

## 7. Discussion and conclusions

## **7.1 Introduction**

This thesis provides insights in individual level micro-processes of interpersonal interaction in different organizational contexts. It has taken endogeneity as core feature of interaction. This last chapter integrates the findings of the previous five chapters. First, I reflect on the findings per chapter and briefly answer the overall research question. I then move on to the theoretical implications associated with the two parts that were outlined in the introduction. After the presentation of the joint contributions of this thesis as a whole, I will provide an outlook for future research. Last, but not least, I introduce the practical implications of this thesis and conclude with some final remarks.

## **7.2 Summary of findings**

In this section I turn to summarize the findings by chapter and the theoretical contributions of the two parts of research that have been put forward in the introduction. I have criticized traditional social network research for portraying actors as rational and relationships as static. Therefore, the overarching research question that I introduced in the introduction read as follows: *“How can interpersonal interaction be understood under endogeneity in different organizational contexts?”* To answer this research question I used qualitative and process research that emphasized subjective accounts of interpersonal interaction and offers the option to view relations as subject to constant change and refinement. The research question is answered by studying two types of relational practices. The first entails interpersonal networking approaches of entrepreneurs and freelancers (Part I), while the second entailed the minutiae of intuition in task-related interaction at work (Part II). I prefer to answer the research question by suggesting that the findings of the five studies in this thesis can be considered as a starter set of working with endogeneity as core feature in interpersonal interaction. That is, they are an attempt to more closely reflect the complex and ambiguous nature of reality by both centralizing the actor as well as the actor’s perceptions. Table 7.1. provides an overview of the main findings per chapter.

Table 7.1. *Findings of the main chapters*

Part	Chapter	Research question	Main findings
I	2	What does network membership offer to freelancers and how do network?	This case study shows that for freelancers networking encompasses more than capitalizing relations. Instead, being part of a professional network offers freelancers the possibility to socially engage, learn and belong to a group. Many reflect on their preferred networking approach as seeking business friendships. Business friendships are business relations with a strong personal connection. Their view on networking is further characterized by a stance of give and take, letting go of direct business expectations and often a dislike of goal-directed networking.
	3	How do entrepreneurs engage in networking under uncertainty?	This conceptual study challenges goal-directedness as feature of interpersonal networking. Instead, it shows how entrepreneurs in the venture founding process engage in interpersonal networking under the cognitive condition of uncertainty. I claim that this boundary condition stimulates a pro-social and co-creative stance towards interpersonal networking. In addition, under uncertainty entrepreneurs incorporate unexpected encounters as opportunities instead of threats and use them to further refine entrepreneurial goals.
	4	How do nascent entrepreneurs build a business network in a new context?	This study suggests to view entrepreneurial networking from within. It centralizes the individual level perception of the entrepreneur as key factor in the creation of a new business network in a new context. The dimensions of initiating, reacting and evaluating describe why some entrepreneurs are able to materialize a network in a 20-week period. I introduce network momentum as the perceptual treshold that a new business network is created.
II	5	How can managers attune to intuition in practice?	This study offers a theoretical framework of intra-subjective components that describe how intuition is attuned to in practice. It highlights the importance of attention and the ability to switch between cognitive perspectives. It supports the idea that in practice intuition is not self-explanatory nor automatically given priority. It further shows that managers differ in their attention for and their descriptive accounts of switching perspectives and trigger, notice and prioritize intuition.
	6	How is social intuition referred to and used?	This study summarizes how intuition in task-related interactions is deployed. It gives detailed micro-level descriptions of the purposes. Those include references to development, improved cooperation and assessing change readiness. The findings extend the existing notion of social intuition in judgmental tasks in which it serves as selection mechanism.

### *7.2.1 Part I: Interpersonal networking approaches*

The first sub-question of this thesis referred to uncovering the origins of interpersonal networking in different contexts. In doing so I employed both a qualitative and conceptual research approach. To start with, the findings of chapter 2 show that experienced freelance professionals seek approaches to networking in which they look for business friendships by emphasizing give and take, highlighting personal, social as well as professional components of networking, dislike instrumental networking and do not have direct business expectations. As such this chapter shows a counterfactual case of the idea that networking is goal-directed and linear (Carpenter et al., 2012). Chapter 3 turned these findings into a conceptualization of how entrepreneurs engage in interpersonal networking when goals are unclear upfront and interpersonal interaction stimulates goal development. This introduction of goal ambiguity and emergence of outcomes through the process of interaction itself are formalized through introducing perceived uncertainty as cognitive boundary condition of interpersonal networking. This process of goal refinement through interpersonal networking for nascent entrepreneurs steers behavior towards a more altruistic stance in which entrepreneurs perceive unexpected contingencies as opportunities rather than threats. This adds a perspective on interpersonal networking that is emergent, person-oriented (Klyver et al., 2011) and highlights a joint process of give and take (Grant, 2013; Van Gelderen, 2013).

In turn, chapter 4 illustrated that novice and nascent entrepreneurs were in fact goal-directed in their networking approaches when starting a venture through participation in a formal Venture Program. I observed variation in their activity and frequency of contacting new others, and with that illustrated tactics to actually create a network from scratch. These findings seem contradictory with findings in chapters 2 and 3. The entrepreneurs in chapter 4 started a new venture abroad which obstructs the possibility to start with available contacts (Hite, 2005; Hite & Hesterly, 2001) with whom relevant interpersonal overlap can be created (Phillips et al., 2013) or from whom referrals can be obtained (Vissa, 2012). Therefore the contextual difference with chapter 2, i.e. experienced freelancers with an existing network, and chapter 3, i.e. nascent entrepreneurs embedded in their own environment, can be seen as a potential source of variation in findings. In addition to that, the formal Venture Program, that these nascent entrepreneurs were part of, did possibly favor a goal-directed approach towards interpersonal networking.

Overall, these three chapters exemplify interpersonal networking as constrained agency (Gulati & Srivastava, 2014). This implies that interpersonal networking is not

context free or replacing structural explanations, but yield contextual and individual level components that steer action into a particular way (Gulati & Srivastava, 2014; Ibarra et al., 2005; Tasselli et al., 2015). In this thesis, agency is constrained by perception and motivation of the actor as well as the context of study. For instance, this constraining component of agency is illustrated by the role that reflections on network actions play in chapter 4, where entrepreneurs sometimes fall victim to their reflections that do not stimulate them to further networking actions in the course of the program. In chapter 3 this constrained agency takes form of perceived uncertainty. In chapters 3 and 4 particular approaches emerge over time as an interaction between entrepreneur's cognitions, motivations and encountered situations. Chapter 2 highlights constrained agency by showing particular predispositions towards interpersonal networking for freelancers that already have an existing network.

These three chapters also contribute to recent calls to pay attention to the psychological dimensions of interpersonal networking (Fang et al., 2015; Porter & Woo, 2015) and to study networking from within (Engel et al., 2017; Klyver et al., 2011). It particularly contributes to the role of cognition in form of beliefs, dispositions and reflections as well as motivations on interpersonal networking and how these are influencing engagement into instrumental networking (Kuwabara, Hildebrand, & Zou, 2016). Chapter 3 and 4 further illuminate how individual level perceptions influence subsequent networking behavior. Chapter 2 and 3 both display networking motives to give to others, to learn from others and a dislike of instrumental approaches. As such these chapters illustrate how in different contexts the minds of the actor plays a role in interpersonal networking (Bandura, 2006) and contribute a pro-social perspective on interpersonal networking (see also Colbert et al., 2016; N. P. Shah et al., 2015) that extends current behavioral perspectives.

Finally, this thesis offers an emergent perspective on interpersonal networking. It illustrates how actors navigate through uncertain environments by loosening the goal-directedness or outcome-orientation of their actions. Instead, in chapter 2 and 3 freelancers and entrepreneurs are open for unexpected encounters. Freelancers in chapter 2 claim that they do not always have a precise goal for networking interactions. In fact some state that outcomes of networking are by definition unknown upfront. Chapter 3 supports this by suggesting uncertainty as boundary condition of interpersonal networking and by theorizing about the role of serendipitous outcomes that result from networking. In chapter 4 the emergence of the business network is more goal-directed than in chapter 2 and 3.

This perspective on interpersonal networking is relatively new. Some have suggested that networks can evolve without pattern (e.g., Kilduff & Tsai, 2003), but the acknowledgement and possible search for unexpected encounters found in this thesis forms an important contribution to the network literature. It mitigates the predictability of networking behaviors and outcomes and emphasizes the importance of being open to the unexpected.

### *7.2.2 Part II: Intuition in task-related interaction*

Turning to interpersonal interactions that are task-related, this thesis' second part inquired the notion of intuition in task-related encounters. This part contained two sub-questions that were addressed in chapters 5 and 6. While the definition of intuition is subject to theoretical debates, the practical side of this concept has received relatively little attention. I particularly wondered how managers could have attention for this phenomenon when being pre-occupied with tasks and goals. Therefore, I focused on identifying collective themes around intuition in practice. Chapter 5 contributes a framework that refines and extends current models of intuition (e.g., Crossan et al., 1999; Dane & Pratt, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2016b) by showing how attention plays an important role to turn to intuition in practice. In particular, this framework highlights that the experience of intuition is not always self-explanatory, nor given priority and that this requires inquiry, attention and relaxation. As such this chapter contributes to a practical understanding of the concept and factors that promote or hamper its application in organizational contexts. It serves as a call not to assume that intuition is self-explanatory and forms a guide to learn to recognize, trust (Sadler-Smith, 2004) and pay attention to intuition (Dane, 2011) when engaging in task-related interactions.

In addition to this, chapter 5 suggests individual level variation in how intuition is talked about (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007). It proposes three ways in which intuition is 'consumed' and given attention. These range from being automatic experiences that emerge involuntarily, to being interested in learning more about the concept, to being experienced in switching attention from intuition to analysis and back. This individual level variation may be subject to differences in attention for internal processes or may be job related. This warrants further research.

Then, chapter 6 offers insights in the 'use' of social intuitions. In this chapter I show that references to intuition in task-related encounters are made to promote development, cooperation and assessing readiness for change. These findings complement the current

perspective on social intuition, that highlights affective automatic evaluation in judgmental tasks (e.g., Gore & Sadler-Smith, 2011; Miles & Sadler-Smith, 2014) such as recruitment and performance appraisal. The inquiry of the micro-practices of intuition makes clear that this way of knowing is referred to in settings for development and training. In addition to that, these references to intuitions seemed to emerged unexpectedly and therefore required improvisation of actors when they were faced with unexpected insights in task-related interaction. This feature of intuition offers potential insight in other contexts in which dyadic interaction plays a key role. For instance, these may entail leader-follower relations (L. Downey et al., 2006), project work (Leybourne & Sadler-Smith, 2006) and teaching and counseling situations (Burke & Sadler-Smith, 2006; Chaffey, Unsworth, & Fossey, 2010).

### 7.2.3 *Alternative explanation of sensitivity*

Qualitative and interpretive research leaves room for alternative interpretations of the findings because of the interrelatedness between the researched and researcher (see also Souitaris & Zerbinati, 2014). Let me shortly reflect on my findings and contributions as outlined above. The findings from chapters 2, 5 and 6 seem to originate from professionals that hold an above average sensitivity to environmental stimuli. Sensory processing sensitivity as it is called officially (Aron & Aron, 1997; Aron et al., 2012), has explicitly been referred to by some of the informants. In relation to intuition, but also in relation to their networking approaches. The application of a short version of the scale for sensory processing sensitivity (Aron & Aron, 1997) indeed showed an increased level of sensitivity for the interviewed professionals, that I statistically confirmed by a one-sided t-test. In particular, the findings in the previous chapters seems to direct academic attention towards reflection, attention for inner processes of intuition, limitations of goal-directed approaches and the reading of subtle information with others. These can also be interpreted as exemplary insights in ways of working of sensitive professionals.

Yet, since my initial focus was to illuminate theoretical insights on the topics of interpersonal networking as well as intuition, I have chosen not to frame the findings as practices of sensitive professionals, but instead have prioritized the theoretical contributions that these findings make. I do advise future research to clarify what particular approaches sensitive professionals hold towards their work and the extent to which similarities are found as to the findings described here. The importance of this topic of research is signified by the idea that about 20% of the professionals can be described as

highly sensitive. Future research will need to pertain a much broader domain than the two topics studied in this thesis and include both constraining and enabling components that feature the working life of sensitive professionals.

### **7.3 Theoretical implications**

Having outlined the findings and theoretical contributions regarding the two parts of this thesis, I now turn to theorizing about the thesis as a whole. In this thesis I have studied actors from within through centralizing their perception, reflection, intuition and motivations. I have also studied these as subject to an interactive and connected context. With regard to the theoretical contributions, I will elaborate on how the studies in this thesis contribute to an alternative ontology of studying interaction. Second, I will illuminate how the studies in this thesis add onto debates about driving forces of organizational behavior as either instrumental or cooperative or personal. These two implications answer the overarching research question that I have proposed in the introduction.

#### *7.3.1 Interpersonal interaction under endogeneity*

First, I highlighted to pay attention to subjective and non-rational ways of knowing on which actions and decisions are based in an intrinsically indivisible world. I illustrated this by taking individual level actor perceptions and motives as approximations for interpersonal networking as well as focusing on performative accounts of intuition in task-related interaction. This feeds into larger debates that centralize actors' subjective ways of knowing, as for instance, research of emotions (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011), the role of the physical body (Courpasson & Monties, 2017) the senses (Saggarthi & Thakur, 2016), practical rationality (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011) and other forms of subjective experiences. The importance of this growing body of work is signified by its presence in multiple phenomena, such as strategic change (Sanchez-Burks et al., 2016), organizational learning and change (Crossan et al., 1999; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) and decision-making (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Sinclair, Ashkanasy, Chattopadhyay, & Boyle, 2002). By examining the minds of actors, this thesis adds to the body of work that views actors as internally complex and temporal dynamic agents.

Second, through centralizing endogeneity as core feature of interaction, this thesis contributes the inclusion of emergent contingencies in the process of interpersonal networking as well as task-related interaction. Some scholars have highlighted this feature

of incorporating unexpected encounters and emergence through reflection-in-action (Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009), entrepreneurial action (Dew et al., 2009; Sarasvathy, 2001) or group dynamics (Waller, Okhuysen, & Saghafian, 2016). This thesis supports these studies in non-linearity and unexpectedness in the context of interpersonal networking and task-related interaction. The constant change that features reality requires attention to register prospective events (Baron, 2009; Dew, 2009) and include them in subsequent behaviors (Baker et al., 2003; Leybourne & Sadler-Smith, 2006; Yanow & Tsoukas, 2009). In this way agency is not habitual (Giddens, 1984) but promotes attention to actual cues that can alter the course of prospective action. The components of subjective internal evaluation as well as reacting on present moment cues has already been incorporated in the employed definition of agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). But so far, scholars have treated unexpectedness similar to random or spontaneous (e.g., Casciaro et al., 2014; Kilduff & Tsai, 2003) and disregard the potential to manage contingencies (e.g., Bandura, 2006).

The management of unexpected encounters is exemplified through the entrepreneurs and freelancers in chapter 2, 3 as well as managers in chapter 6. In chapter 2 and 3 unexpectedness is acknowledged as one of the features of the interaction process they engage in. This makes them aware of the potential for serendipitous encounters. In chapter 6 the unexpected insights of intuition are incorporated in the task-related encounter. Regarding this emerging view on interpersonal interaction, this thesis highlights the following components: being present, being open for the unexpected and having attention for the subjective experience plus an ability to improvise on it when it is encountered (see also Scharmer, 2009). This features a perspective that promotes future oriented creation instead of being concerned with retrospective explanations of particular outcomes. It also redirects the attention from outcome-oriented research to the processes through which these outcomes are obtained (e.g., Bensaou et al., 2014; Cannella & McFadyen, 2016; Mariotti & Delbridge, 2012). These processes of creation originate from entrepreneurship (e.g., Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Alvarez et al., 2013) but can be extended towards interpersonal networking approaches (Engel et al., 2017) when viewed through the lens of human agency.

In particular, the incorporation of unpredictability as well as understanding perceptions and motivations as approximations of emergent outcomes (e.g., Lord et al., 2015; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002) signals a different ontological position in studying interpersonal interaction. This thesis contributes to a reviving stream of research that emphasizes non-duality between agency and structure (see also Bandura, 2006; Emirbayer

& Mische, 1998). This non-duality puts emphasis on perceptions and actions of the individual actor as these automatically shape the environment (Engel et al., 2017). This implies that the “rampant endogeneity problem” (Stuart & Sorenson, 2007: 212) that I introduced in the introduction, will not be solved through methodological solutions. Instead, this thesis contributes to a perspective that acknowledges endogeneity (e.g., Hensen et al., 2015) and the imperfect conclusions that research results into. It suggests to use qualitative and process research to understand why and how particular outcomes of interpersonal interaction emerge.

### *7.3.2 Interpersonal interaction as connecting tissue in organizational contexts*

In this thesis I have illuminated that actors engage in interpersonal interaction for various motives. These motives entail goal-directed searches in chapter 4. In chapter 2 and 3 these motives also include the need for belonging, sharing professional knowledge, thinking about what can be done together and how interaction is a process of give and take. This broader scope of motivations that is revealed through qualitative inquiries, reflects a perspective that interaction is not only initiated on the premise of future economic exchange. This counters the prevalent assumption of rational and strategic actors that drives social network research (Carpenter et al., 2012) and supports a broader base for interpersonal networking than previously assumed. It supports ideas that networking is a behavior in itself (Porter & Woo, 2015), that give and take is relevant (Grant, 2013; Van Gelderen, 2013), that friendship and personal growth also belong to interpersonal networking (Colbert et al., 2016) and that networking can be viewed as amoral (Casciaro et al., 2014; Kuwabara et al., 2016). This thesis contributes to uncovering instrumental or more altruistic and human approaches to networking.

This dichotomy of goal-directed, instrumental or more altruistic and personal approached seems to be present in other studies describing organizational behaviors. Seeking to understand the origin of action, often an either or perspective is taken. For instance, similar dualities in organizational behaviors include give and take (Grant, 2013; N. P. Shah et al., 2015; Van Gelderen, 2013), altruism versus greed or opportunism (Foss & Weber, 2016; Haynes et al., 2015; Sarasvathy & Dew, 2003), approaches concerned with strategic positioning towards others or seeking integration (Fang et al., 2015; Hernandez, Sanders, & Tuschke, 2015; Obstfeld, 2005) and goal-directed and emergent approaches (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Sarasvathy, 2001).

Nonetheless, instead of proposing networking approaches as either or, the studies in this thesis also highlight that motives can be ambiguous or be shaped through the process of interaction itself. Particularly, this thesis shows networking approaches that neither match purely instrumental approaches nor purely reflect entirely social approaches. It suggests an approach that features a personal base for professional interaction (Gao, Liu, & Qian, 2016; Ingram & Zou, 2008), that does not lose sight of the competitive environment in which interpersonal networking takes place. In doing so, it contextualizes motivations of networking. This is illustrated when through perceived uncertainty interpersonal networking is seen as a process through which motives as well as opportunities may emerge and change through the process of interacting (Engel et al., 2017).

Finally, interpersonal networking approaches are context dependent. Novice and young entrepreneurs engage in goal-directed approaches to obtain the resources needed for their venture. Experienced freelancers on the other hand engage in seeking business friendships through which along the way outcomes may or may not emerge. This difference may also be related to the duration of the relationship (Porter & Woo, 2015) in which relations that are mature tend to be both professional and personal. This difference can also be contributed to individual preferences (Bensaou et al., 2014; Casciaro et al., 2015) that remain uncovered in the current thesis design.

## **7.4 Future research**

The findings of this thesis generate directions for future research. Below I propose two areas for further research as a spin-off from this thesis.

### *7.4.1 Emergent and psychological perspectives on interpersonal networking*

To start with, the findings of this thesis call for more research on the psychological dimensions of interpersonal networking. The central position of actors' beliefs and perception relating to practices of interpersonal networking, warrants further inquiry. This research can seek to gain a deeper understanding of the role of uncertainty in interpersonal networking (Engel et al., 2017), the role of individual differences (Casciaro et al., 2015) and motivational factors that give host to particular approaches (Colbert et al., 2016; Porter & Woo, 2015). Such work can give insight in how and why actors deviate from rational and goal-directed approaches and as such further contribute to understanding the origins of networks (Stuart & Sorenson, 2007). This research is needed for entrepreneurs and freelancers as well as organizational members.

Additionally, research can seek to further unravel the finding of business friendships. The personal style of business friendships (Gao et al., 2016; Ingram & Zou, 2008; Porter & Woo, 2015) may give rise to particular approaches of interpersonal networking. Future work can explore whether business friendships in networking are indeed subject to maturity in the relation (Porter & Woo, 2015), subject to individual differences (Bensaou et al., 2014), search for positive affect (Gulati & Srivastava, 2014) or dependent on the context of freelancers. In addition, research can explore a temporally embedded perspective of business friendships in interpersonal networking. This implies questioning whether the experience of business friendships is indeed path-dependent and subject to relationship maturity, or that business friendships can also emerge spontaneously and be fleeting in nature. Research can also seek to address the outcomes of business friendships. Possible research questions entail: are they also in part instrumental? Do they constitute of life giving experiences (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Owens et al., 2016) or create health benefits (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008)? Such research can combine qualitative insights with quantitative investigations.

Finally, future research can pay more attention to the concept of time when studying interpersonal networking. The findings in this thesis support a dynamic perspective on relations (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003; Mariotti & Delbridge, 2012) that is much needed in social network research. A dynamic perspective can unravel whether the micro-changes as found in this thesis are supported in other contexts and whether more profound theory can be developed about the evolving and emergent nature of relations. This calls for more qualitative and process research that highlights the subtle, non-rational and unexpected changes interpersonal networking is subject to (Bensaou et al., 2014; Berthod et al., 2016; Engel et al., 2017). For example, an investigation of ego-network development with the inclusion of other's experiences of interaction can support this. This then creates a better understanding how particular networking approaches and the perceptions of individual actors lead to particular outcomes.

#### *7.4.2 Acknowledging and developing knowing from within in organizations*

Future research can follow the work in this thesis by studying knowing from within, in particular the unconscious and intuition, in organizations. Research is starting to pay more attention to the role of subjective components in multiple organizational processes (Ashkanasy et al., 2014; Dane & George, 2014; Sinclair, 2011) as they possibly play a major role in understanding individual level outcomes. This research can take an

integrative perspective in which multiple individual level processes are monitored in for instance choice processes. The prominent role of unconsciously stored information as well as the innovative and personal component that is attributed to intuition makes this an area for further inquiry. Scholars can look into categorizations of the unconscious mind to better understand beliefs and schemas and how they affect processes of cooperation, relation formation and maintenance. Therefore, we first need to better understand the individual level drivers that obstruct or facilitate interaction.

This research can assess how attention can be paid to senses, intuition, emotions and motivations. Research tends to assume that actors are knowledgeable about their motives, perceptions and sensory interpretations. Yet, the findings in this thesis support views that this assumption is possibly threatened by our action and performance oriented organizational context (Saggurthi & Thakur, 2016) that takes away the attention for subtleties from within. Research can investigate the body as particular ‘instrument’ in fostering knowing from within. Some suggest that the human body is essential for the mind and our understanding of organizations (Claxton, 2015; Saggurthi & Thakur, 2016). For instance, intuition can present itself through the body (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Sadler-Smith, 2016b; Vaughan, 1979). This future work can particularly focus on the role of the body in processes of selection and decision making (Dane & Pratt, 2007). Possible questions that this research may address are: To what extent the body is taken into account in interpersonal interaction and in studies on intuition? How can attention for bodily cues be fostered (Claxton, 2015; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007)? This work can be of great relevance in the predominantly cognitively oriented business schools.

In addition, research on knowing from within in organizations and interpersonal interaction in particular need to examine the interaction between intuition and analysis (Dane & Pratt, 2007; Sadler-Smith & Burke, 2009). While recent work positioned intuition as paradoxically opposite of analysis (Calabretta et al., 2016) others have suggested a more cooperative stance between the two features of mind (Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007) that is supported by chapter 5. Scholars need to understand when and how different ways of knowing emerge in interpersonal interaction and organizations. Some suggest that intuition comes first as “intuition is the beginning of new learning” (Crossan et al., 1999: 527) and is then scrutinized for relevance (Dane & Pratt, 2007). Yet, this thesis also showed a role for the analytical mind in directing attention to intuition before emergence and to criticizing insights after emergence. It therefore seems that the role of the interplay between intuition and analysis warrants further attention.

### *7.4.3 Limitations in light of future research*

The inside perspective on interpersonal networking and task-related intuitions put forward in this thesis, serves as positioning vis-à-vis structural and external explanations of social relations. Critical readers may find that this insider perspective neglects what is written on structural explanations all-together and perhaps that it fails to link its findings to quantitative measures. I think that the qualitative research design adopted in this thesis was appropriate for the stage of research (Edmondson & McManus, 2007) for both intuition and interpersonal networking. It also follows recent development in ontology of organization research that calls for qualitative and process research (Lord et al., 2015). Yet, future research can adopt a mixed method approach (e.g., Berthod et al., 2016) to further strengthen and refine the findings in this thesis. For instance, perceptions of networking can be related to actual change in network size (e.g., Vissa, 2012; Vissa & Bhagavatula, 2012) or conduct a diary design as used in this thesis.

In addition to that, when the academic knowledge on intuition proceeds, more rigor in research methods may be necessary. Field research in intuition makes it difficult to capture the phenomenon in situ and to actually know when informants talk about intuition (Akinci & Sadler-Smith, 2012; Blume & Covin, 2011; Hodgkinson & Sadler-Smith, 2011; Sinclair, 2010). Therefore, I decided to rely on retrospective reports or stories (Pratt, 2008; Weiss, 1994) on intuition (see also Sadler-Smith, 2016b) and tried to capture themes that were common in the interviews. This approach holds potentially a bias to success stories on intuition and can possibly also be interpreted as folk theories on intuition. Therefore, future research, can give more attention to intuition as ‘hit’ or intuition as ‘miss’ (Akinci, 2014) to distinguish how and when intuition is seen as creating beneficial or negative outcomes. It can use protocol analysis or employ psychoanalytic interview techniques (Petitmengin, 2014) to theoretically advance individual level insights. For this thesis, the thematic description of shifting attention as core practice to notice, interpret and prioritize intuition in practice is the core contribution.

Finally, I studied multiple contexts in this thesis. Future research can study these topics in similar and other contexts. Usually research in management tends to overemphasize novelty of research findings at the expense of testing and verifying findings. This makes that findings are often not solidly rooted and creates stress with the researcher to publish new insights. For interpersonal networking researchers may first want

to make clear from which ontological position they conduct research and how endogeneity is handled. Instead of looking for a small-scale novelty, research findings can feed into larger debates and frame their contribution in that light. Therefore, I suggest to study how and why approaches and outcomes to intuition and interpersonal networking emerge in particular contexts.

## **7.5 Practical implications**

One of the strengths of this thesis is that the findings are based on in-depth interviews and diaries in which individual reflections, beliefs, intuitions and dispositions were central features of study. This promotes a bottom-up understanding of how things work in practice (Sandberg & Tsoukas, 2011; Weick, 2003). Reflecting on the two distinctive parts of this thesis I will argue how the findings in this thesis are relevant for practice. I start with interpersonal networking approaches and then move on to intuition in organizational contexts.

A delineation of the micro-processes of networking for entrepreneurs and freelancers has practical validity. There are all kinds of practical advices available online of how to engage in networking (e.g., Grant, 2015). This thesis supports views that highlight the personal and non-instrumental nature of networking as well as those that dislike instrumental networking approaches. In doing so, it shows the discrepancy between theoretical ideals of rational and strategic actors in competitive environments and the personally preferred, ambiguous and contextualized approaches that have been put forward in this thesis. Additionally, this thesis also seeks to tell professionals, that their approach may be context dependent or determined by their personally held beliefs about the phenomenon and their efforts along the way. This thesis can be understood as trigger for actors in practice to think about their preferred approach and the morality with which they view this phenomenon. Stimulating questions in this respect are possibly: What suits you best? With which approach do you feel comfortable?

In addition to that, nascent entrepreneurs can be taught particular networking skills when participating in entrepreneurship courses or venturing programs. This may come in particularly useful for novice or international entrepreneurs who still need to build up their network. This education can distinguish between goal-directed and emergent networking approaches and explain which approach may be applicable under which conditions. One of the central components in this education is to learn freelancers and entrepreneurs that their networking activities, reactions on actions and evaluations and perceptions jointly

contribute to the gradual generation of a new network that is conducive for their venture. Another component is to stress that networking and the outcomes that may result from it, is not always predictable.

In addition to that, since the concept of intuition is inherently practical, the findings in this thesis are relevant for individual actors as well as organizations. Based on the findings I advise actors – by means of freelancers, entrepreneurs and managers – to engage in the process of attending to and inquiring intuition in their work processes. The difficulties to pay attention to intuition and that its experience may not be self-explanatory, calls for devising training programs that promote intuitive awareness (Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007). Outside academia particular training programs are becoming more and more common. Yet, their absence within the educational system makes that students lack tools and approaches that can help them navigate the complex reality of organizational life (Sadler-Smith & Burke, 2009; Saggurthi & Thakur, 2016) in which other ways of knowing are prevalent. Together these findings call for organizational and educational attention for intuition. For instance, chapter 5 and 6 of this thesis can be transformed into training programs onto how to recognize and interpret intuition.

Next, I advise actors in organizations to pay attention to intuition in interpersonal interaction. Yet, while this may sound easy, organizations may be subject to cultures that either promote or reject subjective ways of knowing (Agor, 1987; Dörfler & Ackermann, 2012). Therefore, these findings are of particular importance to managers and leaders that can set the culture and promote experimenting with gut feelings. For entrepreneurs these experiences can be present when selecting partners or team-members, or refining venture ideas.

## **7.6 Final remarks**

In this thesis I have studied interpersonal interaction via interpersonal networking and task-related interaction. The findings emphasize how and why micro-level processes steer interaction and relational development. If endogeneity is centralized as core feature of interpersonal interaction in professional contexts, the temporally complex and context dependent mind of actors becomes a core object of study (Ashkanasy et al., 2014; Dane & George, 2014; Lord et al., 2015). More research is needed to understand how intuitions, perceptions, motivations and beliefs fuel the behaviors of organizational actors when they engage with others and how this in turn affects individual level outcomes. This will provide a more complete, but undoubtedly more subjective and complex, understanding of why actors do what they do.