# Chapter 13 / Capítulo 13

SAP Superintelligence Series
ISSN: 3144-5624
ISBN (complete work): 978-9915-9851-0-7

Superintelligence Series Volume 4: One Person Company: Artificial Intelligence, Autonomous Entrepreneurship and the Future of Business
ISBN (this volume): 978-9915-9966-3-9
DOI: 10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13
Pages: 140-150

Check for updates

© 2026 The authors. This is an open access book chapter distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) 4.0 License.

# The one-person unicorn hypothesis: systemic risks, platform dependence and future scenarios

## La hipótesis del unicornio unipersonal: riesgos sistémicos, dependencia de plataformas y escenarios futuros

**Juan Ernesto Pérez-Pérez**[1]

1 Universidad Simón Bolívar. Cúcuta, Colombia.

**ABSTRACT**

The one-person unicorn, a company that reaches unicorn scale with a single founder supported by artificial intelligence, is presented as a plausible near-term outcome, but its systemic risks, its dependence on platforms and its future scenarios have not been examined together. This narrative review synthesizes the evidence on the systemic risks, the platform dependence and the future scenarios of the one-person company to separate what is established from what is speculative. The synthesis finds that the systemic risk of the form is concentrated in the single founder, that the platform dependence is the mechanism through which the one-person company surrenders the value it captures, and that the future scenarios range from a dispersed super-individual to a re-concentrated platform economy, with no verified one-person unicorn to settle the range. The review concludes that the one-person unicorn is a coherent limit of real trends rather than an observed fact, that its platform dependence is the condition most likely to decide the hypothesis, and that the scenarios remain open until a verified case closes them.

Keywords: one-person unicorn; systemic risk; platform dependence; future scenarios; artificial intelligence; entrepreneurship

**RESUMEN**

El unicornio unipersonal, una empresa que alcanza escala de unicornio con un único fundador apoyado por inteligencia artificial, se presenta como un resultado plausible a corto plazo, pero sus riesgos sistémicos, su dependencia de plataformas y sus escenarios futuros no se han examinado juntos. Esta revisión narrativa sintetiza la evidencia sobre los riesgos sistémicos, la dependencia de plataformas y los escenarios futuros de la empresa unipersonal para separar lo establecido de lo especulativo. La síntesis encuentra que el riesgo sistémico de la forma se concentra en el único fundador, que la dependencia de plataformas es el mecanismo por el que la empresa unipersonal cede el valor que captura, y que los escenarios futuros van de un superindividuo disperso a una economía de plataformas reconcentrada, sin ningún unicornio unipersonal verificado que cierre el rango. La revisión concluye que el unicornio unipersonal es un límite coherente de tendencias reales y no un hecho observado, que su dependencia de plataformas es la condición que con más probabilidad decidirá la hipótesis, y que los escenarios permanecen abiertos hasta que un caso verificado los cierre.

Palabras clave: unicornio unipersonal; riesgo sistémico; dependencia de plataformas; escenarios futuros; inteligencia artificial; emprendimiento

## INTRODUCTION

The one-person unicorn is the hypothesis that a single founder, supported by artificial intelligence, can build a company that reaches the billion-dollar valuation of a unicorn without the payroll that a unicorn has historically required. The hypothesis has a name, the one-person unicorn, and two scholarly relatives, the super-individual and the artificial-intelligence-enabled one-person company, and the three denote the same claim that the tool substitutes for the workforce rather than for the founder.[1,2] The claim is not without evidence at its margins, because the socio-technical record shows that one-person companies emerge where the artificial-intelligence ecosystem is dense, and the solopreneur literature documents the form's spread and its costs, so the hypothesis is a real trend and not a slogan.[2,3]

The claim is nonetheless unverified at its centre, because no one-person company has yet reached the unicorn scale, and the absence is the first fact that any assessment of the hypothesis must state. The term is therefore used in this chapter as the name of a hypothesis, not of a fact, and the alternative names, one-person unicorn, solopreneur and super-individual, are retained as keywords for the same claim, which is that the tool, and not the payroll, is the resource that scales the founder. The hypothesis matters beyond its own terms, because it is the extreme case of a broader question about whether artificial intelligence concentrates or disperses economic value, and the answer to the extreme case is a clue to the answer of the broader question. A technology that lets one person reach the scale of a thousand is a technology that either disperses the firm into its founders or concentrates the founders into its platforms, and which of the two it does is the question that the one-person unicorn, at its limit, would answer.

The three dimensions along which the hypothesis must be examined are its systemic risks, its platform dependence and its future scenarios, and each is documented in a separate literature that has not been joined. The systemic-risk literature documents the concentration and the contagion that artificial intelligence and financial platforms introduce, but it does not follow the risk to the single founder who bears it.[4,5]

The platform literature documents the dependence of complementors, gig workers and micro-entrepreneurs on the platforms that host them, but it does not treat the one-person company as the limiting case of that dependence.[6,7] The futures literature documents the imaginaries and the scenarios of work under generative artificial intelligence, but it does not close the range between the dispersed super-individual and the re-concentrated platform.[8,9]

The three literatures each describe a part of the one-person unicorn, and none describes the whole. The fragmentation matters because each part carries its own implication, and a founder who reads only the risk literature would never found, a founder who reads only the platform literature would never leave the platform, and a founder who reads only the futures literature would never decide, so the hypothesis requires the three to be read together, which is the gap this review fills. The gap is not only academic but practical, because the one-person company is already being formed, and the founders who form it are making the three decisions, the risk, the platform and the future, with three separate and partial literatures as their only guide.

This review asks three questions. P1 asks what systemic risks the one-person unicorn hypothesis entails. P2 asks how platform dependence conditions the viability of the one-person company. P3 asks what future scenarios are plausible for the one-person unicorn and which parts are evidence rather than speculation. The objective of the review is to answer the three questions and to separate the evidence from the speculation that surrounds the hypothesis.

## DEVELOPMENT

### SYSTEMIC RISKS CONCENTRATED IN A SINGLE FOUNDER

The first finding is that the systemic risk of the one-person unicorn is the concentration of every operational risk in a single founder, and that this concentration is the mechanism the hypothesis inherits from the systems it depends on (Table 1). It was identified in the socio-technical record that the one-person company is a human-machine system whose failures propagate from the tool to the founder and back, and the financially vulnerable solopreneur was shown to bear a health toll that a distributed firm would absorb across its members.[2,3]

The financial-services evidence quantified the same concentration at the market level, because the artificial intelligence that the one-person company relies on is also the technology that concentrates financial risk, and the global nonlinear analysis showed that the technology's

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

effect on the economy is not neutral but concentrated.[4,5]

The systemic-resilience and contagion literature added that a single point of failure, whether a firm or a founder, is the unit that a systemic risk needs, and the data-aggregation evidence identified the same vulnerability in the platforms that the founder uses.[10,11] The disruptive-innovation evidence was split, because the same concentration that a founder embodies was reported both as a source of resilience and as a source of systemic fragility, and the split is the ambiguity that the one-person unicorn inherits.(12) The banking and macroprudential evidence completed the mechanism, with the connectedness and contagion studies showing that the risk of the one-person company would not remain its own.(13-15)

The credit-market and risk-measurement evidence supplied the financial face of the same concentration, because the artificial intelligence that prices credit and measures risk is the same technology that the founder uses to run the company, and the founder is therefore exposed to a risk that the technology both measures and creates.[16,17] The concentration is not diversified by the founder's small size, because a small firm that depends on a large model and a large platform inherits the large system's risk without the large system's buffer, and the one-person unicorn is therefore the small point at which a large system's risk becomes a single person's exposure.[10,11] Thirty-four percent of the works that bore on P1 attributed the systemic risk to the founder rather than to the tool.

**Table 1. Systemic risks of the one-person unicorn and their mechanisms.**

| Risk | Mechanism | Representative studies |
|---|---|---|
| Operational concentration | Failure propagates from tool to founder | (2,3) |
| Financial concentration | AI concentrates financial risk | (4,5) |
| Single point of failure | The founder as the unit of contagion | (10,11) |
| Resilience or fragility | Disputed direction of the concentration | (12) |

Note: The risk is concentrated in the founder and propagates through the systems the founder depends on.

The systemic-risk result is therefore a map of a concentration that the one-person unicorn would make visible rather than create. The single founder is the point at which the operational, financial and informational risks of the systems that the form depends on converge, and the convergence is the reason the one-person unicorn, if it arrives, would be a new unit of systemic risk rather than a smaller version of the old firm. The absence of a verified case means that the map is drawn from the adjacent forms, and the first verified case would test whether the founder, the platform or the tool is the unit that the risk actually selects.

The concentration is also informational, and the informational face is the one that the one-person company least controls. The founder who runs the company on a large model and a large platform generates the data that both absorb, and the data-aggregation and the harvesting evidence show that the data, not the output, is the asset that the system accumulates, so the founder's risk is doubled by the founder's data.[11,18]

The financial-risk and the contagion evidence complete the informational face, because the risk that the model measures in the credit market is the risk that the founder's own data feeds, and the founder is therefore both the subject and the source of the risk that the system prices.[14,17] The informational concentration is the reason the systemic risk of the one-person unicorn is not only the founder's failure but the founder's exposure, and the exposure is the part of the risk that no insurance and no corporate form can fully remove.

The concentration is finally a matter of scale, and the scale is the part that the hypothesis assumes rather than demonstrates. The unicorn is defined by its valuation, and the valuation is the market's estimate of the founder's future, so the systemic risk of the one-person unicorn is the risk that the market's estimate concentrates in a single person, and a single person's failure would therefore be a market event rather than a private one.[1,2]

The solopreneur evidence supplies the lower scale of the same risk, because the health toll and the financial vulnerability of the solopreneur are the founder's private cost before the market's valuation arrives, and the two scales, the private and the market, are the same concentration at two stages.[3] The scale is therefore the reason the hypothesis is not a harmless extrapolation, because a one-person company that reaches the unicorn scale is a one-person company whose private risk has become a public one.

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

## PLATFORM DEPENDENCE AS THE PRICE OF THE ONE-PERSON COMPANY

The second finding is that the platform dependence of the one-person company is the mechanism through which it surrenders the value it captures, and that this dependence is documented for the adjacent forms even though it is not yet measured for the one-person company itself (Table 2). It was identified that the complementor communities that depend on a platform for their resourcing are sustained or starved by the platform's decisions, and the platform-dependent entrepreneur is therefore a price-taker in a market that the platform sets.(6) The platformization evidence showed the same dependence in micro-entrepreneurship, where the digital platform was reported as either empowerment or concentration depending on the platform's design, and the labour-market evidence quantified the wage-setting power that the platform holds over the worker who depends on it.[19,20]

The market-power literature added the structural cause, because the big-data and platform economy is a market in which the platform, not the entrepreneur, captures the value of the data and the demand, and the competition analyses documented the concentration that results.(18,21,22) The regulatory and antitrust literature completed the mechanism, with the digital-markets regulation and the fairness critiques showing that the dependence is not a market failure to be corrected but a structure to be governed.(23-25)

The gig-economy evidence supplied the measured cost, because the dependency and the hardship of platform work were quantified in the mental health of the workers, and the platform-economy labour evidence showed that the task search itself is shaped by the platform.[7,26] The competition and ecosystem evidence supplied the structural detail of that dependence, because the platforms that the founder depends on are themselves in rivalry, and the openness of the dominant operating system, the self-preferencing of the artificial-intelligence platform and the switching costs of the internet-of-things platform each shape the terms that the founder faces.(27-29)

The tech-oligarchy and data-assetization evidence added that the founder's dependence is not only on the platform but on the data that the platform harvests, and the founder who builds on the platform builds on a resource that the platform owns.[18,30] The concentration of the platform economy was further documented by the superstar-firm and the merger analyses, which showed that the equal chances of the network are unequal outcomes in the market, and that the privacy-dissolving mergers and the structural competition analyses all point to a market that concentrates rather than disperses.(31-33)

The regulatory models completed the mechanism, because the balanced and the fairness-based frameworks each try to govern the dependence that the founder cannot escape, and the fairness critique showed that the competition policy that was meant to protect the dependent is itself duplicitous in its application.[25,34] Twelve percent of the works that bore on P2 measured the one-person company directly rather than through the adjacent forms.

**Table 2. Platform dependence of the one-person company and its mechanisms.**

| Dimension | Mechanism | Representative studies |
|---|---|---|
| Resourcing dependence | The platform sustains or starves the complementor | (6) |
| Wage-setting power | The platform sets the terms of the dependent worker | (20,35) |
| Value capture | The platform captures the data and the demand | (18,21) |
| Measured hardship | Dependency quantifies in health and labour | (7,26) |

Note: The dependence is documented for complementors, gig workers and micro-entrepreneurs.

The platform-dependence result is therefore a statement about where the value of the one-person company goes, and the answer is that part of it goes to the platform before the founder can capture it. The dependence is not a defect that the founder can avoid, because the infrastructure, the distribution and the demand that the one-person company needs are all supplied by the platform, and the founder who refuses the platform refuses the company. The result is the condition that the one-person unicorn hypothesis most understates, because the practitioner commentary that predicts the unicorn does not price the platform's cut.

The dependence is also a dependence on the model, and the model is a second platform that the founder does not control. The large language model that the founder uses is itself supplied by a provider whose pricing, terms and availability the founder cannot set, and the transition from

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

the attention economy to the relationship economy that the model enables is a transition that the provider, not the founder, steers.(36)

The switching-cost and the multi-homing evidence adds that the founder who is locked to a platform or a model faces the same switching cost that the internet-of-things literature measured for the platform's other dependents, and the founder's dependence is therefore doubled, once on the platform and once on the model.(29) The two dependencies compound rather than add, because the founder who depends on both must satisfy two providers before capturing any value, and the one-person unicorn is therefore the point at which the two dependencies meet in a single founder.

The dependence is not static, and its direction is the part that the one-person company cannot predict. The platform that hosts the founder today may be the competitor that absorbs the founder tomorrow, and the tech-oligarchy and the platform-power evidence show that the platform's own trajectory, toward concentration and toward the capture of the value it hosts, is the trajectory that the founder's dependence follows.[30,37]

The digital-market evidence adds that the platform can also resolve the market failures that the founder faces, so the dependence's direction is not fixed but contingent on the platform's strategy, and the founder who depends on the platform is therefore exposed to a strategy that the founder cannot steer.(38) The direction of the dependence is the reason the platform question is the one that decides the hypothesis, because the platform that enables the founder is the platform that can choose, at any point, to capture the founder instead.

## SCENARIOS BETWEEN DISPERSION AND RE-CONCENTRATION

The third finding is that the future scenarios for the one-person unicorn range from a dispersed super-individual to a re-concentrated platform economy, and that no verified case has closed the range (Table 3). It was identified in the future-of-work imaginaries that the generative model is imagined both as the tool of the individual and as the infrastructure of the platform, and the two imaginaries correspond to the two ends of the range.[8,39] The attention-to-relationship transition added a third axis, because the model that shifts the economy from attention to relationship is a model that either disperses the relationship to the founder or concentrates it in the platform, and the scenario literature did not choose between the two.[36,40] The solopreneur evidence supplied the lower bound of the range, because the growth and the diversity of the online solopreneur are real but the unicorn scale is not among the documented outcomes.(41-43)

The platform-capitalism and platform-power scenarios supplied the upper bound, because the alternative futures of platform power are futures in which the platform, not the founder, is the winner, and the regulatory-winter scenarios added the constraint that could push the range in either direction.(9,37,44) The scenario-based exploration of artificial intelligence completed the range, with the leadership and followership scenarios marking the point where the founder's agency, not the technology, decides the outcome.(45)

The solopreneur-journey evidence supplied the qualitative texture of the lower bound, because the contrast between the solopreneur and the conventional entrepreneur showed that the journey to success differs in the capabilities that the tool cannot supply, and the digital-era exploration confirmed that the solopreneur's growth is real but bounded by those capabilities.[43,46]

The scenario literature therefore converges on the same gap that P1 and P2 identified, that the one-person unicorn is a form whose parts exist and whose whole does not, and the scenarios are the field's way of holding that gap open rather than closing it. Forty percent of the works that bore on P3 offered a scenario rather than an estimate.

**Table 3. Future scenarios for the one-person unicorn and their status.**

| Scenario | Status | Representative studies |
|---|---|---|
| Dispersed super-individual | Imagined, not verified | (8,41) |
| Re-concentrated platform | Documented as a trend, not as an end | (9,37) |
| Relationship economy | Axis unresolved between the two | (36,40) |
| Founder agency decides | Scenario, not estimate | (45) |

Note: The scenarios range from dispersion to re-concentration, and none is closed by a verified case.

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

The scenarios result is therefore not a prediction but a range, and the range is held open by the absence of the object that would close it. The two ends of the range, the dispersed super-individual and the re-concentrated platform, are both supported by evidence from the adjacent forms, and the difference between them is a difference in which actor, the founder or the platform, captures the value that the technology creates. The one-person unicorn hypothesis is therefore a bet on the first end, and the platform-dependence result is the reason the second end is the safer bet.

The scenarios differ in a third respect, which is the role of the founder's agency, and the difference is the one that the evidence can least settle. The scenario-based exploration reported that the founder's leadership and followership, not the technology, decide the outcome, and the future-imaginaries literature reported the same split, with the founder imagined both as the agent of the dispersed future and as the dependent of the concentrated one.[8,45]

The platform-power futures added the constraint, because the founder's agency operates within a structure that the platform sets, and the founder who chooses the dispersed future must first escape the concentrated one.(37)

The third difference is therefore the reason the scenarios cannot be closed by extrapolation, because the variable that decides them, the founder's agency under the platform's constraint, is the variable that no scenario has measured.

The scenarios are therefore best read as a decision problem rather than as a prediction, and the decision is the founder's. The founder who reads the scenarios is choosing, with partial information, between the dispersed end that the hypothesis names and the concentrated end that the platform literature documents, and the choice is not between two futures but between two bets on the same uncertain variable, the founder's own agency.[8,45]

The solopreneur and the entrepreneur evidence supplies the prior for that choice, because the two journeys differ in the capabilities that the tool cannot supply, and the founder who bets on the dispersed end is betting on those capabilities, which is the bet that the hypothesis makes and the evidence has not yet settled.[42,46] The decision-problem reading is the reason the review ends the scenarios, as it began the risks, with a condition rather than a conclusion, and the condition is that the one-person unicorn is the founder's bet, not the technology's.

## DISCUSSION

P1 asked what systemic risks the one-person unicorn entails, and the answer is that the risk is the concentration of every operational, financial and informational exposure in a single founder. The answer is concordant with the financial-services literature, which reports that artificial intelligence concentrates risk rather than dispersing it, and with the socio-technical literature, which reports that the one-person company's failures propagate through the founder, so the two literatures describe the same concentration at two levels.[2,4] The answer is bounded by the absence of a verified one-person unicorn, because the systemic risk of a single founder has not been observed at unicorn scale, and the risk is therefore inferred from the adjacent forms rather than measured in the form itself.(3)

The sustainable-development and the credit-market evidence bound the answer further, because the nonlinear effect of artificial intelligence on the economy and the risk it prices into credit are both measured at the aggregate, and the founder who bears them alone is the disaggregation that the aggregate studies do not reach.[5,16] The resilience-versus-fragility ambiguity remains, because the same concentration that the resilience literature credits as adaptability the fragility literature reads as exposure, and the one-person unicorn inherits both readings without a case to decide between them.(12) The connectedness evidence adds that the founder's risk would not stay the founder's, because the quantile and the frequency of the connection between the artificial-intelligence sector and the rest of the financial system mean that a concentration at one point propagates to the others, and the one-person unicorn, at scale, would be one more point in that connection.(15) The answer to P1 is therefore not a magnitude but a direction, and the direction is that the one-person unicorn concentrates risk rather than dispersing it.

P2 asked how platform dependence conditions the viability of the one-person company, and the answer is that the dependence is the price the form pays for the infrastructure it borrows. The answer is concordant with the complementor and gig literatures, which report that the dependent entrepreneur surrenders the value and the terms to the platform, and the one-person company is the limiting case in which the surrender is total because there is no firm to buffer it.[6,7] Conversely, the platform can also be the enabler, because the digital platform that concentrates

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

micro-entrepreneurship can resolve the market failures that a lone founder cannot, and the dependence is therefore a condition with two signs rather than a cost alone.(38)

The two signs are the reason P2 is the question most likely to decide the hypothesis, because the platform that enables the one-person company is the same platform that can absorb it. The wage-setting and the market-power evidence sharpen the two signs, because the platform's power over the wage and the data is measured, not asserted, and the founder who depends on the platform is therefore subject to a power that the literature has quantified in the adjacent forms.[20,21] The regulatory evidence adds the third sign, because the digital-markets regulation and the antitrust frameworks that govern the platform are the instruments that decide whether the dependence is exploitative or enabling, and the founder's fate is therefore partly a matter of the regulator's choice rather than of the founder's.[23,25]

The data-competition and the structural analyses complete the third sign, because the competition law that could constrain the platform is itself contested, with the Australian and the merger analyses showing that the structural tools exist but are applied unevenly, and the founder's dependence is therefore governed by a law that is as unsettled as the dependence itself.[32,33] The answer to P2 is therefore a condition rather than a verdict, and the condition is that the founder's capture of the unicorn depends on a platform whose terms the founder does not set and a law that has not yet set them.

P3 asked what future scenarios are plausible, and the answer is that the range between the dispersed super-individual and the re-concentrated platform remains open. The answer is concordant with the futures literature, which reports that the imaginaries of generative work are split between the individual and the platform, and with the scenario literature, which reports that the platform-power futures are the ones in which the founder's agency is the deciding variable. (8,37,45)

The range is not a weakness of the evidence but a property of the hypothesis, because a hypothesis that is not yet verified cannot be closed by a scenario, and the one-person unicorn is therefore a hypothesis whose scenarios are its current evidence. The third-decade and the rethinking-labour scenarios add the depth of that range, because the former projects the generative model beyond the decade and the latter rethinks the value of labour itself, and the two together show that the one-person unicorn is a small question inside a larger one about what work becomes.[39,40]

The regulatory-winter and the platform-capitalism scenarios add the constraint that shapes the range, because the future in which the platform is regulated and the future in which the platform extracts value are both futures in which the founder's dispersion is bounded, and the founder's agency operates inside that bound.[9,44] The answer to P3 is therefore a range whose ends are both real and whose middle, the one-person unicorn, is the part that the evidence has not yet populated.

What remains open is the single fact that would close all three questions, a verified one-person company at unicorn scale, and the absence of that fact is the review's most consistent finding. The systemic risk, the platform dependence and the future scenarios are each conditional on the same unobserved object, and the review has therefore mapped the conditions of the hypothesis rather than the hypothesis itself, which is the honest limit of a synthesis of a form that does not yet exist. The three questions converge on that absence, and the convergence is the reason the one-person unicorn remains a hypothesis rather than a description.

The convergence also reveals a structure that the individual literatures conceal, which is that the three conditions are not independent but sequential. The systemic risk is the founder's exposure, the platform dependence is the channel through which that exposure is priced, and the future scenario is the outcome that the exposure and the channel select, so the three questions are the three steps of a single argument, and the argument's conclusion is that the one-person unicorn is a founder's risk that the platform prices before the founder captures it.(3,6,8)

The sequence is the reason the hypothesis is best stated as a condition, the founder captures the unicorn only if the platform's cut and the founder's risk leave enough for the founder, and the condition is one that the existing evidence can state but not yet test. The sequence also explains why the practitioner commentary is optimistic where the evidence is conditional, because the commentary states the founder's capture and omits the platform's cut, and the evidence states both, which is the difference between a hypothesis and its conditions.

The limitations of the review bound the confidence of its answers. The synthesis is narrative rather than systematic, so relevant work may have been missed, and the recommendation is a systematic search once the construct is indexed consistently. The evidence for P1 and P3 is largely inferred from adjacent forms rather than measured in the one-person company, and the

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

recommendation is a dataset that follows the one-person companies that already exist over time. The scenario literature for P3 is prospective by nature, and the review could not test a scenario against an outcome because no outcome exists, so the P3 answer is bounded by the absence of its object. Each limitation is a property of the field rather than of the method, and the answers are offered as the best current map. The map is nonetheless a contribution, because the three conditions have not been drawn together for the one-person unicorn before, and drawing them together shows that the hypothesis is not blocked by a single unknown but by the misalignment of three, the risk that is not yet measured, the dependence that is not yet priced, and the scenario that is not yet closed. The misalignment is the finding, and it is a finding that no single literature could have produced, because each literature sees only its own condition and therefore sees a smaller problem than the founder faces. A founder who reads only one of the three would misjudge the hypothesis, and the review's contribution is to prevent that misjudgment by holding the three in a single frame.

The implication is that the one-person unicorn should be evaluated, by a founder, a funder or a regulator, on the three conditions that the review names rather than on the valuation that the term implies. The founder should ask whether the concentration of risk is one they can bear, the funder should ask whether the platform dependence will transfer the value before the founder captures it, and the regulator should ask which of the two scenarios the platform dependence will select, because the answer to that last question is the one that the hypothesis has not yet supplied. The research agenda that follows is therefore specific, to measure the systemic risk of the one-person companies that already exist, to price the platform's cut against the founder's capture, and to specify in advance the outcome that would count as the first verified one-person unicorn, because the three measures together would convert the hypothesis from a scenario into an estimate. The one-person unicorn, in the meantime, is best described as a founder's bet under a platform's constraint, and the bet is worth taking seriously, not because it is likely, but because it marks the point where the dispersion of the tool and the concentration of the platform meet. The three conditions that this review has named, the risk that the founder bears, the dependence that the platform prices, and the scenario that neither has closed, are the three faces of that meeting, and the founder who understands all three understands the hypothesis, which is more than the hypothesis itself yet promises. The understanding is the practical yield of the review, because a founder who can state the condition under which the unicorn is captured is a founder who can decide whether to attempt it, and the decision, not the prediction, is what the review leaves the founder equipped to make. That decision, made with the three conditions in view, is the point at which the hypothesis becomes a practice, and the practice is the field's next test.

## CONCLUSIONS

The one-person unicorn entails a systemic risk that is concentrated in the single founder, and that concentration is the mechanism the form inherits from the systems it depends on. The platform dependence of the one-person company is the condition through which it surrenders the value it captures, and it is the question most likely to decide the hypothesis. The future scenarios range from a dispersed super-individual to a re-concentrated platform economy, and the range remains open until a verified one-person unicorn closes it.

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

## REFERENCES

Kshetri N. Artificial Intelligence-Driven One-Person Companies: The Reconfiguration of Entrepreneurship, Work, and Scale. IT Prof. 2026;28(3):19-26. doi: 10.1109/mitp.2026.3694520
Liu X, Yang W. The Emergence of One-Person Companies as Human–AI Socio-Technical Systems: Evidence from AI Ecosystem Density in Chinese Cities. Systems. 2026;14(8):994. doi: 10.3390/systems14080994
Majetić F, Rajter M, Bassetti C. Being a financially vulnerable solopreneur: The health toll. Acta Sociologica. 2026;69(3):493-503. doi: 10.1177/00016993251382718
Kabza M. Artificial intelligence in financial services – benefits and costs. In: Innovation in Financial Services. Routledge; 2020. p. 183-198. doi: 10.4324/9781003051664-14
Zhang C, Li R, Wang Q. Artificial intelligence and sustainable development: A global nonlinear analysis of the moderating roles of human capital and renewable energy. Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews. 2026;228:116574. doi: 10.1016/j.rser.2025.116574
Miao Y, Luo J, Jiang Y. Sustaining complementor communities: A resourcing perspective on platform-dependent entrepreneurs. Sustainable Futures. 2025;10:101358. doi: 10.1016/j.sftr.2025.101358
Glavin P, Schieman S. Dependency and Hardship in the Gig Economy: The Mental Health Consequences of Platform Work. Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World. 2022;8:23780231221082414. doi: 10.1177/23780231221082414
El Hajal G, Ivanov S. Machines, minds, and the future of work: GenAI and future work imaginaries. Futures. 2026;184:103934. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2026.103934
Karaduman M, Arık MA, Karaduman S. Platform Capitalism and Digital Labour: Value Extraction in the Contemporary Digital Media Economy. Journal Media. 2026;7(3):159. doi: 10.3390/journalmedia7030159
Wu DD, Mitchell J, Lambert JH. Global Systemic Risk and Resilience for Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19. Risk Analysis. 2021;41(5):701-704. doi: 10.1111/risa.13746
Jain A, Shadangi SK. Systemic Vulnerabilities of Data Aggregation: Privacy Implications and Legal Safeguards Under India's Digital Data Protection Framework. In: Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems. Springer Nature Switzerland; 2026. p. 359-370. doi: 10.1007/978-3-032-27702-2_32
Siddik AB, Amin NU. Disruptive innovation or systemic resilience? Investigating the impact of artificial intelligence on banking stability. Research in International Business and Finance. 2026;82:103245. doi: 10.1016/j.ribaf.2025.103245
Lobo CA, Pacheco LM. Eurozone's macroprudential policy and financial stability. In: Encyclopedia of Monetary Policy, Financial Markets and Banking. Elsevier; 2025. p. 290-297. doi: 10.1016/b978-0-44-313776-1.00087-8
Ionescu Ș, Chiriță N, Nica I, Delcea C. An Analysis of Residual Financial Contagion in Romania's Banking Market for Mortgage Loans. Sustainability. 2023;15(15):12037. doi: 10.3390/su151512037
Jellouli I. Quantile–Frequency Connectedness Among Artificial Intelligence, FinTech, and Blue Economy Markets. IJFS. 2026;14(2):32. doi: 10.3390/ijfs14020032
Song P, Wu S, Partab J. Artificial intelligence in credit markets: Algorithmic lending, financial inclusion, and regulatory arbitrage. International Review of Economics & Finance. 2026;112:105937. doi: 10.1016/j.iref.2026.105937
YU L, HÄRDLE WK, BORKE L, BENSCHOP T. AN AI APPROACH TO MEASURING FINANCIAL RISK. Singapore Econ Rev. 2023;68(05):1529-1549. doi: 10.1142/s0217590819500668
Hackfort S, Marquis S, Bronson K. Harvesting value: Corporate strategies of data assetization in agriculture and their socio-ecological implications. Big Data & Society. 2024;11(1):20539517241234279. doi: 10.1177/20539517241234279
Banihashemi S. Digital platformization in construction: Micro-entrepreneurial empowerment or concentration of intermediation power?. Journal of Business Venturing Insights. 2026;25:e00624. doi: 10.1016/j.jbvi.2026.e00624
Liu X, Zeng X. Labour market concentration and posted wages: Evidence on wage-setting power from a large online recruitment platform in China. Economic Modelling. 2026;157:107482. doi: 10.1016/j.econmod.2026.107482
Nuccio M, Guerzoni M. Big data: Hell or heaven? Digital platforms and market power in the data-driven economy. Competition & Change. 2019;23(3):312-328. doi: 10.1177/1024529418816525
Fatmawati F, Nurbayani SU, Alisyahbana ANQA, Isma A, Muflih BK. From Competition to Concentration: Theoretical Evolution of Market Power through Monopoly and Monopsony. daengku j hum soc sci innov. 2025;5(4):557-572. doi: 10.35877/454ri.daengku4472
Wagner G, Eifert M, Metzger A, Schweitzer H. Taming the giants: The DMA/DSA package. COLA. 2021;58(Issue 4):987-1028. doi: 10.54648/cola2021065
Smith R, Healey D. Attacking concentration: market power in the digital space. European Competition Journal. 2024;20(2):295-314. doi: 10.1080/17441056.2023.2280328
Colangelo G. In Fairness We (Should Not) Trust: The Duplicity of the EU Competition Policy Mantra in Digital Markets. The Antitrust Bulletin. 2023;68(4):618-640. doi: 10.1177/0003603x231200942
Cantarella M, Strozzi C. Task search and labor supply in the platform economy. Structural Change and Economic Dynamics. 2026;79:550-577. doi: 10.1016/j.strueco.2026.06.007
Giachetti C. Rivalry enablers in ecosystems: The role of dominant operating system platform openness across diverse national contexts. Long Range Planning. 2026;59(2):102620. doi: 10.1016/j.lrp.2026.102620
Uikey VG, Kulkarni G. AI Based Self Preferencing and Consumer Safety in Digital Market. 2025 OITS International Conference on Information Technology (OCIT). 2025:622-626. doi: 10.1109/ocit66168.2025.11400384

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13

Basaure A, Vesselkov A, Töyli J. Internet of things (IoT) platform competition: Consumer switching versus provider multihoming. Technovation. 2020;90-91:102101. doi: 10.1016/j.technovation.2019.102101
Wang T. Tech oligarchy and urban mobility in China: the case of DiDi. Science as Culture. 2026:1-17. doi: 10.1080/09505431.2026.2670740
Schulz J, Mayerhoffer DM. Equal chances, unequal outcomes? Network-based evolutionary learning and the industrial dynamics of superstar firms. J Bus Econ. 2021;91(9):1357-1385. doi: 10.1007/s11573-021-01047-8
Binns R, Bietti E. Dissolving privacy, one merger at a time: Competition, data and third party tracking. Computer Law & Security Review. 2020;36:105369. doi: 10.1016/j.clsr.2019.105369
Balasingham B, Jordan H. Big data and competition analysis under Australian competition law: comeback of the structuralist approach?. Journal of Antitrust Enforcement. 2021;9(3):540-565. doi: 10.1093/jaenfo/jnaa055
Lee J. A balanced regulatory model for emerging digital industries: Evidence from Thailand's digital governance. Journal of Asian and African Studies. 2026:00219096261478102. doi: 10.1177/00219096261478102
Söderqvist CF. Platforms, wages and individual bargaining power: assessing labour market competition among Swedish couriers. In: The Elgar Companion to Regulating Platform Work. Edward Elgar Publishing; 2025. p. 152-170. doi: 10.4337/9781035321148.00019
Mieleszczenko-Kowszewicz W, Chodak G, Cambria E, Kazienko P, Cambria E. Transition From the Attention Economy to the Relationship Economy in the Age of Large Language Models. IEEE Intell Syst. 2026;41(4):64-70. doi: 10.1109/mis.2026.3704804
Ebrahimi Shah Abadi A, MobiniDehkordi A. Alternative futures of platform power in Iran's digital economy: a causal layered analysis approach. Eur J Futures Res. 2026;14(1):28. doi: 10.1186/s40309-026-00272-0
Boukhatmi Ä, Van Opstal W. How Can Digital Platforms Resolve Market Failures to Foster a Circular Economy?. Bus Strat Env. 2026;35(1):737-758. doi: 10.1002/bse.70190
Humm P. From marginal tasks to lifecycle thermodynamics: Rethinking labour, value, and distribution in the age of AI. Futures. 2026;184:103928. doi: 10.1016/j.futures.2026.103928
Deipenbrock G. (Generative) Artificial Intelligence in the Third Decade of the 21st Century and Beyond – Selected European Legal, Regulatory and Supervisory Aspects with a Particular View on Companies in Financial Markets. EULR. 2025;36(Issue 2):201-230. doi: 10.54648/eulr2025009
Louisiana State University and University of Pavia, Business Education Complex, Baton Rouge, Los Angeles 70803, United States of America, Piccoli G, Palese B, Northern Illinois University, College of Business, DeKalb, Illinois 60115, United States of America, Rodriguez J, Grenoble Ecole de Management, 12 rue Pierre Sémard, 38000 Grenoble, France. Solopreneur Digital Ecosystems: Genesis, Lineage and Preliminary Categorization. 34th Bled eConference Digital Support from Crisis to Progressive Change: Conference Proceedings. 2021:239-251. doi: 10.18690/978-961-286-485-9.18
Vickers E, Brooks–Gordon B. Growth and diversity of the online solopreneur and sexpreneur. Current Opinion in Psychology. 2023;49:101474. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101474
Jain P. Exploring Solopreneurs' Journey in the Digital Era. In: Advances in Business Information Systems and Analytics. IGI Global; 2024. p. 67-87. doi: 10.4018/979-8-3693-1842-3.ch005
Han X, Jiang M. From laissez-faire to regulatory winter? Regulating Chinese platforms at the crossroads of antitrust, industrial policy, and geopolitics. International Communication Gazette. 2026;88(1-2):68-90. doi: 10.1177/17480485251405588
Kugler M, Aichroth LS. AI is Here to Stay: A Scenario-Based Exploration of Leadership, Followership, and the Impact on Skill Development. New Drctns Student Lead. 2026;2026(191):29-36. doi: 10.1002/yd.70067
Kumar P, Kumra R, Dadwal S. Contrasting the journey of solopreneurs and entrepreneurs in business success - a qualitative inquiry. IJESB. 2025;56(3):351-365. doi: 10.1504/ijesb.2025.149165

https://doi.org/10.62486/978-9915-9966-3-9.Ch13