-axis, which depicts positive and negative affect attached to events, proved problematic when participants expressed neutrality towards specific events. This occurred on two separate occasions with different participants. As a result, I removed the emotive layer on the paper template, i.e. events were recorded on the timeline and emotion related to each event was captured as part of the interview recording in my notes and not on the actual timeline. In this way, affect was still captured and coded for further interpretation without affecting the value of the lifeline. Figures 5 and 6 below depict examples of the original and revised lifeline illustrations.

FIGURE 5

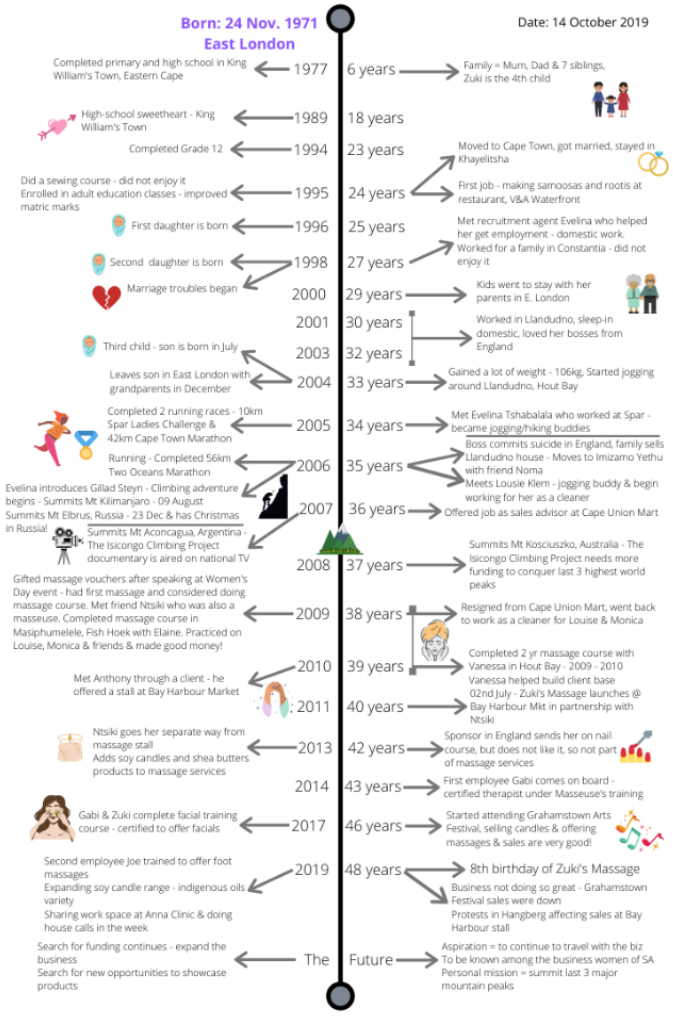
Lifeline using original template with affect



The second issue related to using social network maps and how best to separate social networks over participants' lifespans. The most straightforward assumption would be to separate maps according to major school and work achievements, e.g. the first map would depict early childhood and primary school years, and the second map would capture high school, and so forth. However, it was necessary to consider key life events that would have triggered a change in each participant's social networks, e.g. moving cities halfway through high school meant a change in social networks.

FIGURE 6

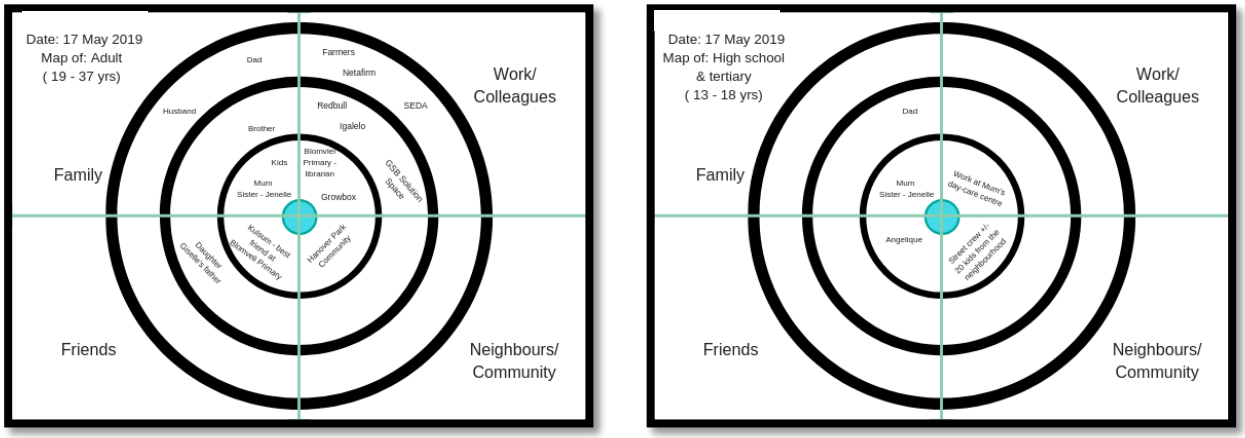
Revised lifeline



Participants needed to make these distinctions rather than me suggesting age groups for them. I made a concerted effort to point out to every participant that they had to consider key life events and transitions that led to significant changes in their social networks, which would signal the need for a new social network map. Figure 7 below illustrates a participant's changes in social networks as a result of changes in their lives. Based on these initial interactions with early participants, I adjusted the look of the lifeline. I left the timing of network maps up to the participant's discretion and specific life transitions.

FIGURE 7

Social network maps illustrating network changes



3.5.3 The Perils of Conducting Research in Township Settings

Three significant events in 2019 and 2020/1 disrupted data collection during this study: political unrest in Philippi linked to South Africa's national elections in May 2019; taxi violence followed by xenophobic attacks on foreign migrants in Imizamo Yethu from May to September 2019; and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 that resulted in several hard lockdowns until the end of 2021. Despite these significant interruptions, and with completed lifelines and social network maps in hand, the next phase of the data collection plan was to observe participants at

their business locations going about their daily venture activities. This was possible, albeit in limited amounts of time, with most participants making up the final sample of nine participants, except Science Guy.

Continuing data collection with the first eight participants and recruiting more participants in 2019 was hindered by several events related to the national political landscape. In May 2019, South Africa held its national general elections. However, many South Africans, particularly those who continue to live without access to basic services, such as housing, water and sanitation, held service delivery protests in township communities. These protests often turned violent and led to protesters burning tyres on the township's main roads and hurling stones and rocks at passing vehicles. This was the case in Philippi (Ludidi & Washinyira, 2019; Washinyira, 2019), and I was advised to stay away until after the elections.

In IY, violence broke out between rival taxi associations in April 2019 (Fisher, 2019). The association bosses were fighting over the transportation routes to and from IY. Four people were killed in the crossfire that broke out the day before I was scheduled to meet my first IY participant, Tour Guide. She assured me that everything was calm within the township. When I drove into IY, I was greeted by several police trucks and vans on my way up to her business premises. After this incident, I hesitated to continue data collection as elections approached. These spates of violence were then exacerbated by an increase in xenophobic attacks. Many unemployed South Africans accused foreign residents (from other African countries) living within the townships of stealing their jobs. This sparked attacks on Somalian and Bangladeshi-owned *spaza* shops (informal shops that stock essential goods within the townships), which were raided in various townships across the province and country. The xenophobic attacks and service delivery protests continued well after the elections until September 2019 (Head, 2019).

With concerns for my safety in mind, I used the time between May and September 2019 to transcribe and code the data I had gathered up until that point. In addition, I presented my experiences of doing research in Philippi at two conferences in May and June, respectively. March 2020 brought the Covid-19 pandemic and hard lockdowns to South Africa. Fortunately, I had completed my rounds of interviews and some observations with the new IY participants. I again spent the time during the various lockdowns that year to transcribe all of the data I had gathered in March and continued with further data analysis.

3.5.4 The Covid-19 Pandemic's Effect on Participants

In March 2020, the world was caught in the grips of the spread of the Coronavirus, which is widely believed to have originated in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. The first case of Covid-19 appeared in South Africa on March 5th in KwaZulu-Natal. As the number of local cases rapidly increased across the country, President Cyril Ramaphosa placed the country under a Level 5 national lockdown (South African Government News Agency, 2020). Under this level, all residents were expected to remain at home and refrain from travelling or attending gatherings with large groups of people. All public and private institutions were advised to close physical operations, except those in healthcare and emergency services.

These measures were deemed necessary to slow the spread of the virus in South Africa. However, it caused irreparable damage to the livelihoods of many residents. The effects of hard lockdown measures were arguably felt the most in township economies amongst women informal traders, who rely heavily on foot traffic and income from other township residents to continue doing business (Reddy, 2020). I contacted participants via WhatsApp messaging or email to hear about their experiences during the lockdown. As the first wave of the pandemic peaked

and then slowed down, I arranged to meet participants from IY for follow-up interviews at the offices of Hout Bay Partnership, where I was offered the use of their space.

I conducted follow-up interviews with Tour Guide and Masseuse in November 2020 to explore how the pandemic had affected their ventures and to learn of any new developments in their life stories. I was also interested in understanding if the pandemic had altered their aspirations and long-term plans. To my surprise, they had many positive developments and plans and used the lockdown time as best as they could for their families and ventures. As South Africa recovered from the first wave of Covid-19 cases, the hard lockdown eased to Level 3, and people could move around more freely to conduct their work and business activities. However, in December 2020, a new, more transmissible variant of Covid-19 was discovered in South Africa, and the government placed greater restrictions on residents.

As I attempted to code and create case reports for each participant, I compiled questions related to their stories and themes that emerged from my writing, which I posed during follow-up interviews. Throughout the data collection process, I kept a journal to capture my reflections on each interaction with participants. This was closely connected to the notes I took during observations. Although I planned to meet with significant others as identified by participants, the restrictions related to the spread of Covid-19 and renewed safety concerns associated with conducting research in township communities and heightened petty crime prevented me from completing these interviews. Although the world, including South Africa, continues to experience several waves of Covid-19 since March 2020, and I did my best to conduct follow-up interviews between the peaks of these waves, I deemed the data set and richness of the data sufficient for data analysis and model development.

3.6 Data Analysis

As a grounded theory study attempts to generate theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 2006), I began the iterative process of coding and consulting scholarly literature while gathering my data. My first attempt at coding began when I transcribed all interviews I had conducted up to May 2019. I used the qualitative coding software program NVivo12 to do a round of open coding on my transcripts. Open coding refers to qualitative inquiries that generate categories and their properties from the data (Yin, 2011). It is the initial interpretation of raw data into systematic categorisation. From this process, I ended up with 24 categories or codes ranging from childhood experiences to significant life events and several business-related codes, such as first interactions with business and business challenges. I then grouped these 24 codes into three themes as follows:

1. Business – codes related to the participant's businesses ranging from their first interactions with entrepreneurial activity, current daily or regular business activities, to the reasons they began their ventures.

2. Important People – this theme grouped codes related to childhood family relations, networks throughout participants' lives, and significant others such as spouses and children.

3. The Entrepreneur – this theme focused on significant events narrated by participants, personal evaluations about their lives and events, as well as previous employment and future business or career plans.

After completing this first coding round, I returned to my research question. I noted that the data presented in the above format was useful for explicating the contextual challenges. However, it did not grapple in sufficient depth with founder identity and how this may have emerged or evolved over the life course. The study

required the write-up of case reports for each participant for within-case analysis to complete cross-case comparisons in relation to life events and identity dynamics. A case study approach is a research strategy which aims to understand the subtleties present within a research setting and is suitable for generating theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). According to Yin (2018), a case study approach is appropriate for studies that seek to explain some social phenomenon and when a study's research questions ask *why* and *how* which require an in-depth description.

Furthermore, creating case reports for each participant enabled further nuanced instances of salient identities at different life stages to be uncovered. Thus, I began writing case reports after I had completed the second round of interviews in March 2020. I spent the initial months of the hard lockdown transcribing all interview recordings into single-spaced transcripts before commencing the initial case reports in June 2020. In these initial case reports, I documented significant life events for each participant, details of their childhood and early adult years, their unique journeys that led to entrepreneurial activities, and details about their aspirations. After completing all fourteen initial case reports, I selected the final sample of nine participants for deeper analysis and to ensure maximum variation across cases.

Table 3 at the end of this chapter describes several categories indicating variation among the nine cases. Maximum variation within the sample ensures that "any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon" (Patton, 2002, p. 235). In this study, maximum variation denotes diverse characteristics of participants' life events and various interests in their entrepreneurial ventures. In creating case reports from this heterogeneous sample, I aimed to produce information-rich descriptions highlighting participants' idiosyncratic cases. But also to uncover significant, shared themes or patterns that

cut across the cases in terms of salient identities that comprised their sets of multiple identities (Patton, 2002).

Glaser and Strauss (2006) state that the core of qualitative analysis and the grounded theory approach is constant comparative analysis. In keeping with the tenets of building theory from cases and developing constructs from the raw data, I iteratively went through the process of organizing and categorizing the data to form more abstract constructs (Eisenhardt, 2021) that emerged from the data. This included constant comparison between the data and theory on founder identity, entrepreneurial motivation and entrepreneurial adversity.

3.6.1 Analysing lifelines and social network maps

An important component of my analysis entailed examining participants' lifelines to note significant events that had shaped their journeys and eventually led to entrepreneurial activities. The first step in the analysis was content analysis, where the basic unit of analysis was a life event (Schroots & Assink, 2005). Key areas that I included for lifeline analysis were:

- Significant life events
- Family relations/ significant people or networks
- Career paths followed
- Entry into entrepreneurial activities
- Future aspirations

Following the format Schroots & Assink (2005) used, the events captured were coded as keywords for each participant and formed part of their case reports. Codes generated from the content analysis were then compared to interview transcripts. Any inconsistencies were noted and formed part of the questions compiled for follow-up interviews. Lifelines had to be compared to participants'

social network maps to overlay significant relationships identified in both lifeline and social network mapping interviews.

Network map analysis focused on the following areas for each participant:

- Significant people in each map
- Changes (physical, social and emotional) evident across maps
- Business entry and networks built in relation to business activities

I first analysed each map and wrote interpretations of the relations presented therein. This was then compared to social network map interview transcripts to understand the subjective meanings of relationships identified by participants (Altissimo, 2016). Further questions were added to subsequent interviews for clarity or greater detail. The information was then cross-compared to the data obtained from lifeline interview transcripts, observation and memo notes and finally added to case reports.

While "playing" with my data (Yin, 2018) and cycling back to foundational identity literature, I attempted to identify role and social identities of each participant. On reflecting on their aspirations, I considered incorporating the Possible Selves Theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986) into my speculative hypotheses in comparison from one case to the next to attempt replication. However, while working with my data, I discovered participants' use of personal narratives in explicating their choices or responses to various life events or transitions. Through continually writing about identities and analysing participants' lifelines and social network maps, an important theme that ran across cases emerged in the form of adverse life experiences and the interplay of role and social identities in relation to adverse events.

This theme moved beyond contextual adversity in influencing participants' actions or responses, shaping their narratives through disconfirmed identities i.e.

particular role and/or social identities which others did not accept in participants' social settings. However, I needed to explain this interesting theme in theoretical terms. Thus I backtracked to focus on coding role and social identities as well as aspirations using Stryker's (1980) sources of evidence and Tajfel & Turner's (1979) social identity categorisation. I also had to clarify each participant's meaning of adverse life events and their temporal nature. I thus consulted the literature on adversity and entrepreneurship as well as entrepreneurial motivation to constantly compare and identify common patterns across my cases (Eisenhardt, 2021).

Identities within the literature are typically defined as particular roles in society, members in groups or specific characteristics that comprise a person identity (Stets and Serpe, 2013). As I attempted to code identities as role or social identities, there were instances where identities could be classified as both, as well as person identities. And there were cases where I could not easily classify a person, role or social identity. This was in line with Stets and Serpe's (2013, p.38) assertion that "role, group and person identities often overlap and cannot be easily separated in situations." I then moved away from attempting to classify every identity for each participant and instead considered how various identities had been affected by adverse life events and in relation to significant others within their social group memberships. Through discussions with my supervisors, the connection between adverse life events and salient social identities became apparent. I realised that my data offered insights into the internalised life stories that participants had constructed over time in response to various adverse life events. Thus, I continued to cycle back to identity literature as I analysed my data.

Given my observation of emotion related to adverse life events, I consulted the literature on identity and emotion. Much of the identity literature on emotion has been written from the perspective of Identity Control Theory (Burke, 1980) through

the process of identity (non-)verification and the Perceptual Control Model (Stets & Burke, 2005). I attempted to explain my cases using the Perceptual Control Model but found it challenging to adequately represent the comparator process which compares perceptual input meetings and reflected appraisals of others to one's own identity standard meanings. Stryker (2004) linked emotion to identity salience and the support (or lack thereof) of salient identities. Thus I continued exploring my cases and emotion attached to life events using IDT and SIT.

Although lifelines comprised various life events, I noted that the adverse life events that resulted in negative emotions were related to founders' family social identities and their inability to enact particular identities. As I worked through defining the constructs of my developing model, I consulted the literature on entrepreneurial adversity to understand what had been previously written about founders' adverse life experiences. It became apparent that there were different types of adversity and that the founders in my sample experienced these differently.

Life experiences are not limited to self; instead, they also embrace the individual's environment, other relevant people and the interactions among them (Azevedo et al., 2017). The relation of others to founders' social identities was found to influence their self-esteem and how they felt about themselves in their various role and social identities. This influenced their subsequent identity construction and behavioural responses, which I again compared to extant identity literature. Even though founders experienced various adverse life events in the context of persistent adversity, I realised through my case writing that their motives for establishing their ventures differed. I further consulted the literature on entrepreneurial motivation. Through constant comparison and writing in identity terms, I could categorise founders into three distinct pathways. I developed a process model that connected adverse life events to identity construction efforts and founding motives for all cases.

3.7 Quality Criteria and Ethical Considerations

Validity has been attributed as a strength of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). To ensure validity in my study, I employed triangulation of data sources and engaged in member-checking. By using multiple sources to gather my data (interviews, lifelines, social network maps, and observations), I was able to achieve triangulation. Member-checking refers to an interaction with participants, such as a follow-up interview, where parts of the findings or research products are presented for participants' comments (Creswell, 2014). As I co-created draft lifelines and social network maps with my participants, I gave draft and final versions of these documents to each participant in follow-up interviews. These were received with enthusiasm and appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on their life stories – in many cases, it was their first opportunity to do so. The documents served as points in the research process to confirm data accuracy. Although I was not able to interview significant others that were somehow connected to every participant, informal discussions with other township residents in the vicinity of participants' ventures, served as additional, albeit minor points of confirmation regarding their venture activities and how each participant was perceived in their social setting.

I acknowledge that I may have brought my own form of researcher bias to the study in the way that I have captured and interpreted the findings. This is informed by my background, gender, culture and socioeconomic origins. Being a female that was raised in a traditional Hindu family, my culture and life experiences are significantly different to that of my participants, which could have resulted in me making comparisons in our life stories. However, I view myself as a key instrument that guided the research direction and have practised reflexivity throughout the research process. Despite cultural differences, I was raised in a similar township

context on the east coast of South Africa. I made sure to explain my background to all participants, particularly during our introductory meetings, so that we could commence the interview process from a place of commonality. In this way, I was able to create rapport and build some trust with participants to obtain as much detail about their life stories as possible while respecting their livelihoods and time.

I am also cognizant that much of the study's data was retrospective in nature and may have resulted in social desirability bias among participants. Participants may have chosen to highlight positive experiences and life events rather than recall adverse events. To counter this bias, I made sure to create awareness that all life events, whether positive, neutral, or negative, were of equal significance to the study. This became easier as participants became comfortable talking to me and when they first encountered their draft lifelines. I found that the interviews were therapeutic for participants, and their responses surpassed my expectations regarding their willingness to share (to varying degrees) adverse life events.

It became clear that recounting such life events touched on sensitive issues for participants. I managed this issue by, firstly, preparing participants at the outset for what was expected of them during our interactions, reiterating that they were in control of what and how much of their life story they shared. I reassured them that their personal stories would remain confidential and that I would use pseudonyms to refer to them throughout my work. Secondly, I highlighted my role in the process as a non-judgemental listener and that their stories would help shed light on what life was like in township communities and as township entrepreneurs.

As a listener, I was able to hold onto their stories while enabling them to express their emotions surrounding various life events. When participants became upset and cried due to their retelling of adverse life events, I asked them whether or not they wanted to stop talking about that particular issue or continue with the

interview. I also gave them the option to stop recording the conversation. In all cases, they wanted to continue and consented to the voice recording of adverse life events. I found that the process of recounting their life stories had a cathartic effect. Some founders mentioned that they felt better after sharing their stories and reflecting on their lives, thus creating albeit a temporary bond with me as a willing listener. In many cases, they had never been asked to talk about their life stories before our interactions, which gave them a sense of validation. This was evident in subsequent interviews, where they continued freely sharing further details of their life events and social relationships.

In addition to managing participants' emotional responses, I had to manage my own reactions to their life stories since some life events triggered my own emotions. Writing memos and journaling after every interaction with participants enabled me to unload my feelings and served as a purgative tool. Thus, the study was ethically guided by the principles of anonymity and informed consent for all participants. Ethical clearance from UCT's Faculty of Commerce Research in Ethics Committee was obtained and maintained throughout the data collection process (2019 to 2021).

During interactions, participants were assured of their anonymity throughout the study and pseudonyms were assigned to each participant. Data was stored on my personal computer using password-protected documents and on Dropbox and Google Drive cloud storage systems. Where transcription services were used, formal non-disclosure agreements were signed to protect participant identities and information. In the next chapter, I present the identity process model that was developed and key examples from my raw data to illustrate themes that emerged in the findings.

TABLE 3

Variation among Participants

Entrepreneurs	Beauty	Green Fingers	Science Guy	Baby Shoes	Tour Guide	Masseuse	Prop Man	Gogo	Fashion
Gender/Age	Female/23	Female/38	Male/24	Female/30	Female/42	Female/49	Male/27	Female/51	Female/36
Business	Mobile beauty therapy	Seedling nursery & veggie planter boxes	Online ed-tech platform for science students	Crafter of traditional shoes, aprons & head-scarves	Township tours in Imizamo Yethu & Hout Bay	Aromatherapy soy candle-maker & masseuse	Online township property platform	Fast-food takeaway	Clothing sales from home
Childhood	Happy living with mum and close to dad. Tragic loss of mum when she was murdered. Not so close to older sister.	Happy playing with other children on their street as well as younger sister.	Happy childhood growing up with older sister, going to school and enjoying learning.	Lived with mum and 7 siblings. Traumatic experience with cousin in Jhb who ill-treated her in Grade 11.	Unhappy childhood growing up in the Eastern Cape where family members mocked her.	Beautiful childhood surrounded by loving family that are still involved and supportive of her life/business.	Grew up in Philippi as a refugee from Angola. Stigma attached to being a refugee affected his childhood and he tried hard to fit in.	Unhappy childhood growing up with father and step-mother who ill-treated her. Had a younger sister.	Happy growing up in a massive extended family. But fell ill in high school and did not complete school. Has 6 siblings and 8 half-siblings.
Parents	Parents separated, lived with mother but remains very close to father.	Her parents divorced during her 1st year at high school. Dad cheated on mum several times. Stayed with mum and dad remarried.	Grew up with both mum and dad in their home.	Grew up with mum, dad worked on mines in Joburg.	Parents were young and both alcoholics when she was born – they did not raise her, she grew up with mother's siblings.	Grew up in the Eastern Cape with both parents. Father still provides some financial support should she need it. Close to her siblings.	Grew up with both parents influencing him. Has five brothers. Parents taught him to work hard.	Did not know her mother. Grew up with father and step-mother was cruel to her.	Grew up with both parents. Father had two wives and her mum was the second wife.
First interaction with business	Learnt about business at age 9 when helped mum.	When she was unemployed and had to feed her 4 children, she grew veggies in her backyard. Entered a competition and won second place.	Through mum, who is still selling mealies as an informal trader.	When she moved to Imizamo Yethu, she started a hair salon.	Surrounded by businesses in IY, and then started her tour guiding business.	She came to run her massage stall through her involvement in mountain climbing and the social networks that provided her with opportunities to start her venture.	Both of his parents run businesses, his mother runs her own hair salon and dad used to run a panel beating shop.	When she became unemployed, she sold chocolates outside the factory at which she used to work.	Mother used to sell biscuits in the Eastern Cape. Older siblings came to IY and started businesses.
Partner/ Marital Relations	Accepted being in an abusive relationship. Currently in a more stable relationship.	Casual relationships led to two 'accidental pregnancies'. Found out that her current partner cheats on her.	Has many friendships with female friends, but no serious relationships.	No previous relationships before meeting her husband in IY. Stable marriage.	Husband has not had stable work & abuses alcohol – cheated on her twice, fathered two children from affairs. But she still believes in their marriage.	First husband broke her trust but he is still involved in his daughter's lives. Currently in a stable relationship and fathered her third child, but she does not wish to marry him because it complicates her work activities.	Currently in a relationship & living with girlfriend, but focused on business more than relationship.	She was pregnant in high school and her partner then, fathered her second child, but is now estranged. Currently with a more stable partner, lives in his home in IY.	No previous relationships before meeting her husband when she moved to IY. Stable & supportive marriage.

Entrepreneurs	Beauty	Green Fingers	Science Guy	Baby Shoes	Tour Guide	Masseuse	Prop Man	Gogo	Fashion
Parental role	Mother to one son – lives with his father & family due to her not being able to afford to care for him.	Mother of four children. Fully involved in their lives.	No children	Mother of two children.	Mother of three children.	Mother of three children.	No children	Mother of two children, estranged from son. "Mother" to her niece and her child – taken as her grandson.	Mother of three children.
Aspirations	To grow mobile beauty offering into a full salon on her own land. To empower other women by training them to work in beauty.	To grow the seedling business to uplift her children lives so that they can move out of Hanover Park.	To grow the ed-tech business to assist as many previously disadvantaged students as possible. To pursue other business ideas e.g. virtual art gallery showcasing township art.	Would like to run a wedding planning business in the Eastern Cape in future (she would run it in IY if there was space to do so).	To own land in IY to start an eco-friendly township B&B for tourists to experience the township.	To continue to grow her spa and travel around the world with her business. To be recognised as one of the women entrepreneurs of South Africa.	To become a millionaire through his business activities. To grow his main business & continue to partner with other founders in other business ventures. To eventually take some business ideas and implement in Angola.	To run her own bakery in IY.	To continue to expand her clothing sales business. To open up a coffee shop in IY and employ unemployed residents to work there.

Chapter 4 – Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key themes that emerged from my data. The main finding centres on the interplay between multiple forms of adversity and founders' disconfirmed and salient social identities prior to venturing. At the start of my study, I was sceptical of the assertion made in the literature about entrepreneurs in developing contexts, which claims they share a common motive to establish ventures due to necessity or 'push' factors (Dencker et al., 2021). Despite the adverse conditions of the poorly-resourced township context, I discovered that founders' life stories indicated several other motives, which I classified into three distinct pathways: the Accept pathway that depicted founders' acceptance of their multiple adversities and disconfirmed identities; the Fight pathway characterised by founders' needs to redeem themselves from past adversities; and the Flight pathway that revealed founders who escaped past adversities and reconfirmed previously disconfirmed identities in new social environments.

To elucidate my findings, I first introduce the identity process model depicting the three pathways evident in my data and a summary of the model. I then share three illustrative life stories of exemplary cases that personified each path. Using these three cases and data from the other cases, I describe each construct within my process model to illustrate variances in founders' journeys that resulted in community-focused, redemptive, or emancipatory founding motives. To maintain participants' confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used throughout.

Figure 8 below illustrates the identity process model based on my findings. I could distinguish three distinct pathways among my cases, which I labelled the

Accept, Fight, and Flight pathways in relation to their responses to adversity and identity disconfirmations. In defining who they are, some founders accepted adverse experiences as part of their life stories; others chose to fight against adversity, while others decided to escape such experiences. My data revealed that all founders experienced adversity in the form of adverse life events that led to disconfirmed identities, both of which were associated with negative affect. But the responses to adverse life experiences appeared to differ across cases.

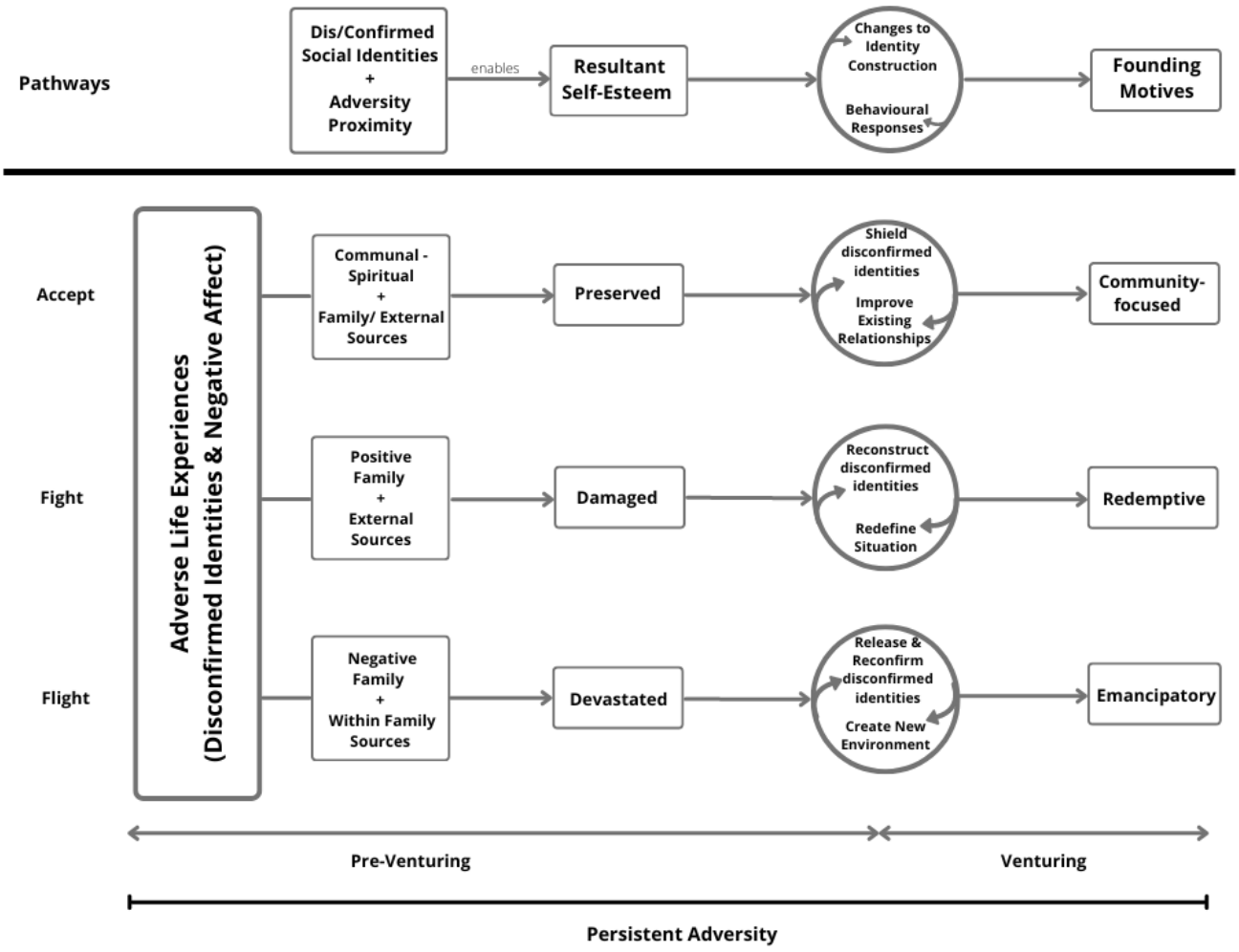
I considered founders' adversity in terms of three dimensions: severity – the intensity of adverse life events; temporality – the duration of adverse life events; and proximity – the distance and relation of family members to adverse life events. Section 4.3.1 below further explicates these adversity dimensions. I found that only differences in the proximity dimension in combination with salient social identities resulted in variances in founders' self-esteem, i.e. how they felt about themselves based on the adverse life events. The adversity-proximity dimension accentuated the role of family members in founders' identity management and construction strategies. Communal-spiritual and family social identities had a refractive effect on founders' self-esteem, in some cases reinforcing the salience of disconfirmed identities or producing damage and devastation in cases where family social identities were disconfirmed.

On the Accept pathway, ventures were *community-focused* and consistent with founders' communal or spiritual social identities and their efforts to shield salient role identities that were embedded within their communities. For founders on the Fight pathway, venturing was *redemptive* as they found new environments to reconstruct disconfirmed identities with the support of their family social group memberships. On the Flight pathway, the source of founders' adverse life events was within their family social groups, which devastated their self-esteem. Their decisions

to release disconfirmed identities and start over in new environments created an *emancipatory* motivation behind their venturing efforts.

FIGURE 8

Identity Process Model



Identity theorists confer that at a foundational level, individuals enact particular identities and behave in specific ways to establish or maintain a sense of coherence in their lives (Gecas & Burke, 1995). I noted that all founders in my sample changed how they enacted disconfirmed identities and their behavioural responses when faced with adverse life events. While some founders considered disconfirmed

identities too important to abandon and chose to protect these identities by managing existing relations, others decided to release disconfirmed identities and create new social environments. I arrived at the above labels in my process model through constant comparison between my cases and theory to ensure there was a good fit between the constructs that emerged from the data and extant theory, providing credibility to my theory building (Eisenhardt, 2021).

4.2 Three Illustrative Life Stories

Recent commentary has increased scholarly attention on theorizing from emerging market contexts and the need to "decolonize knowledge" in such contexts (Hamann et al., 2022). Morris and colleagues (2023) highlight the central role that emerging markets play in traditional management theorizing. They state:

> *"As emerging markets like Brazil, China, India, Russia, and South Africa become more central in the global economy and move from the periphery to the core of management practice, it is crucial that we learn from and incorporate these unique contexts into our theorizing. Further, we should become more active in questioning our existing perspectives and theories" (Morris et al., 2023, p. 2).*

They suggest two approaches to developing theory in emerging market contexts: the outside-in approach where existing theories are used to examine contexts where parts of the theory are absent, and the inside-out approach, which builds theory from an emerging market (Morris et al., 2023). I use an inside-out approach to build theory in my study. Taking this perspective entails a greater sensitivity to the local context and research subjects therein to induct new theory. Based on this stance, I describe the life stories of three exemplary cases below to demonstrate variations across the pathways of my process model and to provide an authentic impression of the context. The first life story is that of Tour Guide, a co-founder of a township tour venture and youth development non-profit organisation.

Tour Guide's story represents the Accept pathway. Secondly, I present Prop Man's life story. He is a digital township property platform founder and represents the Fight pathway. Lastly, I introduce Gogo's life story. Gogo is the founder of a fast food takeaway, and her story epitomises the Flight pathway.

4.2.1 Accept Pathway – The Life Story of Tour Guide

Tour Guide was born in Cape Town to a very young mother who was struggling with alcohol addiction at the time. When Tour Guide was five years old, her grandfather sent her to the Eastern Cape to live with her great-grandmother and extended family. Unfortunately, as Tour Guide's great-grandmother grew older, she was less capable of taking care of Tour Guide, and the extended family neglected her needs. Instead, she endured their mockery of her absent parents. This resulted in her inability to enact the daughter's role within her family social group. After an accident at home where Tour Guide sustained a severe burn injury, her great-grandmother pleaded with her grandfather to send Tour Guide back to Cape Town.

> *I'm not even apologetic about it, it was not nice. I was always mocked you know about my parents, about my mum who likes to drink and have a good time, who doesn't think about me, you know… because when I left I had an accident. Then my grandmother actually told my grandfather, cos they will only love me when my grandfather was around, that woman and her kids [extended family]. Yeah, they would pretend, even though my granny, my great-grandmother would know the truth.*

When Tour Guide was 13 years old, she moved back to Cape Town and began high school, but to her disappointment, she lived with her mother's siblings instead of her mother, which again disconfirmed her daughter identity. As a married woman, Tour Guide dealt with further disappointment when her husband, who also had problems with alcohol abuse, cheated on her on two separate occasions. His infidelity led to two children he fathered from each instance of infidelity. These

events threatened her wife and mother role identities, but Tour Guide chose to forgive her husband. The adverse life events she encountered came from within her family social groups instead of external sources. Although she struggles with her emotions in dealing with her husband's betrayals, she finds solace in her Christian social identity by working with youth in her non-profit organisation and church community. Tour Guide was introduced to Christianity by her great-grandmother.

> *She really protected me. She will pray with me. That's why I, the whole Christian thing, I think it came from her… so the whole background of Christianity of connecting with God and praying, I think I got it from her.*

This early socialisation inculcated Christian beliefs and practices into her daily life, and she identified as a Christian. In her childhood, her mother's siblings and her great-grandmother's early influence and socialisation into Christianity provided Tour Guide with the emotional resources to continue living her life and complete high school, despite her parent's rejections. Her Christian social identity enabled her to accept the personal adversity she experienced. In her early adult years, her faith and spiritual practices led to her reconciling with her mother. Her membership within the community supported her through her adverse life experiences. The attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours within this spiritual social identity enabled her to preserve her level of self-esteem. They softened the effects of her daughter and wife role identity disconfirmations.

> *I was angry because I didn't know what was happening with my dad and my mum. Cos both of them were like black sheeps in the family… Then I just remember God just healing my heart, the pain you know. The one thing, I think that was the voice that told me that you need to reconcile with your mum. You need to forgive. You need not to judge. You don't know what was happening at that time. Just forgive… So yeah, it [husband's cheating] has affected me emotionally, but I think my Christian values as well and also friends, I think I was able to overcome some of the things you know, which I'm still trying to overcome even today.*

Even though her mother had only visited her a few times during her childhood and she never had the opportunity to live with her, she was raised by her mother's siblings and her grandfather and heard all about her mother's life. Despite her being unable to enact her daughter identity, she still wanted a relationship with her mother as she grew older, and through prayer in the church, she decided to improve their relationship before she got married. This meant that even though she was disappointed with her mother's absence in her early life, which caused her pain, their relationship and her role as a daughter were significant enough to reconcile.

> *I went to her and then I think, she explained her side of the story and then I just accepted it and I said that we need to start over and that we need to move on and that I need her in my life… so then my mum played a huge role [in my wedding negotiations]. Yeah she stood for me… so that made us to be even more close you know.*

Similarly, her wife and mother identities were highly salient, prompting her to improve her relationship with her estranged husband. She recognised the role that her husband played in their family as the father of her children. She wanted her children to maintain their relationship with their father. Thus she was willing to reconcile her relationship with him. She also recognised that they jointly envisioned the tour guiding venture and youth development programmes, so she made extra efforts to include him in her venturing efforts, despite him leaving her for several months on multiple occasions. In this instance, he was the source of adversity as opposed to an external source.

> *Even now, we still a struggle you know, once you've been in the bad, it's very hard to build your life. So even now, he's still on and off… but it's never a stable thing… I had to push for the business to be registered and to draw him back to the vision of the family. So yeah, there's still issues. Obviously if you look at from 2010 until now, we are still partners because we have kids. So we try to be civilized but there's on and off. That's the story of my marriage… it's been hard because I realise sometimes, when I'm angry at him, I take my anger to the kids as well you know… So I said, let me lead this you know, let me be the face of it even though I know he was the vision*

bearer of everything then. Because of funding and stuff, I feel if I'm in front, things will be easy… he's got the hospitality side of things. So I think that will be something that will bring us together again because we are a good team but we can also be a bad team [she sniggers].

Her Christian social identity and community membership facilitated her successful efforts at strengthening existing relationships, enabling her to enact her salient daughter, wife and mother identities. Growing up within the Christian and township communities reinforced the value of the collective and service to others. "Being called to serve through God" motivated her efforts to establish her faith-based youth development non-profit organisation and tour guiding venture to give back to her community, just as her Christian social identity had guided her through her troubles.

I said I love working with young people. I love working with the community… So we still continue with nothing, serving and doing what we feel God has called us to do… Cos everything that I'm doing, it is what has given me strength through the challenges… so I'm doing everything that I love you know from the sport to the community services to everything… we believe that's what God wants for us, right from the beginning, that he would call us for diversity in South Africa … even now, we still see how God is connecting us.

She also shared a community-focused view of her township tour venture.

I mean we are the first people that has done the home-stay [in IY]… So I still feel that tourism is gonna change things around here for Hout Bay… Cos my theory around tourism is that everyone should benefit from tourism. And that tourism and development, you can't control. You know those are the two things that I'm passionate about. So yeah, I think that's the future for me is to look out now for my kids and my family and have a stable home. Not home for us, but a home to welcome the world.

Part of her work with youth through her non-profit organisation also focuses on community work through her recycling initiatives to alleviate waste in the township.

So then the recycling, it started with our idea of seeing our community being dirty and wanting to make a difference but at the same time, earning

money. So in partnership with Thrive who have organized a waste plan to come and pick up the recycling and wait for us … is [a] fully sponsored programme to be part of our businesses.

Reflections of her personal adversity that was tempered by her membership in the Christian community and her associated spiritual beliefs and values indicated the accepting nature of her life story. Despite her struggles with unstable incomes and marital problems, she remains cautiously optimistic about her plans for her ventures and is grateful for her spiritual and community support systems.

So people know us, they've seen our journey in terms of moving up and down, in terms of strife in the family, in terms of I mean, we've been through separation, we've been through yeah a lot of things. There's a lot of drama also with the family dynamic things but we still moving on. Obviously my spiritual life, also community of friends and obviously support and family of course and also the vision you know what brings you as a couple together, and as a family.

4.2.2 Fight Pathway – The Life Story of Prop Man

Prop Man was born in Angola and came to South Africa as a refugee when he was three years old. His family started their life in Khayelitsha informal settlement and often moved around because they did not have a secure place to live. They used to rent a room in other people's houses until they eventually settled in Mitchell's Plain. His father earned a basic income as a panel beater, and his mother was a hair stylist who also managed to raise Prop Man and his five brothers. As his family grew, it became increasingly financially challenging for his parents, who could barely afford to buy him proper school uniforms. He narrated how he was mistreated at school and the adverse effect this had on him.

I was actually looked down upon when I was in primary school because you know, most of the kids had, you know during casual wear, they would wear their Nike takkies (sneakers) and they'll make fun of you because you don't wear casual because even new school shoes at that time you wearing, it's actually broken (shoes) you understand. There's nothing much you can do because it's, it's because of the family you come from… I went through a lot

> *that time as well in primary school, because I felt like I'm not I'm, actually it is not how I felt but how people made me feel that I'm not going to amount to anything in life, you know. I had nothing basically, you know, these kids had almost everything… even the teachers they tend to look down on you… when I think about it, it pains me… I realized that I'm not trusted in this environment. Because everyone will just point at me because I was the one who was the poorest basically, you know, from all these kids.*

Not being accepted by his fellow pupils and teachers at school disconfirmed his learner identity. The source of his adversity came from others in the community. Branded as poor refugees, his family experienced many instances of xenophobia, which translated into many adverse life events for Prop Man and disconfirmed his township social identity. He described how others within the township communities regarded him differently when interacting with the predominantly Xhosa families. Questions would often arise based on the noticeable difference in the texture of his hair. These questions confused him about his identity and sense of belonging as a young township resident.

> *My hair is a bit softer than theirs you understand. It's curly, it's actually soft. With them, when you comb it, the comb stucks. With me it just flows, so they are able to identify that. Why is your hair this way? Yeah so growing up they used to ask me those kinds of questions… There are certain questions people ask you in order for them to accept you or rather to find out whether you belong within the surroundings or not, you understand… I've never been to Angola. So I don't know how it looks like… so it's a lot of confusion like you know, that's when people remind you that you are not South African… So when people tend to raise those questions then you realize, I'm not from this country. I'm not accepted here, you understand… you're from Angola and in Angola, you haven't been there, so where are you from exactly? [he sniggers] you don't exactly know where you belong.*

Given the exclusionary effect of others' constant questioning and more severe xenophobic incidents that regularly occurred, Prop Man's family played an integral role in supporting him through adverse life events. The beliefs and values of his family social identity, instilled in him by his mother and uncle, played a pivotal role in how he dealt with the damage to his self-esteem due to being stigmatised in his

early school career and within the township community. His family greatly valued education to uplift him and the family from their position as refugees. This motivated him to focus on his studies despite being mistreated and elevated his position within the family when he graduated from high school.

> *I think the family values as well, that were actually embedded in me by my mom. So, and my uncle as well who always reminded me that, you know, you're not South African, you're foreign national. So you need to make sure that whatever you do, you do it at the best of your abilities, make sure you get an education, finish school, you know, so that you're able to assist your family one day … I think the turning point in terms of making us closer [him and his father] was when I finished matric [Grade 12]. Cos I was the first one basically to finish matric at home. So it was an achievement to my family you know. We did a sort of a celebration at home when I finished matric… So to them, it was more like, it was more like a ceremony of also opening up the door for the ones who are following up you know [his younger brothers].*

Even though his fellow pupils and teachers disconfirmed his learner identity during primary school, Prop Man took the advice from his supportive family members to make different choices to achieve his aspirations. Thus, while the source of his adverse life events was external to his family social group, his positively-perceived family social identity enabled him to cope with the identity disconfirmations of others. He changed how he enacted his learner role during high school, effectively reconstructing his disconfirmed learner identity.

> *So but then when I left primary school I started high school, that's when I realized that I'm actually the only person who can change my life. There's no one who can actually change this life. And also, I think the family values as well… Let me rather, just focus on my education and see where this will lead me, you understand. So from Grade 9, I associated myself with people who are positive, who are basically working hard, and I dedicated my life as well in terms of doing my homework and everything I wanted to change basically, whatever I did.*

Prop Man redefined the situation by taking on new roles within the school system, which imbued the social structure and his previously disconfirmed learner identity with a new, positive meaning.

> *When I was in Grade 10, I decided to take up leadership roles … I wrote my speech and I actually won, yeah as the student representative… you know people were rooting for me, that's when I realized, wow, this is an amazing feeling … Like for the first time in my life, I had this amazing feeling people rooted for me … So all these things motivated me. So I think those leadership roles they actually built me [up] as well, so I had to be an example to other kids as well and at home as well.*

He also wanted to change how others saw him outside of school and took on a part-time job when he was fifteen to afford to buy himself extra food at the school tuckshop or when he went out with his friends.

> *On weekends, I remember I was working for some Afghanistan or some Bangladesh store you know, selling clothing on the weekends whilst I was at school. That was on Fridays after school but mostly on Saturdays and Sundays. I will be there to work there and get paid, maybe R180 or R150 for that two to three days. That time for a learner, it's a lot of money you understand. You are able to buy a Gatsby [foot-long roll] or whatever to chow [eat]… Yes, it is just to get money to buy things and to eat as well because obviously, you can't rely on your parents. They can't afford to give you so much because other kids have R20 at school and you've got R5 [he sniggers]. It's not enough to buy something to eat. So you have to hustle.*

Prop Man's struggles with poverty and his attempts to overcome this state as a young boy through student employment represent his proverbial fight against his economic condition. His efforts led to the achievement of his high school and tertiary diplomas. After several unsuccessful attempts to secure employment in two provinces that disconfirmed his identity as an employee, he became involved with various business incubator programmes. The establishment of his first venture post-incubation enabled Prop Man to redeem himself. When he was belittled as a child due to his status as a poor refugee or overlooked as an adult seeking employment, there was little he could have done to change others' expectations of him. Through

the changes he made in achieving his education and in his venturing efforts, he could redeem himself by providing for his family and establishing his venture within the township community that was once the cause of his adverse life events.

> *I remember the first property we sold on the platform… I made about fifteen thousand [rand] on that property… and then I made a difference at home. I paid rent for them [his parents]. I bought food. I bought clothes for myself as well because it was a long time ever since I spoilt myself.*
>
> *I always identify myself as an entrepreneur. I'm a self-proclaimed solid entrepreneur basically you know cos I think my life revolves around seeing opportunities even when I was a kid as well… for me like having to look for opportunities, for me, it's like having a way of sort of making my life a bit easier in future you know…Ever since you know, starting the business, working with specific conveyancers you know, running workshops, property workshops, you know to educate people in the township concerning, with regards to workshops in property in the township, yeah specifically for those kind of people. Yeah so I guess, slowly, but surely, I'm getting there.*

He describes feeling vindicated when he reflects on some of his classmates that have become drug users while he thinks that he has made positive strides in his life, despite being disregarded. He is especially proud to receive praise from his former teachers.

> *It [the mistreatment at school] actually broke me down to a certain degree basically. And it's also one of the things that actually made me you know, the person I am today – to be strong, because, I had no one to fight for me basically, yeah. And when I meet all those guys I went to primary school with … I would find some of them there, you know, they're now tik-koppe [drug-users] and you know and selling drugs, and doing all those kind of things. And I look back and like, hey, but no, it's now the opposite, you know. These are the kids who had everything basically, you know, with their families, and I was the guy who had nothing… even my teachers, one of my teachers, also on Facebook, so he's like, wow Prop Man, I'm really proud of you. You've done so much for your life when we look back at how I started.*

4.2.3 Flight Pathway – The Life Story of Gogo

Gogo never knew her mother and for the first eight years of her life, she stayed with distant relatives or family friends. She was unsure of the relationship, but recalled that a social worker lived with them. After that, she was sent to live with her

father and his new wife, and the cruelty began. Gogo's narration of her life story revealed that for the first twenty years of her life, there was very little happiness. Her stepmother mistreated her throughout her childhood, and her other family members did nothing to support her in resolving the situation. As a result, she felt unable to enact the role of daughter, nor did she think she belonged to the family. The source of Gogo's pain stemmed from her immediate family social group.

> *[After I was born] I didn't see my mother. I just went to the stepmother… When I was there, life was not right. The stepmother doesn't like me [she starts to cry]. The stepmother doesn't like me. I was young, I was ten years. I stayed that life. I didn't growing. When I was ten years my [step] mother tell me I must cook. I didn't know how to cook. And my father was working at Port Elizabeth and she liked Nomsa, my younger sister… When I was not cooking, she throw me with the water. I wake up and call my father's younger sister to tell. And she said I must go to my place because "you make a trouble". I stay like that.*

Only after Gogo left the house with her child in her early twenties did her stepmother admit that she had treated Gogo unfairly. Her adverse life experiences with her stepmother and extended family left Gogo with feelings of devastation and exclusion.

> *…and when she fight with my father, then my father is coming and she make trouble again that side. And I stay like that… When my son was three years, my stepmother say, "sorry, I was jealous because your mother is like you". I said I didn't know my mother. Why you do like this?*

She tearfully recounted the experience of her family forcing her to marry an older man when she was in her early twenties. Her stepmother, in particular, saw the marriage as an opportunity for their impoverished family to receive some money in the form of bride payment, known as *lobola* in the Xhosa community. Within the patriarchal Xhosa cultural system, Gogo was seen as the family's responsibility until she married when her husband would take over her care. Since she remained

unmarried and had the added responsibility of caring for her son, her family saw Gogo as a liability. Gogo described the forced marriage life event as the turning point in her story when she chose to take flight from her family and move to another town. They did not provide the support system she expected of her immediate family. She perceived her family social identity in a negative sense. Her family was the source of her adversity as opposed to external parties.

> *And that man maybe said to my father, he want to marry me. And my father doesn't tell me… My stepmother say, you must go. You must go to meet that man… I said, I didn't want that. They said, no, you must go because you didn't get a place [married]. I said, I don't care because I don't want to marry that man. He was a big man, old man. And my [step] mother take my clothes out, threw them out and they take me and go… I didn't talk. I just cross… when I go out, I leave the family at the chair and I run. I go to the police station Middeldrift.*

After the forced marriage incident, Gogo escaped to her cousin's home in another town and her life situation improved in her new environment. She was able to acquire new skills and secured stable employment. Her sense of devastation in terms of her family's cruelty began to ease.

> *Yes, it's better that side because my cousin take me to school – I do the sewing [course] there. And I got a certificate and I have a job that side. I was happy that side.*

When she was forty years old, and after further struggles with unemployment, Gogo moved to IY – a completely new social environment. Here, she was intentional about forging new social relationships, including meeting her current partner.

> *When I finished to clean, I go out and found a friends there… they are working at Pick 'n Pay. I found those two friends… she give me a place to stay [in IY]. When I come back [from work] to see my friends this side, I found a man. There's a man, this man I have with [boyfriend].*

For Gogo, establishing her venture was a means to assert her independence and start a new life. It was a struggle to find stable employment. When she moved to IY to take up a role as a domestic worker, she was dissatisfied with her earnings in terms of all the duties that she had to assume for her employer. This led her to exploit her talent for baking to establish her venture, which flourished into a home-based fast food takeaway that she operated from her boyfriend's house. In our last interview, she had plans to build extensions to their shack so that she could offer more food varieties for her customers.

> *When I was there [at her employer's house], I wake up to prepare for her sons and make stuff clean, everything and I iron, I clean, I cook, but for two thousand Rands. I said, uh uh. I leave… That time I know scones, how to bake scones… I make it and I sell it there in school because I didn't want to work to another person. I want to do myself, yeah… I want to build up nè [extend the building structure for her restaurant] because I try to cook, even in December I wanted to cook those rice and pap, but I didn't cook now… because I didn't have space… I also bake bread. Yeah, I also bake bread. These people like bread. And those vetkoek [fried bread rolls].*

Tour Guide, Prop Man and Gogo's life stories illustrate how adverse life events disconfirm identities. However, there were apparent differences in how they responded to identity disconfirmations, and their social identities played a significant role in these variations. Importantly, the proximity of the source of their adversity – either from within their families or from external others – created differences in how they perceived their social identities and how they felt about themselves. To create or restore coherence to their lives, they made changes that ultimately guided how they established and operated their ventures. The following section presents a detailed exploration of each element of the process model and the variations that I found on each pathway.

4.3 Explicating Elements of the Identity Process Model

4.3.1 Adverse Life Events and Adversity Dimensions

Table 4 below depicts the components of my model for each of the nine cases. The identity process model begins with the adversity construct. Adverse life experiences resulted in salient role and/or social identities being disconfirmed by others as founders could not enact role identities or could no longer identify with valued social groups and identities. I discovered that multiple forms of adversity in different combinations were encountered by founders over the course of their life stories. While it was evident that all founders dealt with chronic adversity by virtue of being residents in under-resourced township settings, they also experienced persistent and episodic adversity through various adverse life events. I attempted to categorise the data based on these adversity combinations.

There were three dimensions on which I considered adverse life events: (1) severity – the intensity of adverse life events; (2) temporality – the duration of adverse life events; and (3) proximity – the distance and relation of family members to adverse life events. Of these three dimensions, the proximity dimension played a significant role in how founders perceived adversity on each pathway.

I initially expected that the severity of adverse life events would determine the effects on founders' identities and the subsequent pathways they would follow. But, as I compared adverse life events across cases, I noted that these events were spread out across the three pathways in no particular pattern. I initially surmised that founders on the Flight pathway experienced the most severe life events, but there were two cases with life threatening events, viz. Prop Man who experienced multiple xenophobic attacks on his family and Beauty who witnessed her mother's murder and was sexually assaulted on more than one occasion. It was clear that adverse

life events were spread out across the pathways. Notably, these adverse events still resulted in identity disconfirmations across the three pathways for all founders.

TABLE 4

Model Elements per Case

Case #	Founder	Pathway	Adverse Life Event(s)	Dis/ Confirmed Social Identities + Adversity Proximity	Resultant Self-Esteem	Changes to Identity Construction	Behavioural Response	Founding Motives
1	Tour Guide	Accept	Absent parents in childhood; mistreated by family; twice betrayed by husband	Communal - Spiritual + Family Sources	Preserved	Shield disconfirmed identities	Improve existing relationships	Community-focused
2	Science Guy	Accept	Struggles with inadequate school system; arrested at university	Communal -Spiritual + External Sources	Preserved	Shield disconfirmed identities	Improve existing relationships	Community-focused
3	Prop Man	Fight	Refugee stigma in childhood; struggles with employment	Positive Family + External Sources	Damaged	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities	Redefine the situation	Redemptive
4	Green Fingers	Fight	Extended unemployment; husband's infidelity	Positive Family + External Sources	Damaged	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities	Redefine the situation	Redemptive
5	Fashion	Fight	Illness during schooling; inadequate employment	Positive Family + External Sources	Damaged	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities	Redefine the situation	Redemptive
6	Masseuse	Fight	Husband's infidelity	Positive Family + External Sources	Damaged	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities	Redefine the situation	Redemptive
7	Baby Shoes	Flight	Family abuse led to incomplete schooling; extended unemployment	Negative Family + Family Sources	Devastated	Release and reconfirm disconfirmed identities	Create new environment	Emancipatory
8	Gogo	Flight	Abusive stepmother through childhood	Negative Family + Family Sources	Devastated	Release and reconfirm disconfirmed identities	Create new environment	Emancipatory
9	Beauty	Flight	Witnessed mother's murder; twice sexually assaulted; GBV	Negative Family + Family Sources	Devastated	Release and reconfirm disconfirmed identities	Create new environment	Emancipatory

Thus, ruling out severity as a distinguishing dimension of adversity, I considered temporality or the duration of adverse life events. Taking the adverse life events of each case into account (in addition to cognisance of chronic adversity characteristic of township life), I sorted events into the persistent or episodic categories. Using the Flight pathway as an example, adverse life events ranged from a minute, a few months, to several years. Across the pathways, adversity ranged from episodic life events to those that persisted over several years and in many cases, a combination of the two. Yet these differences in temporality did not create distinctions in identity disconfirmations across the pathways. Thus, Beauty's (Flight pathway) mother was murdered in an instant, whilst Tour Guide's (Accept pathway) parents were absent for her entire childhood. Yet, these adverse life events of differing temporality had a similar effect in the disconfirmation of or threat to their daughter identities.

The last dimension of adversity I considered was proximity, which revealed a clear pattern connected to founders' social identities. The distance and relation of family members to adverse life events influenced how founders perceived their salient social identities and how they felt about themselves, i.e. their self-esteem. Founders on the Accept pathway had cases of family members as the source of adversity as well as external sources of adversity, the latter being Science Guy's experiences of inadequate resources in his township schooling. But they perceived their family social identities positively. They were also embedded within supportive spiritual communities. For instance, Tour Guide's parents' absence in her childhood and the mistreatment she endured from extended family members place them at the source of her childhood adversity. But she was also raised by her caring great-grandmother, who socialised her with Christian beliefs through the church. Her case highlights the significance of family members (her grandparents and mother's

siblings) and her church community social relations as support systems in dealing with adverse life events, as described below.

> *So I think my high school years have shaped me in terms of making the right decisions and also my aunts as well. Cos they used to tell me that I shouldn't get pregnant before I finish school. So I think having them around also matters even though I was angry because I didn't know what was happening with my dad and my mum… so they were young and also it was their first time having a teenager in the house as well… I was not an easy child… because I was full of anger… it was not easy because they had to provide for me, feed me… I think they were still trying to protect me from boys, teenage pregnancy and all these things. But in my mind at that time, I didn't understand.*
>
> *So yeah, it [her husband's infidelity] has affected me emotionally, but I think with my Christian values as well and also friends, I think I was able to overcome some of the things you know, which I'm still trying to overcome even today.*

Founders on the Fight pathway belonged to caring family social structures that guided them through adverse life events. In these cases, family structures were viewed as supportive resources even though in some cases, some adverse life events had family sources such as unfaithful partners. To illustrate, Prop Man regularly referenced the family values that were instilled in him early on in his life and the importance placed on education in his specific context as a refugee living in townships prone to xenophobic outbreaks. He attributed his life decision-making to his family's influence, specifically his mother and uncle.

> *It was my mum, yeah growing up because I remember most of the time, the only time when I would have a conversation with my mum was when we are going to the shop… During our journey to Shoprite, she will speak to me about the values and she would instil those values to me. And say, my child, you need to finish school, you need to do this, you know… my uncle… he was very strict but he was the closest to me in the sense of looking out for me basically. He wanted the best for me you know. He was very strict so he was also one of the guys who instilled some values to me as well in terms of you need to work hard, you need to look at your books, you know.*

In contrast, founders on the Flight pathway experienced adversity *within* their family structures. In each of these cases, specific family members were the source of episodic or persistent adversity and there were no other supportive social structures to counter the adversity experienced. Thus, their family social identities were disconfirmed by others within their family social groups and the latters' exclusionary behaviours. In Gogo's case, her stepmother persistently inflicted cruelty, and her extended family failed to eliminate the mistreatment. Similarly, in the life story of Baby Shoes, her cousin was tasked with her care as she completed her last two years of high school. Instead, her cousin mistreated her, so her plans to attain her high school diploma were shattered. Like Gogo, it was difficult for Baby Shoes to speak about this life event, eliciting an emotional, tearful response.

> *My cousin, so my cousin didn't treat a child, like, I'm a child, but [s]he didn't treat me like a child… Because that time I'm staying in Joburg, [s]he was abusing me. I can't do read, I can't sit. I don't have a money to buy clothes. If I'm [she] cooking, you didn't give me food. She didn't feed me. So that's why I didn't go to school after that. She didn't buy any food, but my mother and father give her money to buy, but she didn't buy [she begins to cry].*

In all cases on the Flight pathway, familial proximity to adverse life events in addition to minimal support structures amplified their experiences of adversity. While founders on the Accept and Fight pathways had supportive familial social structures and confirmed family social identities that cushioned the effects of adverse life events, such structures were absent or minimal for founders on the Flight pathway. This is illustrated below by Beauty when, after the murder of her mother and her first sexual assault case, the counselling service offered by her school was suddenly taken away.

> *So there was an art therapist. So I went to her and told her my story and she helped me with counselling and all that. Then I met a counsellor at school. He was called Sydney. He was a great guy. He was a brilliant guy ever. And I started sharing my story with him and all that. We started talking and all that*

but, I think the contract ended before I finished school. I lost his contact and I felt like, okay now I'm left alone.

4.3.1.1 Disconfirmed Identities

Applying an identity lens, I found that adverse life experiences led to disconfirmed identities i.e. identities that were not accepted by others in founders' social groups during experiences of adversity. Disconfirmed identities were role and/or social identities and could thus be described from an IDT and SIT perspective. Using IDT, identity disconfirmation refers to the inability of founders to enact specific role identities in relation to significant others in counter roles. The (in)actions of those in counter roles threatened or violated salient role identities, for example, Tour Guide's inability to enact the daughter role due to her absent parents. From an SIT perspective, identity disconfirmation meant that founders perceived that they were not recognised or accepted as members of salient social groups to which they belonged, as in Gogo's case with her family. They felt excluded from their salient social identities and group memberships due to other in-group members (in)actions.

The disconfirmed identities construct is built on the concept of identity verification, which argues that people are motivated to verify or confirm their beliefs about their self-concepts to create coherence in their worlds (Swann, 1990). According to Higgins (1987), when others do not verify identities, this results in a discrepancy between how one is seen (reflected appraisals) and how one desires to be seen (ideal self), and this produces an emotional response and a strong motivation to reduce the discrepancy. I noted that disconfirmed identities led to various forms of negative affect for all founders through their adverse life events. Table 5 below describes the adverse life experiences and associated disconfirmed

identities. It also indicates the sources of adversity in the proximity dimension and the social structures available to all founders during adverse life events.

TABLE 5

Adverse Life Events, Adversity Dimensions, Disconfirmed Identities, & Social Structures

Case #	Founder	Adverse Life Event(s)	Length of Event	Persistent &/or Episodic Adversity	Adversity Proximity Dimension	Disconfirmed Identities	Social Structures Available at time of Adversity
1	Tour Guide	Absent parents in childhood; Twice betrayed by husband	20+ yrs.; 1yr & 1yr	Persistent & Episodic	Family source	Family social identity; Daughter role identity; Wife role identity	Extended family; Church community and friends
2	Science Guy	Struggles with inadequate school system; Arrested at university	5+ yrs.; 2yrs.	Persistent & Episodic	External source	Learner-student role identities	Immediate family; Township community
3	Prop Man	Refugee stigma in childhood; Struggles with employment	13+ yrs.; 3 yrs.	Persistent & Episodic	External source	Learner role identity; Township role & social identities; Employee role identity	Immediate family
4	Green Fingers	Extended unemployment; husband's infidelity	2+ yrs.; 3+ yrs.	Persistent & Episodic	External & Family sources	Employee role identity; Wife role identity	Immediate family
5	Fashion	Illness during schooling; inadequate employment	1 yr.; 3+ yrs.	Episodic	External source	Learner role identity; Employee role identity	Immediate family
6	Masseuse	Husband's infidelity	4+ yrs.	Persistent	Family source	Wife role identity	Immediate family & friends
7	Baby Shoes	Family abuse led to incomplete schooling; extended unemployment	6 months; 4+ yrs.	Persistent & Episodic	External & Family sources	Learner role identity; family social identity; Employee role identity	Minimal to no support system
8	Gogo	Abusive stepmother through childhood	20+ yrs.	Persistent	Family source	Family social identity; Daughter role identity	Minimal to no support system
9	Beauty	Witnessed mother's murder; twice sexually assaulted; GBV	1 minute; several hours; 1+ yr.	Episodic	External & Family sources	Daughter role identity; Family social identity; Woman social identity	Minimal to no support system

4.3.2 Dis/Confirmed Social Identities

Confirmed social identities refer to membership within significant social groups to which founders belonged. In cases on the Flight pathway, family social identities were disconfirmed in addition to other role or social identities that were disconfirmed. Usage here is based on Tajfel's (1978, p.63) definition of a social identity which is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and social significance attached to that membership." Social group memberships formed an integral part of founders' lives from childhood or early adult life stages, i.e. pre-venturing stages.

These social identities had a refractive effect on founders' self-esteem, amplifying how they felt about themselves in positive or negative ways. They were significant in founders' lives in terms of their perceptions of their membership within these groups, i.e. when an individual is perceived by other group members and perceives herself as a group member rather than as a unique individual, the social category is said to be salient (Turner & Reynolds, 2012). As described below, I observed variations in salient social identities across my cases.

4.3.2.1 Communal-Spiritual Social Identities

Communal-spiritual social identities were pivotal to founders' collectivist focus on the Accept pathway. These were social group memberships that were community or faith-based in which founders were deeply embedded. The values, attitudes and beliefs within these identities were formed in early childhood through community, cultural or religious institutions and practices. For example, Tour Guide was raised in a Christian environment where she attended church services with her

great-grandmother and was taught how to pray and conduct herself through Christian values. Such social identities also formed part of the broader community in which they existed, in this case, the township context. Science Guy highlighted his African spiritual beliefs as part of his confirmed social identities, his identification with the township community, and his African social identity, as described in the excerpt below.

> *Sometimes you know when you hear a voice that is the same as your own, you sort of relate to it, you sort of get empowered by it and me growing up in a township, you see a lot of unemployment, a lot of youth who are out of school, they are not doing anything and a large reason behind that is there are not really a lot of role models for them and for them to see someone who grew up around them who now is speaking about empowerment and entrepreneurship in the location and I think that's a voice that a lot of young, upcoming youth need to hear… I really do believe that us as Africa, we've got a lot to offer the world and I think now it's our time using technology also harnessing the power of technology to change how we are viewed and how we view ourselves and how we contribute in the general global economy…*

4.3.2.2 Positive Family Social Identities

Positive family social identities were social identities perceived positively by founders on the Fight pathway. The term follows from the early principle of SIT, which describes positive social identity as being based on favourable comparisons that can be made between the in-group and a relevant out-group. The in-group needs to be perceived as positively differentiated from relevant out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Positive family social identities buffered the effects of identity disconfirmations from external others, as they encouraged founders to improve their self-concepts and to metaphorically "fight" for their salient identities.

For example, Masseuse described her family as her ultimate support system from childhood to her current adult life stage. When she discovered her husband's betrayal, her children were toddlers, and she had just begun earning a basic

income as a domestic worker. She narrated troubles with her husband from the ninth year of their marriage until she found him in a compromised position in their twelfth year. Her family encouraged her to send her children home to them (to her hometown) until she could physically and financially care for them on her own.

> *Things started at my, marriage, things started not to be well and I was not happy… And I told her [employment agent] that I just want to be on my own you know. So by then, I told my parents because the kids… and then my parents said, relocate the kids to us so that there, you gonna be on your own looking after yourself. So I was very fortunate. Because here I have this very high standard family looking after each other. Very lovely family, so I took the kids to my mum and dad and my siblings.*

4.3.2.3 Negative Family Social Identities

When a social identity was not perceived positively, as was the case for founders on the Flight pathway with negative family social identities, the social identity became unsatisfactory, prompting individuals to change their perceptions of the group membership or change the situation (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Negative family social identities refer to disconfirmed social identities that created a sense of exclusion from the family social group as perceived by founders on the Flight pathway. Their feelings of exclusion emerged from physical acts committed by other in-group members that promoted rejection, in addition to disconfirming different salient identities. Their cases represent within-family sources of adversity that left them without supportive social structures and multiple identity disconfirmations.

The double negative of disconfirmed identities and disconfirmed family social identities resulted in a diminished self-concept for founders on this pathway, which prompted them to escape or "take flight" from these adverse experiences and relationships. This was evident in Beauty's case after her mother was murdered and her aunt went to prison for the crime. Her uncle failed to consider her needs as she

and her sister lived in a child-headed household. He used money that was left from her mother's funeral policy for his own pleasures.

> *Because my uncle did the – all the beneficiary things, all those funeral things and all that. So the change from the money that my mother saved and from the funeral policy, yes, he took them. And he was just having fun and all that. He didn't even care about us.*

Table 6 below outlines confirmed social identities for all nine cases.

TABLE 6

Dis/Confirmed Social Identities per Case

Case #	Founder	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Details
1	Tour Guide	Communal-Spiritual	Christian beliefs, practices and community members have supported her through negative life experiences, strengthened her efforts to help others. This socialization began with her great-grandmother: *She really protected me. She will pray with me. That's why I the whole Christian thing, I think it came from her… so the whole background of Christianity of connecting with God and praying, I think I got it from her.*
2	Science Guy	Communal-Spiritual	African ancestral beliefs and worship was embraced as it strengthened his identification with other township residents and his intentions to assist others: *Coming from a family of mostly traditional and we believe in the existence of ancestors … this one is on African spirituality and how I believe it will rectify what spirituality is and how we relate to spirituality (in reference to stories that he has written about township life).*
3	Prop Man	Positive Family	Mother and uncle taught him important family values promoting education and hard work, and were protective against xenophobic incidents: *During our journey to Shoprite she (mum) will speak to me about the values and she instil those values to me. And say, my child you need to finish school, you need to do this, you know. You need to help us at home. So I grew up with those values basically… My uncle wanted the best for me. He was very strict so he was also one of the guys who instilled some values to me as well in terms of: you need to work hard, you need to look at your books, you know.*
4	Green Fingers	Positive Family	Mother raised her and her sister as a single parent after her divorce: *My mother taught me to never stop and complain, to keep going. When she divorced, she rolled up her sleeves and opened her own day-care centre, so that she could send me and my sibling to school.*
5	Fashion	Positive Family	Supportive parents in childhood and her siblings have stayed connected as adults, encouraged her venturing efforts: *It's my mother and sisters. And also my brother was close to me. Yes he's my twin brother… My father, he was having two wives. My mother was doing a business as well. That's where we got the business. She was selling. Selling biscuits and stuff. So I got sisters, they are also close to us… they are here in Cape Town. They are always there for me, in good and in bad times.*
6	Masseuse	Positive Family	Raised in a supportive loving family. Supported her through divorce and provided continued assistance with her venture and finances: *Things started at my, marriage, things started not to be well and I was not happy… And I told her (employment agent) that I just want to be on my own you know. So by then, I told my parents because the kids… and then my parents said, relocate the kids to us so that there, you gonna be on your own looking after yourself. So I was very fortunate. Because here I have this very high standard family looking after each other. Very lovely family, so I took the kids to my mum and dad and my siblings.*
7	Baby Shoes	Negative Family	Cousin mistreated her and she could not complete high school: *I go to Joburg to, at school. Grade 11. But in Joburg, it's not nice for me. I was staying with my cousin. My cousin, she didn't do straight. Didn't like a children… so I dropped Grade 11 due to what happened… Because that time I'm staying in Joburg, she was abusing me. I can't do read. I can't sit. I don't have a money to buy clothes. If I'm (she) cooking, you didn't give me food. She didn't feed me. So that's why I didn't go to school after that. She didn't buy any food, but my mother and father give her money to buy, but she didn't buy (starts crying).*

Case #	Founder	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Details
8	Gogo	Negative Family	Step-mother mistreated her, family did not help resolve the situation, forced her to marry older man for bride price money: *The step mother doesn't like me (she starts to cry). The stepmother doesn't like me. I was young, I was ten years. I stayed that life. I didn't growing. When I was ten years my mother tell me I must cook. I didn't know how to cook. And my father was working at Port Elizabeth and she liked Nomsa, my younger sister… When I was not cooking, she throw me with the water. I wake up and call my father's younger sister to tell. And she said I must go to my place because "you make a trouble". I stay like that.*
9	Beauty	Negative Family	Aunt murdered her mother and left her to live in a child-headed household. Uncle took all of the insurance money after mother's funeral without concern for their needs: *He didn't take anything but he just shot my mum and ran away… Because my uncle did the – all the beneficiary things, all those funeral things and all that. So the change from the money that my mother saved and from the funeral policy, yes, he took them. And he was just having fun and all that. He didn't even care about us.*

4.3.3 Resultant Self-Esteem

The refractive effect of salient social identities on founders' disconfirmed identities resulted in variances in self-esteem. Gecas and Burke (1995, p.46) define self-esteem as "the evaluative and affective aspects of the self-concept, to how "good" or "bad" we feel about ourselves." While the self-concept is our collection of beliefs about ourselves, self-esteem is the positive or negative evaluations of ourselves and how we feel about self (Smith, Mackie & Claypool, 2015). While adverse life experiences and associated identity disconfirmations resulted in declines in founders' self-esteem to varying degrees, it was evident that salient social identities played an integral role in managing founders' specific state self-esteem by either preserving, damaging or devastating their self-esteem.

4.3.3.1 Preserved Self-Esteem on the Accept Pathway

Having both supportive family and communal social group memberships, founders on the Accept pathway were able to preserve their self-esteem in the face of adverse life events, regardless of the source of adversity. These confirmed social identities provided founders with the support and encouragement to mitigate the effects of identity disconfirmations. For example, when Science Guy was arrested

and awaiting the outcome of court hearings, he turned to his spiritual social identity and beliefs in African ancestral worship to maintain his self-esteem.

> *… and she taught me about how to navigate the spiritual life and how to get to my African spirituality, how to meditate, how to because I used to also have dreams. So she also taught me about dreams that sometimes things you dream are things that are about to happen, some are bad but what you need to do is wake up and pray… the traditional type of prayer was not really a prayer but it was you talking to your ancestors.*

4.3.3.2 Damaged Self-Esteem on the Fight Pathway

Founders on the Fight pathway experienced decreased self-esteem due to adverse life events. However, their positive family social identities mitigated the effects of identity disconfirmations to the extent that their self-esteem was only temporarily damaged by adverse life events, irrespective of the source of adversity. For instance, when Green Fingers first learned of her husband's infidelity, it was particularly upsetting since she was also struggling with unemployment and taking care of her four children. But with her mother as a role model, and as she focused on establishing her food-gardening venture, her husband became less of a priority and her emotional responses diffused.

> *Yeah, then I was like totally you know, bawling out my eyes and upset and wondering what did I do and why and all of that stuff. I'm way over that right now. I'm like, okay cool and I go… he was asking me now the other day, why I don't get angry anymore… I don't go looking for it anymore. If there is something, I don't want to know about it… I concentrate on me and my children and that is it… my mother taught me to never stop and complain, to keep going. When she divorced, she rolled up her sleeves and opened her own day-care centre, so that she could send me and my siblings to school.*

4.3.3.3 Devastated Self-Esteem on the Flight Pathway

The double negative of disconfirmed family social identities and the absence of other supportive social structures on the Flight pathway left founders devastated.

Since other significant members of their family social groups were the source of their adversity, they did not have a supportive social structure which would have mitigated the effects of the adverse life events. To illustrate, Baby Shoes' cousin not only mistreated her while they lived together in Johannesburg, but she also failed to return Baby Shoes' identity document on her return to her parents. This further devastated Baby Shoes by preventing her from re-registering at another high school back home.

> *That time I'm going back to the Eastern Cape, my cousin take my ID, she didn't give me [back] my ID. So that's why I didn't go to school… No, the school is fine, but that time, it was painful [after the abuse], so that's why I didn't go back to school.*

Table 7 below provides details of the resultant self-esteem for all nine cases in relation to their dis/confirmed family social identities and other disconfirmed identities.

TABLE 7

Resultant Self-Esteem per Case

Case #	Founder	Disconfirmed Identities	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Resultant Self-Esteem
1	Tour Guide	Family social identity; Daughter role identity; Wife role identity	Communal-Spiritual	Self-esteem preserved: Tour Guide's self-categorization as a Christian and her acceptance within this SID* served to maintain her self-esteem and softened the effects of her disconfirmed identities. *Then I just remember God just healing my heart, the pain you know. The one thing, I think that was the voice that told me that you need to reconcile with your mum. You need to forgive. You need not to judge. You don't know what was happening at that time. Just forgive… So yeah, it has affected me emotionally, but I think my Christian values as well and also friends, I think I was able to overcome some of the things you know, which I'm still trying to overcome even today.*
2	Science Guy	Learner-student role identities	Communal-Spiritual	Self-esteem preserved: Science Guy's self-categorization as an African ancestral worshipper enabled him to embrace his culture and accept the disconfirmation of his salient identities. His spiritual SID enabled him to overcome his negative life experiences and maintain his self-esteem. *… and she taught me about how to navigate the spiritual life and how to get to my African spirituality, how to meditate, how to, because I used to also have dreams. So she also taught me about dreams that sometimes things you dream are things that are about to happen, some are bad but what you need to do is wake up and pray… the traditional type of prayer was not really a prayer but it was you talking to your ancestors. So I started also exploring that. Started calming me down to a point that I do believe that in terms of managing my anger and managing myself in uncomfortable situations, I'm more better than I was.*
3	Prop Man	Learner role identity; Township role & social identities; Employee role identity	Positive Family	Self-esteem damaged: Prop Man's self-esteem was negatively impacted by his identity disconfirmations, however his family SID provided the support and encouragement that mitigated the effect of the disconfirmations. *My mum as well, like they would place their hopes on me basically, as opposed to my brother because you know we had different characteristics.* *Everyone at home as well was happy for me, my mum and my dad, because after telling them about this academy, I need to go there (on his acceptance into a business academy).*
4	Green Fingers	Employee role identity; Wife role identity	Positive Family	Self-esteem damaged: Green Fingers' self-esteem was negatively impacted by her identity disconfirmations, however, her family SID provided the support and encouragement that mitigated the effect of the disconfirmations. *I came to that point where I was just so desperate that I started growing vegetables in my own backyard and when my kids saw what I was doing, you know they went and told the neighbours and they got all excited and the neighbours got all excited about it… I can say that we as a family personally, we are much better off than we were two years ago.*
5	Fashion	Learner role identity; Employee role identity	Positive Family	Self-esteem damaged: Fashion's self-esteem was negatively impacted by her identity disconfirmations, however her family SID provided the support and encouragement that mitigated the effect of the disconfirmations. *And the money I was getting there, it was too little because I was getting R250 a week. Then I tried to save that money so that I can open my own business … I was not happy with my salary that I had from there. So that's why I think I can open my own business so that I can do more money for my needs…I've got a younger sister. She is the one who will send the WhatsApp. So she is the one who is supposed to market it for me… He (husband) feels very happy. Yeah he also helps me.*

Case #	Founder	Disconfirmed Identities	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Resultant Self-Esteem
6	Masseuse	Wife role identity	Positive Family	Self-esteem damaged: Masseuse's self-esteem was negatively impacted by her identity disconfirmation, however her family SID provided the support and encouragement that mitigated the effect of the disconfirmations. *(When asked who has helped her in life) It's my Dad. Yes, it's my hero. Yes, financially. Yeah, he's took my hat off. I remember when I was going to add the product to massages, he helped me. I asked him to borrow me (lend) money, so he did. Yes, we are a very close family. Even my brothers and my sisters, especially my sisters… We live to each other.*
7	Baby Shoes	Learner role identity; family social identity; Employee role identity	Negative Family	Self-esteem devastated: The double negative of negatively perceived family SIDs that disconfirmed salient identities resulted in low self-esteem for Baby Shoes. *That time I'm going back to the Eastern Cape, my cousin take my ID, she didn't give me (back) my ID. So that's why I didn't go to school… No, the school is fine, but that time, it was painful (after the abuse), so that's why I didn't go back to school.*
8	Gogo	Family social identity; Daughter role identity	Negative Family	Self-esteem devastated: The double negative of negatively perceived family SIDs that disconfirmed salient identities resulted in low self-esteem for Gogo. *(After I was born) I didn't see my mother. I just went to the stepmother… When I was there, life was not right… I stayed that life. I didn't growing… And when she fight with my father, then my father is coming and she make trouble again that side. And I stay like that… When my son was three years, my stepmother say, "Sorry about everything I do to you". She say, "Sorry, I was jealous because your mother is like you". I said I didn't know my mother. Why you do like this?*
9	Beauty	Daughter role identity; Family social identity; Woman social identity	Negative Family	Self-esteem devastated: The double negative of negatively perceived family SIDs that disconfirmed salient identities resulted in low self-esteem for Beauty. *So the change from the money that my mother saved and from the funeral policy, yes, he took them. And he was just having fun and all that. He didn't even care about us… then we, okay my cousin left. She went to her mother. And my sister left to her father's family because we did not share the father. So I was left alone… Then I met a counsellor at school. He was called Sydney. He was a great guy. He was a brilliant guy ever. And I started sharing my story with him and all that. We started talking and all that but, I think the contract ended before I finished school. I lost his contact and I felt like, okay now I'm left alone.*

*SID – social identity

4.3.4 Changes to Identity Construction and Behavioural Responses

According to Gecas and Burke (1995), people are motivated to avoid low self-evaluations. They will increase efforts to improve self-esteem through various behavioural responses such as restructuring the environment or redefining the situation to enable a more favourable reflection of self. The data indicated that the effect of adverse life experiences on founders' self-esteem influenced their efforts to improve how they felt about themselves. This resulted in different behavioural strategies to improve self-esteem and in the treatment of disconfirmed identities.

Since identities precede behaviours, changes were evident in founders' identity construction efforts, either by releasing disconfirmed identities with low salience and reconfirming them in new social settings, reconstructing, or shielding highly salient identities. Identity construction refers to "the process through which actors come to define who they are. The key outcome of identity construction at the individual level is identification, the extent to which one internalizes a given identity as a (partial) definition of self" (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016, p. 113). Thus, founders changed how they negotiated and enacted their disconfirmed identities through different behavioural responses in their efforts to redefine themselves. Changes to identity construction and behavioural responses were viewed as co-constructive processes.

4.3.4.1 Shield Disconfirmed Identities by Improving Existing Relationships – Accept Pathway

Founders on the Accept pathway shielded disconfirmed identities as they still considered these highly salient identities to which they were committed to enacting in the same social structures. Thus, they chose to reconcile with those who had disconfirmed their identities by improving those relationships, thus preserving their

self-esteem. For instance, when Science Guy got arrested for involvement in student protests at his university, his role identity as a student was threatened. He had to face the possibility of being excluded from the university as he appeared in court. Fortunately, the court case was dropped due to insufficient evidence. But the experience led to his reflection on his short-lived role as a student activist and how this could have derailed his academic career had he been expelled. It prompted behavioural changes that would enable him to continue to enact his salient student identity by re-focusing on his academics within the same university structures.

> *And the court case also took a toll on me… because a lot of people around me were being expelled, and for me, it [the protests and campaign] was not even that important, Fees Must Fall. It was just me going to meetings and protests and just getting up the numbers… And that kicked off my confidence and I started separating myself from those people and stuff… so I was still focused on my academics as much as they were, they dropped a bit.*

4.3.4.2 Reconstruct Disconfirmed Identities by Redefining the Situation – Fight Pathway

On the Fight pathway, founders sought out new social structures to reconstruct disconfirmed identities so that they may still be able to enact these identities with new others. Founders on this pathway had the support of their family social groups to cope with disconfirmed identities. Socialisation and beliefs within their family social identities enabled them to redefine the situations in which their identities were disconfirmed. Thus, they could re-enact disconfirmed identities in new social structures and restore their damaged self-esteem.

A case in point is Green Fingers, who was unemployed for two years after she lost her job at the local school library. She spent those two years doing menial tasks as they came up in her community for meagre earnings. During this time, she also discovered that her husband had been involved in extra-marital affairs for several

years, and he had left their home. In a desperate effort to feed her four children, she grew vegetables in her back garden so they could harvest them for their meals. This activity eventually turned into her business venture, where she employs others and earns enough to support her children comfortably.

> *I've got four kids so raising four children and being unemployed is quite hard … but for us living in Hanover Park, you have three or four different families living in someone else's backyard. So although there was a necessity and there was a need for food growing, there wasn't actually any space available. And it was at that point that I saw this ad in the paper for the Youth Start entrepreneurship challenge where youth had to think of ideas that would create jobs, empower the community but also be a sustainable business within their communities… And that's where developing spaces where there aren't any land spaces available for people to grow their own vegetables [came about].*

4.3.4.3 Release and Reconfirm Disconfirmed Identities and Create a New Environment – Flight Pathway

Founders on the Flight pathway chose to release disconfirmed identities associated with adversity. They sought new environments with new social structures and identities that enabled them to positively redefine their self-concepts. Their devastated self-esteem motivated founders to change their social environments to establish new, more positive versions of previously disconfirmed social identities and improve their diminished sense of self. In their new social settings, they were able to reconfirm previously disconfirmed identities. For instance, when Baby Shoes felt that she could not continue with her final years of high school after her cousin abused her, she moved to an entirely new town, where she found work at a hair salon. She let go of her learner identity in the formal schooling system. Instead, she learnt to braid ethnic hair in a new environment.

> *After [the abuse] I'm going to Eastern Cape [back to her mother], then I'm going to Queenstown. I think it's a four month, I'm staying in Queenstown. In Queenstown, I was working at a salon.*

She then described how she moved to her sister in IY and began practising her new-found braiding skills. This eventually led to the establishment of her first venture as a hair salon owner.

> *After Queenstown, I'm coming here [to IY]… I was staying with my sister. After that, I'm looking at job but didn't find a job. I would braid. I was making braids. After two years, I opened my salon… Yes, in 2010, my life was beautiful.*

Table 8 below outlines the changes to identity construction and associated behavioural responses for all nine cases.

4.3.5 Founding Motives

As I compared founders' life stories and how they responded to adversity through changes to their identity construction, it became clear that their motives to establish their ventures differed across the three pathways. Confirmed or disconfirmed social identities were integral driving mechanisms for their founding motives and in their efforts to create or maintain coherence in their life stories post-adverse life events.

4.3.5.1 Community-Focused Venturing Motives on the Accept Pathway

On the Accept pathway, founders' efforts to manage their existing relationships and shield their disconfirmed identities were successful. This, in conjunction with their confirmed communal-spiritual social identities, prompted them to establish ventures that were community-focused and prosocial in nature. These founders, who were deeply embedded within their communities, acknowledged and accepted their chronic, persistent and episodic adverse life experiences. Together with their concern for other township residents, they created coherence in their life stories through their ventures.

TABLE 8

Changes to Identity Construction & Behavioural Responses per Case

Case #	Founder	Disconfirmed Identities	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Changes to Identity Construction	Behavioural Responses
1	Tour Guide	Family social identity; Daughter role identity; Wife role identity	Communal-Spiritual	Shield disconfirmed identities. Acknowledging her part in relation to her husband's infidelity: *We are still partners because we have kids. That's the story of my marriage… It's been hard because I realise sometimes, when I'm angry at him, I take my anger to the kids as well you know… We can make a good team.*	Improve existing relationships In relation to reconciling with her mother: *I went to her and then I think, she explained her side of the story and then I just accepted it and I said that we need to start over and that we need to move on and that I need her in my life… so then my mum played a huge role (in her wedding negotiations). Yeah she stood for me… so that made us to be even more close you know.*
2	Science Guy	Learner-student role identities	Communal-Spiritual	Shield disconfirmed identities Acknowledging his disadvantaged education: *I think you can add that the birth of my business was also through the experience, my education, the experience that I saw how the education system was limiting students and their thinking abilities and how they express themselves.*	Improve existing relationships Intention to improve communication with others through his venturing: *I think one part I did not focus on during my upbringing … I think I was so individualistic growing up that I didn't know… and as a business person, I need to really build up on that …looking into the future here is to build my communication skills and also I'm only 23 so I'm still very young.*
3	Prop Man	Learner role identity; Township role & social identities; Employee role identity	Positive Family	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities Making changes to how he enacted his learner identity: *Let me just focus on my education and see where this will lead me you understand. So from Grade 9, I associated myself with people who are positive, who are basically working hard, and I dedicated my life as well in terms of doing my homework and everything I wanted to change basically, whatever I did.*	Redefine the situation Taking up new roles within the school situation gave the social structure a new, positive meaning: *When I was in Grade 10 I decided to take up leadership roles… I wrote my speech and I actually won, yeah as the student representative… you know people were rooting for me, that's when I realized, wow, this is an amazing feeling… Like for the first time in my life, I had this amazing feeling people rooted for me… So all these things motivated me. So I think those leadership roles they actually built me as well, so I had to be an example to other kids as well and at home as well.*
4	Green Fingers	Employee role identity; Wife role identity	Positive Family	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities Living without her husband in her home as a single parent in her children's lives: *I concentrate on me and my children and that is it. I don't concentrate on anything else. That days of making him a priority is not important anymore.*	Redefine the situation Using the incubation opportunity as a means to earn income: *I've got four kids so raising four children and being unemployed is quite hard … but for us living in Hanover Park, you have three or four different families living in someone else's backyard. So although there was a necessity and there was a need for food growing, there wasn't actually any space available. And it was at that point that I saw this ad in the paper for the Youth Start entrepreneurship challenge where youth had to think of ideas that would create jobs, empower the community but also be a sustainable business within their communities… And that's where developing spaces where there aren't any land spaces available for people to grow their own vegetables (came about).*

Case #	Founder	Disconfirmed Identities	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Changes to Identity Construction	Behavioural Responses
5	Fashion	Learner role identity; Employee role identity	Positive Family	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities Operating her venture has increased her earning ability and in other salient roles (mother): *I manage to be a mother because my business is, I'm also doing my business in my house, so people just come here and take their things (clothing).*	Redefine the situation Making changes from being inadequately employed to self-employed: *I was not happy with my salary that I had from there (the restaurant) and I was having more needs than my salary. So that's why I think I can open my own business so that I can do more money for my needs… I do the course there in Ikayalathemba to be a barista and now that was 2018 for three months.)… My plans now is to open my coffee shop.*
6	Masseuse	Wife role identity	Positive Family	Reconstruct disconfirmed identities Moving on from failed marriage: *I was going to my house up until I find something very strange in my house. That's where things broken down (in her marriage). I was very happy to catch something right-handed… I am not that person when I saw something bad, I was worried about, I will lay low, I get sick. No, I get over it immediately. I said, ah, ah, that was not good enough for me. So after this, there is life.*	Redefine the situation Negotiating the terms of new relationships: *He (current partner) wanted to marry me. I said, you know I was married before and I don't want to. Because it was, you see my first husband, I trusted so, that was the trust between me and him and he broke that trust. So at some stage, I don't trust anyone now. I trust my family… I said to him, yes, I love you, but we need to put some boundaries you know, because I want to be independent. I've got this business. This business is my first priority, yes.*
7	Baby Shoes	Learner role identity; family social identity; Employee role identity	Negative Family	Release disconfirmed identities Finding new ways to develop skills through learning: *After (the abuse) I'm going to Eastern Cape (back to her mother), then I'm going to Queenstown. I think it's a four month, I'm staying. In Queenstown, I was working at a salon.*	Create a new environment Moving to a new social environment and using newly learnt skills: *After Queenstown, I'm coming here (to IY)… I was staying with my sister. After that, I'm looking at job but didn't find a job. I would braid. I was making braids. After two years, I opened my salon… Yes. In 2010, my life was so beautiful.*
8	Gogo	Family social identity; Daughter role identity	Negative Family	Release disconfirmed identities Forced marriage was the final act that disconfirmed her daughter and family identities: *My step-mother say, you must go. You must go to meet that man… I said, I didn't want that. They said, no, you must go because you didn't get a place (married). I said, I don't care because I don't want to marry that man. He was a big man, old man. And my (step) mother take my clothes out, threw them out and they take me and go… I didn't talk. I just cross… When I go out, I leave the family at the chair and I run. I go to the police station Middeldrift.*	Create a new environment Moving to a new social environment, Gogo was intentional about forging new social relationships: *When I finished to clean, I go out and found a friends there … they are working at Pick 'n Pay. I found those two friends… she give me a place to stay (in IY). When I come back (from work) to see my friends this side, I found a man. There's a man, this man I have with (boyfriend).*
9	Beauty	Daughter role identity; Family social identity; Woman social identity	Negative Family	Release disconfirmed identities Acknowledging that domestic violence was not acceptable: *So that time I was in a relationship with the father of my child. He was so abusive. Yoh! At that time, I did not have a problem with his abuse but as time goes, I saw that I'm settling for something that is not there… and people were keep on telling me that this is wrong… And I started seeing that, okay, this is wrong.*	Create a new environment Moving to father's house to re-establish close relations with him: *I decided, okay I have a family…Then I went back to my father's house because I got raped twice… My father bumped into that book (her journal) that I wrote those things in and the page was on the rape page. And he read the page … So he was a bit angry with me because he felt like he was not caring enough or he was not there enough for me. So he started to tell me that, I must be open with him, whatever and whenever I want to talk to him… I had a close relationship with my father (when I was younger) and I still have it now.*

To illustrate, Science Guy reiterated that he established his online science learning platform not only because he personally experienced struggles with inadequate resources when he was a science student in high school but because he saw how other township students were challenged when they got to university.

> *So Vision is an ed-tech app that uses a motion to visualise educational content… because those are the things that especially students in previously disadvantaged background do not have access to it, do not have access to labs and some of them don't even have access to good textbooks, so that will bridge the information gap that you find in the location [the township] and previously disadvantaged backgrounds… in high school, I did science, physics and life sciences and from Grade 10 to Grade 12, I used to fail physics… I don't remember one day I was doing a chemistry experiment, yeah, whilst we were science students and it's very hard for one to understand science when you've never done an experiment on it. So that's one of the problems that we were trying to solve using your phones to create and bridge that educational gap.*

4.3.5.2 Redemptive Venturing Motives on the Fight Pathway

Founders on the Fight pathway reconstructed their disconfirmed identities in new social structures with the support of their positive family social identities. Enacting these previously disconfirmed identities in new social structures gave them a sense of redemption. For these founders, the support of their positive family social identities offered the sustenance and guidance to seek new ways to disprove disconfirmations of salient identities. This differed from the Accept path in two ways: firstly, the salient social identities were not communal- spiritual in composition, they were family-focused, and secondly, supportive family members on this pathway inspired or spurred founders on to redefine disconfirmed identities in new ways. Thus, founders on this pathway enacted the proverbial "fight" for their positions to create coherence in their life stories. For example, after Masseuse's divorce, she had another long-term relationship. However, she had lost faith in the idea of marriage and made it clear to her new partner that she was committed to him but on her

terms. She made it clear that she prioritised her children and her massage and soy-candle-making venture before intimate relationships.

> *He wanted to marry me. I said, you know I was married before and I don't want to … at some stage, I don't trust anyone now. I trust my family. I trust the other women instead, yeah. I said to him, yes I love you, but we need to put some boundaries you know because I want to be independent, I've got this business. This business is my first priority. Yes… If I didn't divorce my ex-husband because all this hard work came from my divorce. I just like told myself that er, I'm not that kind of person who can sit down as a housewife waiting for the husband… I'm not that kind of person. I just want to live my beautiful own life. That's me.*

4.3.5.3 Emancipatory Venturing Motives on the Flight Pathway

Founders on the Flight pathway presented a third motive for establishing their ventures. The devastation felt at the hands of their own family members prompted them quite literally to escape their family social groups. Given the intense affective response to their disconfirmed identities, they actively sought new social identities in new social environments to establish coherence. Their ventures had an emancipatory motive as they released their disconfirmed and negative family social identities. In Beauty's case, she discovered a group-based support program many years after her traumatic life experiences, which awakened her motivation to focus on her future. She attributes her sense of empowerment to her venturing efforts as a mobile beauty therapist.

> *I'm very glad that I did the beauty therapy course because now I have this business… I love this business. I get so excited when I get clients. I get so excited whenever I have to show people how I work. To me, it's not about money… because everyone wants to be beautiful. Everyone wants to be relaxed… I want to empower the other women. Like I'm empowered.*

Table 9 below describes founders' motives and some of their venturing activities across the three pathways. My findings show that salient social identities prior to venturing and the proximity dimension of adverse life events have far-

reaching consequences in terms of founders' responses to disconfirmed identities and how these social identities influenced founders' motives for venturing. In the next chapter, I discuss the practical and theoretical implications of these findings in relation to previous studies, present the limitations of my study and make recommendations for future research.

TABLE 9

Founding Motives per Case

Case #	Founder	Disconfirmed Identities	Dis/Confirmed Social Identities	Venture Activities	Founding Motives
1	Tour Guide	Family social identity; Daughter role identity; Wife role identity	Spiritual-communal	*So I started projects. I worked with youth while they were here. I worked with their families, worked with different angels all around… I also started a parent centre programme where I ran projects with parents, workshops and stuff… and my heart was always with youth and older kids.*	Community-focused *I said I love working with young people. I love working with the community… So we still continue with nothing, serving and doing what we feel God has called us to do.*
2	Science Guy	Learner-student role identities	Spiritual-communal	*And then last year we busy focusing on Vision and I also enrolled on the program from GSB, the IVIP entrepreneurship program, so I was part of that cohort… and then on the demo day of the IVIP, we met a lot of people who sounded interest in what we were doing…*	Community-focused *If you look at students who come from privileged schools, they have a lot of access to information and how they are taught is different from how (disadvantaged) students are taught… what's the best way we could solve the educational crisis in South Africa is to level the playing field, is to give them the same access to information…*
3	Prop Man	Learner role identity; Township role & social identities; Employee role identity	Positive Family	*I remember the first property we sold on the platform… I made about fifteen thousand (rand) on that property… and then I made a difference at home. I paid rent for them (parents). I bought food. I bought clothes for myself as well because it was a long time ever since I spoilt myself.*	Redemptive *For me, like having to look for opportunities, for me, it's like having a way of sort of making my life a bit easier in future you know… Yeah so I guess, slowly, but surely, I'm getting there.*
4	Green Fingers	Employee role identity; Wife role identity	Positive Family	*Being a business owner is challenging! I take three trips a day to water the plants in the greenhouses, then I have to take care of admin and finance… it never stops! I struggle every day, but I'm building something of my own. It's a struggle with a purpose and a mission, and I know that I have the skills and the determination to get there.*	Redemptive *I can say that my family is comfortable for now but whatever profits I do manage to make, I reinvest it back into the business because there is so much that needs to be done… that days of making him (husband) a priority is not important anymore… I'm way over that right now. As soon as I can afford it (divorce proceedings), I will yeah… I don't want to give him fifty per cent of my company, what did he do?*
5	Fashion	Learner role identity; Employee role identity	Positive Family	*And I started to loan people that money so that my money can grow up… 2015, I started to buy the clothes to selling clothes and different style shoes, everything up until now… we give credit, it's not even a lay-buy. You have to give them (customers) and then they want to pay two months. For two months.*	Redemptive *I build the house there (in her rural hometown). I got my own car. We are doing a lot of things (from earning income through her ventures)… I was not happy with my salary that I had from there (the restaurant) and I was having more needs than my salary. So that's why I think I can open my own business so that I can do more money for my needs… the good side is I like what I'm doing. Because, like there's no one who's gonna tell you what to do. What I like is doing my own business.*

Case #	Founder	Disconfirmed Identities	Confirmed Social Identities	Venture Activities	Founding Motives
6	Masseuse	Wife role identity	Positive Family	*The oils, the candles, the diffusers, the refills and yeah, the shea butters. So I had one shea butter. And then I said… I must think out of the box. Now I've got the second shea butter I created myself… Now I've got the lemongrass one and it's selling like cupcakes!*	Redemptive *Because you see, in these Black communities, there are things we not exposed to, you know. We don't know but once you get in there you felt like, wow. We've missed out big time… (if I was still married) I was gonna be the housewife. I wasn't gonna you know, expose this talent if I was still there… I'm very, very happy… also what I like about my job, it's travelling, yes I want to travel the world now… I just want to live my beautiful own life.*
7	Baby Shoes	Learner role identity; family social identity; Employee role identity	Negative Family	*After two years, I opened my salon. Yes. In 2010, my life was beautiful… So now, I am making a shoes again, because I got a baby now. So I went back to business, all my business.*	Emancipatory *Oh, it's making a shoes and this ones (traditional clothes) because it's my talented, it's my talent, yes.*
8	Gogo	Family social identity; Daughter role identity	Negative Family	*I come to my place. I make (the extension to her home) when I come here. I was selling through this side and the people will come, come, come and I do this side (second extension)*	Emancipatory *That time I know scones, how to bake scones… I make it and I sell it there in school because I didn't want to work to another person. I want to do myself yeah.*
9	Beauty	Daughter role identity; Family social identity; Woman social identity	Negative Family	*My prices were very low and at school they were asking me, why are your prices so low? And I said, no I want recognition… I just want people to know that I have this skill and I'm good at it. So I keep on going with the same price…*	Emancipatory *I'm very glad that I did the beauty therapy course because now I have this business… I love this business. I get so excited when I get clients. I get so excited whenever I have to show people how I work. To me, it's not about money… because everyone wants to be beautiful. Everyone wants to be relaxed… I want to empower the other women. Like I'm empowered.*

Chapter 5 – Discussion

5.1 Introduction

I began this study wanting to understand how the lived experiences of founders in informal township contexts influenced their motivation to establish ventures. I asked the research question: *How do adverse life events shape entrepreneurs' identity construction efforts and their venturing motives?* With the limited scholarly knowledge of founder identity dynamics in informal contexts, I used life course methodology and multiple case studies to examine founders' life stories to induct an identity process model.

Interest in the challenges of being and becoming an entrepreneur has grown exponentially in both academic and mainstream literature. Previous research has examined entrepreneurial responses to adversity such as a traumatic life event that results in questioning one's identity (Haynie & Shepherd, 2011); the impact of domestic violence in combination with other adverse conditions on entrepreneurial pursuits (Shahriar & Shepherd, 2019); and by venturing as a means to overcome identifying as victims of adversity following a community-wide natural disaster event (Williams & Shepherd, 2016). Yet our understanding of what it means to be a founder under chronically adverse conditions remains limited, particularly in the Global South.

Entrepreneurship in the Global South has often been portrayed as an unglamorous, homogenous group of entrepreneurs who are pushed into venturing out of necessity as a result of a lack of other employment opportunities. In contrast, the opportunity-seeking entrepreneurs of the developed world are pulled into venturing activities by the attractiveness of such opportunities (Dencker et al., 2021).

This view is problematic since the assumption that entrepreneurs in informal contexts are a homogenous group engaged solely in necessity-based venturing relegates variation in founders' identities, behaviours and motives to the background (Dencker et al., 2021). Given the lack of understanding of founders' identities and motives under adverse conditions, my study builds on assertions by Dencker and colleagues (2021) by illustrating the variation in founders' motives in the South African township context.

I applied a life course methodological approach to better understand how lived experiences shape founders' identities and entrepreneurial motivations in an emerging market in the Global South. Lifelines and social network maps employed during my data gathering enabled me to portray the chronic adversity that founders experienced in their environments and the implications of persistent and episodic adverse life events on their identity construction efforts that ultimately shaped variance in their founding motives.

From a methodological point of view, using LCT methodology and research tools proved to be a suitably compatible choice for my study. Not only did lifelines and social network maps serve as points of verification and rapport creation between me and my participants, the LCT approach illuminated the value of considering the whole life experience in relation to entrepreneurial actions and motivations and associated identity construction. This is particularly insightful in terms of the identity dynamics of township entrepreneurs, who remain relatively under researched in broader entrepreneurship scholarship. Below, I discuss the main contributions from my analyses, locating them within previous entrepreneurship studies and demonstrating how I extend the work on adversity, founder identity, and entrepreneurial motivation.

5.2 Three key contributions

5.2.1 Multiple identities and founders' responses to adversity

By accentuating the role of salient social identities in relation to adversity, my study presents the far-reaching consequences of adversity on venturing outcomes. It extends the work of Powell and Baker (2014) in combining role and social identities to examine different responses to adversity. My findings are consistent with their study in highlighting the role of salient social identities as crucial mechanisms in subsequent identity construction and behavioural responses. To date, few studies have combined identity theories in entrepreneurship research (Powell & Baker, 2017; 2014), let alone in developing contexts (with the exception of Musona et al., 2021).

My study addresses this dearth and extends previous research by demonstrating the interplay between disconfirmed role and/or social identities and salient social identities in response to adverse life events in a context of chronic adversity. Applying the key tenets of both IDT and SIT enabled me to demonstrate the intertwined compositions of salient role and social identities and how the disconfirmation of some identities can have a rippling effect on further identity construction, which ultimately shaped founding motives. Had I focused on either IDT or SIT alone, the process model would have failed to highlight the tensions and complementarities of the multiple identities that made up the founder identities of my sample of township entrepreneurs.

My findings show that adverse life events lead to disconfirmed identities when founders cannot enact salient roles or highly valued social identities. Founders' salient social identities were key causal mechanisms for their resultant self-esteem and subsequent identity dynamics. These social identities played a pivotal role in founders' decisions to repair, reconstruct or release disconfirmed identities. By examining identity dynamics in relation to adverse life events, my study builds on

Powell and Baker's (2017) FIT construct and the multiple identities at play in venturing efforts.

It offers a novel perspective on how founders respond to adversity in a developing context in distinctly different ways, as evidenced by the adversity-identity combinations along the three pathways of my model. The combination of particular role and social identities positioned founders in their contexts to respond in particular ways (Fauchart & Gruber, 2020). It also revealed the significance of prior identities in shaping founders' identities, which few entrepreneurship studies in emerging contexts have previously considered from an identity perspective.

5.2.2 The implications of multiple forms of adversity on founders' identity construction efforts

Previous literature on adversity and entrepreneurship has independently considered episodic and persistent adversity and associated them with various founder motives. Shepherd and Williams (2020) theorised that venturing activities perform an equilibrating or balancing function when adversity is an episodic event, returning individuals to a valued pre-crisis state of well-being. In contrast, they explain that venturing efforts perform a disequilibrating function when adversity is persistent. This results in an increase in founder well-being, such as alleviating poverty (Shepherd & Williams, 2020).

My study demonstrates that episodic and persistent adversity commonly occur together in the township context, which is also characterised by chronic adversity. Whereas previous studies on adversity have focused on episodic events or persistent adversity, my study demonstrates that multiple forms of adversity exert pressure on township entrepreneurs and these multiple forms are inextricably linked to identity construction efforts through significant others in founders' social relations. Notably, my findings show that it is not the kinds of adversity that shape founders'

identities and behaviour but the proximity of family social groups to adverse life events. Specifically, the familial versus external community sources of adverse life experiences and the presence or absence of supportive social structures to handle adversity differentiated founders' identity construction efforts and behavioural responses.

Founders on the Accept pathway belonged to communal-spiritual social identities and supportive family social structures, which buffered them against adverse life events. They may have had adverse life experiences that either involved family members or external community groups, i.e. varied sources of episodic adversity, but the presence of supportive family social structures and their membership in communal-spiritual social groups enabled them to repair their disconfirmed identities. The highly valued collectivist view internalised within their communal-spiritual social identities prompted founders to accept adverse life events more readily and manage relationships in which salient identities had been disconfirmed. Thus, their communal-spiritual social identities acted as a buffer against adverse life events and enabled them to accept their life experiences, repair damaged relationships through forgiving others, and continue to enact previously disconfirmed identities in the environments in which they were socially embedded. This finding begins to highlight the role of pre-venturing spiritual beliefs and communal-spiritual identities on entrepreneurial actions, a promising area for future studies in the field of entrepreneurship.

In addition to communal-spiritual identities, my findings highlight the positive and negative role of family social identities and structures in relation to adversity and identity construction. For founders on the Fight pathway, adversity also materialised from varied sources, including family members in some cases. Still, supportive family social identities encouraged reconstructing disconfirmed identities in new social

environments. This was not the case for founders on the Flight pathway, where adversity originated from other family members and supportive social structures were absent. In these cases, family members were the sources of adversity, leading founders to negatively perceive their family social identities. The proximity of family social groups to adversity and the lack of supportive social structures, such as religious or friend networks, prompted founders on the Flight pathway to release disconfirmed identities and seek new social environments to create new role and social identities.

Petersen and Charman (2018) explain that functioning social security systems assist individuals living in poverty in developed economies. In less developed contexts, the family plays an integral role in providing social protection for individuals, as in informal contexts such as the slums of India (Gras & Nason, 2015). The philosophy of Ubuntu [loosely translated to: "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (Lutz, 2009, p. 314)], which promotes a culture of community among South African communities, has led to a predominance of family businesses within South African townships (Petersen & Charman, 2018). However, studies on the role of family structures in relation to adversity prior to venturing activities remain scarce, with the role of family dynamics on entrepreneurial action having hardly been considered (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

Some research on family and entrepreneurs has focused on women entrepreneurs and work-family conflict (Poggesi et al., 2019). This is unsurprising given the traditional gender roles of women who hold multiple identities, such as mother, householder, and entrepreneur (Chasserio et al., 2014). Chatterjee and colleagues (2022) set out to understand how entrepreneurship training benefited the well-being of marginalised women from highly conservative, patriarchal villages in rural India. In their study, women expressed greater well-being and empowerment when they had supportive families willing to accept their venturing efforts. In contrast, women whose

families disapproved of their venturing activities resigned themselves to being unable to change their family situations and languished in despair over their life circumstances (Chatterjee et al., 2022). While my study echoes their findings in relation to family support systems, I extend this work by using an identity theoretical lens to connect adversity to salient identities in a different developing context.

My study makes a novel contribution by drawing attention to the role of family social identities, either as a source of strength against adverse life events or as the source of adversity for township entrepreneurs prior to venturing. While some work on the role of family in entrepreneurship has been published in the South African township context (Petersen & Charman, 2018), this has focused on the role of family members in the business and not on the role of family prior to venturing. My study connects prior adverse life events that includes the extent of family relations through social identities, to identity construction and associated behavioural responses as expressed in the different pathways of venturing. It suggests that individuals can recover from identity disconfirmations when they have supportive community or family social structures. Without such support, as on the Flight pathway, identity release and reconfirmation is possible through the creation of new social identities, which facilitates coherence in one's life story. Through these findings, my study highlights the inextricable link between family and venturing efforts in the township context.

5.2.3 Founders' motives differ even under adverse conditions

Literature on entrepreneurship in contexts of poverty has largely assumed that adverse conditions produce a homogenous group of founders who are pushed to pursue ventures purely out of necessity, though this has recently been criticised (Weber et al., 2022; Dencker et al., 2021). Based on my personal experiences with township entrepreneurs prior to this study, I was not convinced that there was

homogeneity within this sector. My analysis demonstrates that founders' motives to establish ventures go beyond 'push' factors. Different types of adversity-identity combinations gave rise to variance in founding motives. When founders positively perceived salient social identities and felt supported within these social structures, their motives differed in comparison to cases where there was a lack of social support and salient identities were disconfirmed.

5.2.3.1 Spiritual-Communal Social Identities and Prosocial Motives

Founders on the Accept pathway were motivated to serve others in their communities through prosocial venturing. This was in alignment with their confirmed communal-spiritual social identities and their identity construction efforts to repair disconfirmed identities. I considered them social entrepreneurs based on their community-focused venturing activities and motives. Literature has expanded on the socially-driven motives that social entrepreneurs pursue over profit-seeking motives (Ruskin et al., 2016; Miller et al., 2012; Zahra et al., 2009), with only a handful of studies focusing on developing contexts (Littlewood & Holt, 2018; Ghalwash et al., 2017). Despite this growing body of work, few studies have considered the influence of the relationship between adversity and spiritual beliefs on founders' motives to establish prosocial ventures and even less so in developing contexts (Ghalwash et al., 2017; Rivera-Santos et al., 2015).

The role of religion and spirituality in entrepreneurship has only recently begun to gain traction (Kumar et al., 2022; Rashid & Ratten, 2021; Smith et al., 2021; Smith et al., 2019). Smith and colleagues (2019) posit that resources attained from religious or spiritual membership, which they refer to as spiritual capital, have been overlooked as significant in shaping individual and collective entrepreneurial efforts. Importantly,

they suggest that religious social identities motivate entrepreneurial opportunities, including prosocial motives that entrepreneurs pursue (Smith et al., 2019).

While there are few empirical studies on the role of spiritual beliefs in entrepreneurship, a recent study by Rashid and Ratten (2021) found that Pakistani entrepreneurs operated their ventures based on lifelong spiritual beliefs and practices. These beliefs motivated them to use their ventures for the good of both self and society. Similarly, my study's founders on the Accept pathway integrated faith and spiritual beliefs into their prosocial venturing efforts. However, I show that this resulted from their communal-spiritual social identities. With the values, attitudes and behaviours of these identities baked into the purpose and activities of their ventures, these founders could accept adverse life events and went on to manage relationships that had disconfirmed their salient role identities. Their ventures were mechanisms to share their beliefs about religion or community with others (Smith et al., 2019; Dana, 2009).

The importance of spirituality and faith is significant in township contexts since it is central to individuals' identities, as evidenced by Tour Guide's beliefs in Christianity and Science Guy's beliefs in African ancestral worship. Although these represented vastly different spiritual practices and forms of worship, both motivated collectivist, other-focused venturing outcomes. While some scholars have argued that religion should not form part of entrepreneurship studies as it is globally on the decline (Smith et al., 2021), my study presents an alternative view from a developing context. My analysis points to the positive effect of communal-spiritual social identities in response to adverse life events and disconfirmed identities. However, it differs from a study on Ghanaian rural entrepreneurs by Slade Shantz et al. (2018), which demonstrated the negative consequences of venturing in informal contexts when collectivist goals were placed before individual entrepreneurs' motives for

growth or innovation (Slade Shantz et al., 2018). This suggests that spirituality remains to be explored, particularly concerning identities and in response to adversity in developing contexts.

Some research has been conducted on the prosocial motives of entrepreneurs in developing contexts. Ghalwash and colleagues (2017) led a study on five Egyptian social entrepreneurs. They discovered that personal experiences and informal social networks were two integral sources of motivation for social entrepreneurs in emerging contexts. Interestingly, they also found a link between religious teachings and founders' motivations to help others in their communities (Ghalwash et al., 2017). Based in a similar developing context, their study is a rare example that highlights the value of the unique features of context as sources of variation in founders' motives on which my study builds.

Littlewood and Holt (2018) argued that incorporating the environment into research on social entrepreneurs in sub-Saharan Africa offers new voices and enriches ongoing scholarship on social entrepreneurship in Western domains. However, although their study focused on social entrepreneurs who operated in marginalised township contexts in South Africa, the founders were well-educated. They came from privileged backgrounds outside of the townships and had well-developed social networks (Littlewood & Holt, 2018).

In contrast, the founders on the Accept pathway in my study were born and raised within the township contexts in which my study was based. They had disadvantaged backgrounds and relatively small social networks. Having had these first-hand life experiences, they possessed empathy and compassion in relation to the struggles of others; constructs which have recently been written about in entrepreneurship studies (Bacq & Alt, 2018; Miller et al., 2012). By incorporating the pivotal role played by their communal-spiritual social identities in response to

adverse events, my study presents a nuanced understanding of the socially-driven motives of some entrepreneurs in a context of poverty.

5.2.3.2 Positive Family Social Identities and Redemptive Motives

Founders on the Fight pathway sought redemption for their disconfirmed identities through their new ventures. Few entrepreneurship studies have considered motives for venturing as redemptive. A parallel could be drawn with Miller and Le Breton-Miller's (2017) model of underdog entrepreneurs who overcome personal challenges beyond their control through entrepreneurial pursuits. They argued that personal challenges, such as being an immigrant or dealing with a disability in combination with the absence of employment opportunities, are life events that shape people's perceptions and actions. These life hardships prompt individuals to adapt through venturing efforts (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2017). Similarly, Haynie and Shepherd's (2011) study of US military veterans who had to transition to a career in entrepreneurship due to injuries during combat that left them disabled, is a fitting example of personal challenge creating underdog entrepreneurs.

Arguably, all founders in the township context could be considered underdog entrepreneurs, given adversity's pervasive nature in its chronic form. This underdog characterisation was pronounced in my cases on the Fight pathway where founders' venture activities enabled them to overcome challenging life experiences by proverbially fighting for what they wanted to achieve. This was possible through their positive perceptions of their family social identities, which provided the social support systems to cope with multiple adverse life events. They represent the underdog entrepreneurs in my sample through the manner in which they redeemed their former disconfirmed identities through their venturing efforts. This finding extends

Miller and Le Breton-Miller's (2017) theorising by incorporating an identity explication from a developing context.

My study further presents an additional element to the underdog characterisation of township entrepreneurs by incorporating an identity lens, specifically in terms of positive family social identities that played an integral role in response to adversity and in founders' redemptive motives. The family dynamics embedded in founders' family social identities on this pathway not only provided a supportive barrier against multiple episodic or persistent adverse events, but also served as a guiding force that motivated founders to redefine their disconfirmed identities as they established their ventures. In the absence of formal support structures, the value of the positive role of families is emphasised on this pathway.

5.2.3.3 Negative Family Social Identities and Emancipatory Motives

Founders on the Flight pathway viewed venturing as a means of escape from negative family social identities that were the sources of their adverse life experiences. The motives for founding their ventures were emancipatory in nature. All the founders on this pathway were female. Much of the literature on the emancipatory role of entrepreneuring has focused on women entrepreneurs (Alkhaled & Berglund, 2018: Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). Through their discussion of the emancipatory potential of entrepreneuring, Rindova and colleagues (2009) attempted to shift the focus of entrepreneurship studies on wealth creation and economic motives to how venturing addresses founders' dreams or enables them to express greater autonomy. I build on this view by showing how venturing enables founders to change behaviour and remove constraints in the environments in which they are socially embedded (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Rindova et al., 2009). I

demonstrate how adversity created within family social groups can devastate founders' self-esteem and identities.

Entrepreneurship has often been encouraged as a means of women's empowerment, particularly in contexts of poverty (Jamali, 2009; Chant & Pedwell, 2008). However, Xheneti and colleagues (2017) argued that the focus on formalisation and streamlining ventures in informal economies does not give due attention to the vast array of motives that lead women to establish informal ventures voluntarily. Trivedi and Petkova (2022) add that research on the empowering aspects of entrepreneurship in developing contexts has largely focused on social development organisations rather than the entrepreneurs themselves, rendering them passive beneficiaries of such interventions. My study highlights the effect of socio-cultural embeddedness and, in the case of founders on the Flight pathway, the devastating effects of their negative family relations on their lives that motivated their pursuit of emancipatory venturing activities. Despite constraints within the township settings and their positions within these contexts, their ventures provided greater independence and autonomy, and they did not necessarily have plans to formalise their ventures.

Founders on the Flight pathway were socially and economically empowered through their ventures when they left behind damaging social group memberships and created new social identities. While extant research on women's entrepreneurship in developing contexts acknowledges that patriarchal and socio-cultural constraints can subordinate women's venturing efforts in male-dominated entrepreneurial ecosystems (Ojediran & Anderson, 2020; Masika, 2017), few studies connect the identities impacted by adverse life experiences to emancipatory motives. Cases on the Flight pathway reflected social exclusion from *within* family structures before venturing. This finding represents an idiosyncratic perspective on

the family-business nexus in women's entrepreneurship from a developing context (Xheneti et al., 2019). It contributes to the nascent body of emancipatory entrepreneurship by showing how township women's venturing choices are deeply rooted in cultural and gendered norms and identity dynamics in relation to adverse lived experiences whilst also being sources of empowerment. Although my study focused on one albeit under-researched developing context, the variation evident in motives contributes to the emerging argument of rich heterogeneity in founders' motives.

5.3 Study Limitations and Future Recommendations

As referred to in the methodology chapter, the lockdown restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic prevented me from gathering further data from founders' social relations. This data from significant others would have added an additional source of information about founders' lives and the role of social ties in founders' venturing efforts. Despite this limitation, the data gathered from founders, especially with the inclusion of life course tools, provided rich detail that was validated through several meetings with each founder. I had no reason to believe that founders were not forthcoming in sharing their authentic life stories, given their overwhelmingly positive responses to the final lifelines and social network maps I presented to them during their last interviews.

My analysis considered adverse life events prior to venturing and the effect of these on founders' identity dynamics and venturing motives. Taking the entire life course into consideration, future research could extend my work by looking at other life stages, for example, by focusing on founder aspirations and possible future identities, or along different points of the venturing process such as during exit strategies, as these are areas of entrepreneurship that remain under-researched in

developing contexts. Possible research questions could include: How do positive life events impact founder aspirations and well-being? Or what are the exit strategies employed by founders in contexts of poverty?

Since my study used an identity theoretical lens which posits that changes to identity construction are most likely to occur when identities are threatened or disconfirmed (Ashforth & Schinoff, 2016), I analysed adverse life events and how these influenced identity construction strategies and founding motives. Future research could consider the influence of positive life events on identity dynamics and venturing efforts since these could provide further insights into founders' identities and motivations. Although it did not form part of my theoretical model, positive life events in my sample were generally tied to confirmed social identities that were positively perceived as well as to successes with venturing activities such as securing funding from venture capitalists or being able to travel with the venture to build its reputation.

Arguably, my findings may not be generalizable to the broader informal entrepreneurship sector, given my sample size of nine founders in a typical South African township context. However, one of the aims of my study was to create an in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of township entrepreneurs in a sub-Saharan informal context – an under-researched context in wider entrepreneurship scholarship where few studies have considered "differences within the same types of entrepreneurs" (Chatterjee et al., 2022, p.15).

Most of my sample comprised women entrepreneurs, and I acknowledge that there were findings pertinent to the gendered nature of township life, which I did not focus on. As my study considered identity disconfirmations and behavioural responses, gender did not emerge as a distinguishing factor. However, there were several gender-related challenges that the women in my sample had to contend

with, such as partner envy, partner infidelity and abusive behaviour, all of which contributed to their personal adversities. In addition to these challenges, lower levels of education, smaller social networks, lack of safety and security and lower social positions within their family structures presented challenges for them in both pre-venturing periods and in operating or attempting to expand their ventures. Future research could delve deeper into these and other gendered practices within township economies.

Whilst the differences in intensity and temporality of adverse events did not reveal clear patterns among the cases in my study, the familial proximity to adversity dimension caused great strife in the form of damaged or devastated self-esteem for founders. However, this may not always be the case should my study be replicated in a different informal context. My study shows the relation between combined forms of adversity and salient social identities *prior* to venturing. In contrast, previous studies have focused on the role of family within the venturing process. Future studies should consider extending my work by contributing richer descriptions of family in relation to adversity in its various forms and its impact on entrepreneurial efforts or motives for founders in the Global South. This direction would likely pick up on the emerging stream of research on childhood adversity (Yu et al., 2022; Cheng et al., 2021) and points to the significance of life events prior to venturing. Future research questions could ask: How do entrepreneurial families influence children's interest in entrepreneurial pursuits in contexts of adversity? Or, how do the compositions of families influence the operation of ventures in adverse conditions?

My study illuminates the lives of township entrepreneurs and the personal circumstances that led to their venturing efforts. It addresses the growing number of calls for further contributions from Global South contexts (Baker & Welter, 2017; Poggesi et al., 2017). It is certainly a study that could be replicated by future

researchers in other sub-Saharan African contexts. Such studies would likely find a similar array of variations in the kinds of adversity experienced through adverse life events in founders' responses to identity disconfirmations and in terms of variation in founding motives. Such research would continue to add much-needed insights into what it means to be an entrepreneur in the Global South and what motivates entrepreneurs to establish ventures in contexts of adversity. My time spent in IY and Philippi has illuminated idiosyncrasies such as diverse ventures operating alongside each other, from the street vendor selling roasted corncobs outside the fully-registered internet café offering township residents the use of computers and printers. I have seen friends become business partners and grandmothers pass their trading stalls to their children and grandchildren. This suggests that many research topics are awaiting future researchers who choose to focus on similar contexts of poverty.

In terms of the kinds of ventures that operate in the township context, my sample included both formally registered and informal (but socially legitimate) ventures. Much of the previous literature on informal entrepreneurship contexts tends to view all informal ventures as illegal but legitimate to large groups of individuals (Salvi et al., 2022), which is a problematic contextualisation of informal contexts. Across the breadth of approximately 500 South African townships that house an estimated 40% of the country's population, a variety of registered and unregistered businesses operate alongside each other (Hume et al., 2021). This requires further explication within entrepreneurship scholarship. Comparative studies across different informal contexts, such as in different regions of the Global South, would further the research agenda on the meaning of legitimacy in informal entrepreneurship.

Lastly, we know little about the forms of business partnerships or why and how they emerge or dissolve in contexts of poverty. While my study focused on largely

single-founder township entrepreneurs, future research could consider founding teams and how their multiple identities and combined adverse life events may influence how ventures are shaped and directed. Different configurations of teams such as spousal or cross-generational co-founders within family structures as well as non-family co-founders and the identity dynamics within these types of teams would make a novel contribution to research on founder identity, entrepreneurial adversity and motivation from the developing world.

5.4 Practical Implications of the Findings

Having spent the past four years focused on the township context and three years co-creating life stories with my sample of founders, several recommendations can be made on an individual, institutional and national level to support township entrepreneurs. At the individual or micro level, it is evident that founders require greater psychosocial support to address the multiple forms of adversity they experience. While it can be argued that all entrepreneurs begin ventures from a position of resource constraint, township entrepreneurs' venturing efforts are further challenged along health, education and socio-economic dimensions, all of which negatively impact their psychological well-being (Chant & Pedwell, 2008).

Given this state of mind, it is difficult for township entrepreneurs to acquire the entrepreneurial education that might be offered through township-focused business development programmes and proficiently implement such advice in their ventures without first addressing their psycho-social needs. This implies that such programmes need to include relevant psycho-social support such as individual counselling services, mentoring or life coaching circles. Specifically, my findings around the influence of family social identities and addressing the role of family members in adversity warrants further embedding as part of psycho-social support in

entrepreneurial programming. When adverse life events come from within the family social group, it speaks to deeper familial and household issues within the township community, further highlighting the need for unique entrepreneurial programming in consideration of the lived experience of township entrepreneurs.

At the meso or institutional level, entrepreneurship development programmes have begun to be offered to township residents. They aim to impart basic business knowledge such as managing venture cash flows, marketing and building customer engagement. However, such programmes need to pay greater attention to the challenges facing township entrepreneurs and should be tailored accordingly, given the diversity within the sector (Rogan, 2018). Often, such programmes are designed and funded by external organisations and hosted at locations that may not be accessible to the targeted township residents. Issues such as access to safe transport, child-care support, and safety and security require immediate solutions to improve the prospects for township entrepreneurs and render them visible in developing contexts.

Several founders in my sample were part of entrepreneurial development programmes such as business incubators. They reported varying benefits from these programmes. Although this was not the focus of my study, it was evident that programmes run within the township context generally failed to provide tangible benefits for founders. In some cases, these development programmes were run for a few weeks before the next cohort of students was inducted. The focus of such programmes appears to be to train as many residents as possible, but this leaves little room for follow-on support that may be required for new ventures to survive and thrive beyond the initial stages.

Thus, entrepreneurial programming needs to extend beyond the typical three-to-six month format currently available in some township incubators, such as

Philippi Village's Solution Space (UCT GSB Solution Space, 2022). If most ventures fail within the first year of operation (Fatoki, 2014), entrepreneurial support and programming should extend beyond this point to improve the chances of venture development and survival. A useful approach that has proved effective in other informal settings is social network development and peer-to-peer mentoring for knowledge transfer (Trivedi, 2018; Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). This would enable entrepreneurs to grow their entrepreneurial networks and connect them to external sources and stakeholders that could improve their venturing activities.

Another issue that surfaced during my interviews related to the lack of land space for founders to conduct their ventures properly. For example, Fashion and Baby Shoes, who operated their ventures from their homes, mentioned that they could create better cash flow if they had a shipping container from which they could operate their ventures and store their stock. Considering the broader informal entrepreneurial ecosystem, their concerns point to the need for spatial and informal settlement planning to incorporate safe and appropriate spaces for entrepreneurs to operate their ventures. For example, the Philippi Village development complex includes an amphitheatre of colourful shipping containers from which Philippi entrepreneurs operate a range of township ventures (Philippi Village, 2021). The complex, which also hosts a library, school and business incubator, was a collaboration between several key stakeholders, including government and private corporations, to address economic marginality in one of Cape Town's poorest townships (Pollio, 2020). Further collaborative projects are required to improve growth through entrepreneurial development within township economies across the country.

Baby Shoes also revealed that she had created a holiday food stall outside her home in December 2019, but city officials removed it because of legislation

prohibiting township residents from erecting new structures without the city's permission. Charman et al. (2017) argue that South African legislation around spatial land use has done little to create spatial justice for township micro-enterprises. Land use management systems and rules imposed on township ventures harmed venture growth and formalisation. The often illogical rules enforced on micro-enterprises in terms of the use of zones and floor space have resulted in the majority of township entrepreneurs resisting the government's calls to formalise their ventures in what is described as 'enforced informalisation' (Charman et al., 2017). This suggests that an overhaul of the land use system within and around township communities is necessary for progress in informal spatial planning. Broader consultation with township entrepreneurs to understand how land use can be envisioned for spatial justice is long overdue for the re-framing of policy and implementation at local levels.

My findings across the three pathways confirmed my doubts about founder homogeneity by revealing that not all founders in township contexts were driven to establish ventures out of necessity. Miller and Le-Breton Miller (2017) argued that personal challenges in one's social environment cannot be ignored in terms of how they shape an individual's perceptions, attitudes and skills and that these responses are conducive to pursuing entrepreneurial undertakings. They claimed that these challenges are drivers of entrepreneurial motives and actions, encouraging people to adapt to demanding environmental conditions where few other employment opportunities exist (Miller & Le-Breton Miller, 2017). My study demonstrates how the interplay between salient social identities and adverse life events prior to venturing shapes variances in subsequent behaviour and entrepreneurial motives for township entrepreneurs. This elucidates the need for further investigation of identity dynamics

in relation to multiple forms of adversity and the role of significant others in shaping founders' identities and motives in contexts of poverty.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

My study focused on the township entrepreneur in South Africa – a type of founder who exists in an informal context plagued by chronic adversity. Using an identity theoretical lens and a grounded theory approach that employed life course methodology, the life story data I gathered helped me to understand that in addition to chronic adversity in the townships, founders experienced various adverse life events i.e. episodic and/or persistent adversity that disconfirmed salient identities. A key driving factor in how founders responded to multiple forms of adversity was their membership in salient social groups and valued social identities. The interplay between identity disconfirmations and social identities resulted in variances in founders' self-esteem and prompted differences in how founders chose to repair, reconstruct or release disconfirmed identities. Changes to identity construction and behavioural responses were demonstrated in founders' motives for establishing their ventures, ranging from prosocial to redemptive and emancipatory motives.

Through my findings, I contribute to the entrepreneurship field in several ways. Firstly, my study contributes to the work on entrepreneurial adversity by demonstrating the presence of multiple forms of adversity prior to venturing activities that shape founders' actions and motives. Previous research has examined episodic and persistent adversity separately and has associated them with different founder motives. My study shows that episodic and persistent adversity can occur together, which has implications for founders' identity construction efforts. By showing how adverse life events and salient social identities shape subsequent identity construction strategies and behavioural responses in different ways, I connect adversity to identity dynamics. Specifically, I have shown how the role of salient social identities and the proximity of family to adverse life events direct different

behaviour and founding motives. In doing so, I extend the work on founder identity theory by demonstrating the identity dynamics inherent in founders' efforts to restore or establish coherence in their lives through their ventures. The effect of confirmed or disconfirmed social identities on identity construction efforts highlights the interplay between founders' multiple identities. By demonstrating this in an under-researched developing context, I build on Powell and Baker's (2014) pivotal work that combines role and social identities in explaining founder identity. Lastly, my study contributes to the rising group of scholars who question the view that entrepreneurs from developing contexts are a homogenous group of necessity-based founders that are pushed into venturing due to a lack of other employment opportunities (Chatterjee et al., 2022; Weber et al., 2022; Dencker et al., 2021; Rogan, 2018).

My study finds that entrepreneurs in informal township contexts are not a homogenous group. Evidence of prosocial, redemptive and emancipatory motives among the founders in my study contributes to this richly heterogeneous perspective. My study provides a detailed description of adversity by foregrounding founders' identities, behaviours and motives in a township context in the Global South. It demonstrates that the sources of adversity matter in terms of how founders respond, highlighting the role of family in founder identity and motivation. New research should extend my work on the role of others in the venturing process, particularly prior to venturing, to contribute detailed descriptions of community and family in relation to the various forms of adversity and its impact on founders' behaviour and motives.

From my study, it was evident that pre-venturing adverse life events mattered more for founder identity dynamics than previously written. Social identities were fundamental driving mechanisms in founders' responses to multiple forms of adversity. This points to the need for further explication of identity dynamics in

informal contexts where adversity is ubiquitous and social relations can have far-reaching consequences for what it means to be an entrepreneur.

On contemplation of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Shepherd (2020) pointed out that the extent and occurrence of adverse events are set to increase with time, which reinforces the case for further entrepreneurship studies on how individuals and ventures respond to adversity. Considering the growing number of adverse life events across the globe, it is clear that adversity cannot be relegated to the margins in entrepreneurship research. In establishing, operating and exiting their ventures, entrepreneurs have an increasing number of issues that they need to consider due to various and multiple forms of adversity. This influences how individuals come to define who they are (Ashforth, 2020).

As an entrepreneurship researcher from the Global South, I have attempted to contribute to the entrepreneurial adversity literature by connecting adversity in an informal context to identity dynamics and venturing motives. Yet, much work must be done to understand how entrepreneurs respond in similar contexts. Future studies in other informal contexts are necessary to contribute to the growing body of research on founder identity and founder motives for individuals embedded in adversity to add to the breadth of knowledge on what happens to people that shape who they are and how they become founders.

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Appendix A – Interview Protocol

The following topics need to be discussed through interviews

- Brief life history beginning at childhood stage - family, parents, siblings, schooling
- Development of interests leading to employment/unemployment
- Social relations – friends, neighbours, work colleagues, partners, children, outside of community
- Self-beliefs – what were the self-beliefs from childhood to young adult to current stage?
- Entrepreneurial activities – what exactly are the activities? How did such activities start? Feelings about being in business?
- Rewards? Motivations? Who has helped you along this journey?
- Challenges faced as an entrepreneur? At what level – individual? Community? Broader society? Assistance received? From which institutions, if any?
- Perceptions of others – how do significant others feel about you being an entrepreneur?
- Aspirations for the future? Link to entrepreneurial pursuits.

Questions/guidelines in relation to lifelines (see example lifeline below):

In creating the lifeline, introducing the timeline on paper:

- We are going to describe your life in as much detail as you can and add your experiences to this timeline. Note that both good and bad experiences are equally important. The line represents your life in number of years. We are going to start with your early childhood through to the present time.
- Tell me about events that have changed your life in any way – both good and bad. Add them to your timeline.
- What do you see for the future on your timeline? Why? Please add it to the timeline.

Member-checking in subsequent interview:

- Please have a look at your timeline again. Are you happy that you have talked about all events or changes in your life? Is there anything else that you wish to add to your timeline? Have we correctly captured the timing of events? What do you think of your timeline now that it is complete?

Questions/guidelines in relation to social network maps (see example network map below):

In creating the map, introduce the network maps on paper:

- We are going to talk about the people that have featured in your life over the years – 1. When you were younger, 2. As you grew into adulthood, and 3. In your current life. We will create as many maps for each of these phases in your life as you require and focus on family, friends, teachers/mentors, and colleagues. The maps will highlight all the people that were/are in your life and how close they were/are to you from closest to fairly close to distant. Please ask any questions if you feel unsure about placing a person in the appropriate circle.
- For each life stage, category, and person, prompt as follows: Who is/was closest to you? Was this a good relationship? Why? What did they do for you/you do for them? What did you learn from them, if anything? Who else was in your life?

Member-checking in subsequent interview:

- Please take a look at the X number of maps for each of your life stages. Can you think of anyone else that was/is in your life that we may have not spoken about?
- Looking at these X number of maps, what do you think of your relationships over the years? Go through each map.

Appendix B – Observation Protocol

Date: _____

Time: _____

Who am I observing? _____

Location: _____

Length of observation: _____

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes