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# Later-working-life social entrepreneurial identities: A dynamic self-categorisation framework

## Abstract

**Purpose** - This study examines self-defined interpretations of age by later-working-life (LWL) social entrepreneurs and how these influence constructions of their social entrepreneurial identities (SEIs).

**Design/methodology/approach** - Adopting a social constructivist ontology and inductive, interpretive, theory elaboration qualitative methodology, a sample of 28 social entrepreneurs based in England were interviewed, data being analysed thematically using the Gioia method.

**Findings** - Using social identity theory and its linked self-categorisation lens, this study reveals three types of LWL social entrepreneurs. First, LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars embrace both social and business identities in support of their social mission. Second, LWL Social Value Creators identify with their social identity as making a difference to the local community, income generation being perceived as incompatible with their social mission. Finally, LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs demonstrate shifting identities, evolving from purely social value creation to balancing hybridised social and commercial identities.

**Originality** – This study reveals social entrepreneurs' age has a positive role in forming LWL SEIs, associated experience, skills, knowledge and sense of urgency acting as a catalyst, facilitating rather than hindering social and economic participation. It contributes to the social entrepreneurship literature by advancing current theorisation of age's role in constructing over-50s' SEIs.

**Keywords** Social entrepreneurship, Ageing, Later-working-life, Identity

**Paper type** Research paper

## **Introduction**

Research highlights how ageing, influenced by socio-economic, cultural and environmental structures, is subjectively constructed, depending on individuals' perceptions of age (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013). Later-working-life (LWL) over-50s identify often with younger-age identities; shifting perceptions and socio-economic roles meaning chronological ageing is no longer a proxy for workplace withdrawal (Schafer and Shippee, 2009). Late-career entrepreneurship research shows LWL individuals embrace entrepreneurship (Kautonen *et al.*, 2017), bringing professional experience, networks, social capital, and industry knowledge (Soto-Simeone and Kautonen, 2021). Further, it offers insights into antecedents and factors influencing LWL entrepreneurial propensity; encouraging interest in over-50s' transition from employment to entrepreneurship (Kautonen *et al.*, 2017; Kenny and Rossiter, 2018); the extent continued participation positively influences identity construction (Soto-Simeone and Kautonen, 2021); and how entrepreneurial identities form (Mallet and Wapshott, 2015; Stirzaker and Sitko, 2019). Nevertheless, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of how LWL social entrepreneurs (SEs), who are often driven by social value creation rather than revenue generation (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Santos *et al.*, 2021), construct their social entrepreneurial identities (SEIs).

Social entrepreneurship literature (SEP) provides theorisation about tensions SEs experience in managing their 'contested identities' (Howorth *et al.*, 2012, p.386) of social and business, including challenges experienced (Miller *et al.*, 2012; Pache and Chowdhury, 2012; Pan *et al.*, 2019). Research suggests SEs salient identities, comprising empathy, altruism, social responsibility, compassion, and moral obligations/judgments, shape their intentions, differentiating them from commercial entrepreneurs (CEs) (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010). While scholarship offers robust insights regarding antecedents that shape SEs SEIs, little is known of how age, as a key determinant for those in LWL, shape their SEI constructions (Driver, 2017;

Pan *et al.*, 2019). Through the lens of social identity theory (SIT) and the linked self-categorisation perspective (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), this paper addresses this gap in the literature by focusing on over-50s SEs to provide a more nuanced understanding of the role age plays in shaping their SEIs.

SIT reveals how individuals derive self-meanings through social interactions (collective identity) (Tajfel and Turner, 1979); self-categorising according to values, beliefs and feelings (Tajfel, 1974; 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979); self-perceptions of social and personal identities (Tajfel, 1974; 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979). SIT and self-categorisation are complementary, influencing consideration of LWL SEs' self-interpretations of age's multifaceted meanings informing their SEIs. This elaborates traditional SEP approaches focusing on younger entrepreneurs' SEIs (Douglas and Prentice, 2019). It advances a SEP identity-based approach (Stets and Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1974; 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979), by developing understandings (Fisher and Aguinis, 2017) regarding how LWL SEs perceive and manage complex identities, with age a defining attribute. Hence, this study's research question:

How do self-defined interpretations of older age by later-working-life social entrepreneurs influence constructions of their own social entrepreneurial identities?

This study makes three contributions. First, it elaborates knowledge, contributing to SEP and later career entrepreneurship literature by revealing three values-driven social identity types; and how SIT and self-categorisation identity work (Tajfel, 1974; 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979) help explain interplays between positive self-images and views about age and SEIs. Professional experiences, skills, knowledge, and social networks were perceived as providing advantages over younger counterparts. Second, the paper responds to calls (Driver, 2017; Pan *et al.*, 2019) for identity-based research focussing on SEs contested social and business identities. This is addressed by incorporating age, as a focal construct, to understand its

dynamic interplay with LWL SEs SEIs. Third, on a practice level, the paper explores the complexity of SEIs in LWL. For LWL SEs, age was a catalyst for re-appraising societal roles and continued economic and social participation. These findings have implications for supporting over-50s' employment return or for those choosing social entrepreneurship as their career (Maalaoui *et al.*, 2023; Matos *et al.*, 2018).

First, literature on conceptualisations of entrepreneurial identity and late-career entrepreneurship is reviewed, followed by examination of SEP on social identity construction and founder social identity types. Methods are then outlined. Next, findings are presented, and contributions and elaborations of SEP theory are discussed. The final section offers conclusions and future research directions.

## **Literature review**

### *Guiding theory*

Late-career entrepreneurship literature examines factors influencing over-50s' entrepreneurial intentions (Kautonen *et al.*, 2017). Shifting age perceptions mean it is no longer seen as preventing economic participation (Barnhart and Peñaloza, 2013; Schafer and Shippee, 2009). Rather, over-50s' professional identities and experiences interplay with desiring flexibility, self-fulfilment, independence, work-life balance, wellbeing, and quality of life (Kautonen *et al.*, 2017; Soto-Simeone and Kautonen, 2021), increasing entrepreneurial propensity. Studies also show ageism, lack of career opportunities, low retirement income, and job dissatisfaction, may push over-50s towards entrepreneurship (Kautonen *et al.*, 2017). Ill-health and low energy, perceived risk, uncertainty of monetary gains, and family responsibilities may negatively influence entrepreneurial intentions (Lévesque and Minniti, 2006).

Over-50s' entrepreneurial intentions are multifaceted, with identity transition to entrepreneurship managed through a liminal process, tensions being experienced between

previous and new entrepreneurial identities (Garzia-Lorenzo *et al.*, 2020). Soto-Simeone and Kautonen (2021) argue for three ‘senior entrepreneur’ types. Autonomy seekers choose entrepreneurship for more control in life. Active agers pursue it for dignity and usefulness within their known communities. Communitarian entrepreneurs strive to help others in known communities. Their research focuses on senior individuals pursuing profit-driven entrepreneurship due to unemployment or (threatened) redundancy. Although non-monetary objectives drive enterprise, these types focus on entrepreneurs, their families and ‘known others’ (familiar communities), rather than benefits for unknown others and society. Recent commercially-oriented LWL entrepreneurial identity construction research therefore notably neglects LWL SEs identities where the primary motivation is creating social value (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Santos *et al.*, 2021).

SIT posits that self-meanings and behaviours are shaped through social interactions (Hogg, 2001; Hogg and Terry, 2000; Stryker and Burke, 2000). Social identities are understood as roles individuals apply in ‘intergroup’ relations, including attached emotional and affective significance (Tajfel, 1982; Stryker and Burke, 2000). These link to shared meanings, such as societal norms and expectations specifying how identities are enacted (Stryker and Burke, 2000). They represent internalised meanings and societal roles individuals play, providing reference frames for evaluation (Brewer and Gardner, 1996). Personal identities, self-meanings and self-categorisations are held, consistent with beliefs, feelings and values (Stets and Burke, 2010; Hitlin, 2003). Individual identity enactments are consistent with role perceptions of social actors, cognitively assimilating distinguishable unique identities, beliefs and actions (Hogg and Terry, 2000). Collective identity influences how self-perceptions can be different to those held by others. Individual identity is dynamic, shifting over time due to cultural/social contexts, and influenced by social perceptions and how self-identity can be altered relative to embedded context (Chasserio *et al.*, 2014; Stets and Burke, 2000). For Watson (2009: 426) ‘the

notion of identity has enormous potential as a bridging concept between individual agency, choice and creation of self on the one hand, and history, culture, and social shaping of identities on the other’.

Research already highlights identity’s importance in predicting entrepreneurial actions, decision-making (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010), and entrepreneurial behaviour infused with meanings confirming entrepreneurs’ identities (de la Cruz *et al.*, 2017). Although sociocultural norms and expectations influence identity (Anderson and Warren, 2011), entrepreneurs tend to reconcile individual and social identities in establishing their unique entrepreneurial-self (Shepherd and Haynie, 2009), identity-bridging agency and self-creation, and the social context shaping self-identity (Watson 2013). They balance belonging/sameness as part of collective identity (Gioia *et al.*, 2000; Brewer and Gardner, 1996), with distinctiveness (entrepreneurial individual identity), differentiating themselves from others (Anderson and Warren, 2011; Shepherd and Haynie, 2009). Entrepreneurs frequently struggle reconciling individual and social identities, the latter derived from micro-identities and social groupings, like gender, family, and ethnicity (Rigg and O’Dwyer, 2012), intertwining with corporate identity whilst developing their entrepreneurial-self (Gioia *et al.*, 2000).

As with SIT and self-categorisation, SEP studies examine SEs’ salient identities, differentiating them from CEs (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010). Contrasting with CEs identity and the ‘commercial logic’ of pursuing profits (Hitlin, 2003; Stets and Burke, 2000), SEs’ identities are often interlaced with compassion, purpose, sympathy, social responsibility, moral obligation/judgment, and altruism (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Douglas and Prentice, 2019; Douglas *et al.*, 2021; Ip *et al.*, 2021; Mair and Noboa, 2006; Tiwari *et al.*, 2020). Menke (2020) highlights the role of entrepreneurial stereotypes within social and commercial entrepreneurial intentions, explaining how perceived SEs’ and CEs’ stereotypes affect intentions to become entrepreneurially engaged in either. SIT can advance theorising regarding how LWL SEs, often

starting-up social ventures with beliefs about entrepreneurship types and concerns for *known* and *unknown* others (Gruber and MacMillan, 2017; Menke, 2020), perceive their identities, including age's role, in SEI construction.

### *Social entrepreneurial identity*

Despite no single agreed SEP definition (Zahra *et al.*, 2009), SEs are considered change agents, developing innovative social value approaches addressing social or environmental problems (Austin *et al.*, 2006). Studies suggest SEs and CEs have distinctive identities shaped by inherent characteristics, cultural norms and expectations (Tiwari *et al.*, 2020). These create and present 'collective' entrepreneurial identities constructed around innovativeness, creativity, proactivity, internal locus of control, and self-efficacy (Santos *et al.*, 2021; Tiwari *et al.*, 2020). Yet, SEP studies suggest SEs' salient identities intertwine with accountability, ethical and virtuous behaviour, compassion, unity of purpose, sympathy, social responsibility, altruism and judgment (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Douglas and Prentice, 2019; Douglas *et al.*, 2021; Ip *et al.*, 2021; Mair and Noboa, 2006); and may build social identities based on prior experience helping others (Driver, 2017).

SEs can develop and maintain their SEIs through divisioning and positioning (Jones *et al.*, 2008). Focusing on the greater good, they self-categorise through divisioning by relating with their social activist identity to engender systemic social change. Jones *et al.* (2008) argue for three SEI construction layers; those rejecting main entrepreneurship discourse (not me), imbued by institutional practices; those self-identifying with grassroots, communitarian objectives (me); and those underplaying self-identification with social entrepreneurialism (suppressed me).

SEIs are shaped by SEs ongoing narratives, created through negotiating who they are relative to competing discourses (Jones *et al.*, 2008). SEs balance tensions between social and business

identities (Driver, 2017) through sameness and otherness (Ko and Kim, 2020). Yitshakia and Kropp (2016) argue CEs and SEs are driven by needing to leave their mark through meaningful activities, although SEs identify with their other self through creating social value. Thus, despite SEIs' multi-layered aspects, social value creation remains core to SEs identity (Elfving, 2013).

Fauchart and Gruber's (2011) conceptualisation of founder social identities distinguishes three primary types: Darwinian entrepreneurs consider themselves unique and put Self (I) at their self-identity's core, pursuing private, economic self-interest, and deriving self-worth in ways congruent with business logic; Communitarian entrepreneurs focus their behaviour and actions on the Personal (We), deriving self-worth from supporting community; and Missionary entrepreneurs put the Impersonal (We) at their self-definition's locus, having a strong societal responsibility, deriving self-worth by pursuing political and social vision. Hence, while Darwinian entrepreneurs' self-concept follows 'business logics' to maximise private returns (Self), Communitarian and Missionary entrepreneurs behave in ways reflecting concerns for known and unknown others. These three SEI types can coexist, with one or more dominant, within entrepreneurs' hybrid social identities.

Studies on entrepreneurial identities demonstrate how LWL entrepreneurs develop the self as they transition from 'employment or early retirement' identities to a new 'entrepreneurial' identity (Garzia-Lorenzo *et al.*, 2020). They highlight the importance of non-monetary self-rewards such as self-realisation and feeling active and useful as important motives to pursue entrepreneurship as a career choice in LWL (Soto-Simeone and Kautonen, 2021). Fauchart and Gruber (2001) explore entrepreneurs' identities, behaviours, and actions, conceptualising three 'founder identity' types, demonstrating how entrepreneurs behave and act in ways consistent with the self. However, there remains little research on how LWL SEs per se manage the interplay between age and SEIs. Consequently, this study extends SEI theoretical

understanding, introducing age as a key construct, associated with experience, knowledge, and skills, shaping LWL SEs, often driven by social value creation rather than monetary gains.

SEI construction is an emerging sub-set of SEP studies enabling understanding of SEs balancing complex tensions between commercial and social identities. SEP literature sheds light on how salient identities are shaped by self-perceptions in relation to others (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011), including CEs'/SEs' stereotypes (Menke, 2020). Through a SIT and self-categorisation lens (Stets and Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1974; 1978; Tajfel and Turner, 1979), this paper expounds how age, an inherent characteristic, plays a key role in shaping LWL SEs self-image and identity self-categorisation.

## **Methods**

### *Research Design*

Through SIT, its linked self-categorisation lens and existing SEP Literature, the qualitative research design focused on the subjective interpretations of LWL SEs in negotiating interplays between age and SEIs. By elaborating knowledge on existing entrepreneurship and social identity typologies (Fisher and Aguinis, 2017), this paper explains how SEs understand their SEIs in relation to age. Adopting a theory elaboration approach (Fisher and Aguinis, 2017; Lee *et al.*, 1999) constructs were effectively identified and defined following Gioia and Chittipeddi's (1991) inductive study; this having been highlighted by Fisher and Aguinis (2017) as an exemplar.

For the present study, data were collected and examined for underlying patterns and dimensions. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to enable new understandings between age and SEI constructs, extending theory to encompass LWL SEs. The qualitative approach allowed participants to provide rich descriptive data (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991) of the complex phenomenon being explored (Saunders *et al.*, 2023) within social constructionist

ontology (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The research design therefore prioritised participant standpoints, supporting subjective interpretations of LWL SEs understandings of age's role in SEIs (Prasad and Prasad, 2002).

### *Sampling and Data Collection*

Following ethical review/approval, a heterogenous purposive sample was selected (Neuman, 2014). Potential participants were identified through information from a UK third sector organisation. Two inclusion criteria were adopted: they needed to be SEs and aged over-50 at the time of the interview; the 'over-50' age criterion being consistent with previous research (Kautonen *et al.*, 2017). 91 potential participants were identified and, following Saunders and Townsend (2016), a credible a priori sample size of approximately 30 which met epistemic norms specified. This was twice that identified as likely to be necessary for saturation to be reached (Francis *et al.*, 2010; Guest *et al.*, 2020). Of the 91 potential participants, 28 agreed to participate, all signing a consent form and being interviewed. Subsequently analysis revealed repeated patterns across their transcripts, no new concepts emerging from later interviews. This indicates data saturation had been reached (Francis *et al.*, 2010). Participants were located in regional areas across England: London (3), Southeast (6), Northeast (3), Southwest (5), Northwest (4), East (3) and the Midlands (4). This final sample reflected a diversity of professional backgrounds, current activities and social aims (Table I), helping heterogeneity of views into participants' understandings of SEIs (Saunders *et al.*, 2023).

[Table I]

To develop new understandings, semi-structured interviews focused on participants' self-defined identities, and age's role in forming SEIs. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, the average (mean) duration being approximately one hour. Each was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, the participant receiving an identifier for anonymity. In total

just over 35 hours of interviews were transcribed, comprising 283,715 words. Each interview began by participants talking through motivating factors to become SEs, expressing ideas and meanings significant to their experiences (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008). Subsequent questions probed participants' self-categorisations, including age's influence on their SEI construction. Each was asked what being a social entrepreneur meant, how they self-identified with the label; and age's role, if any, in forming their SEIs. These revealed a diversity of perspectives and enabled the identification and development of new constructs (Fisher and Aguinis, 2017).

### *Data Analysis*

Data were analysed across participants' accounts (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Following the Gioia methodology (Gioia *et al.*, 2013) transcripts were read and re-read, ensuring data familiarity. Initial codes as identified by the first author, were recorded manually against each transcript, NVivo being used for data management and retrieval (Maher *et al.*, 2018). To help ensure rigour, these data were coded independently by the second author, discrepancies debated, and agreement reached. This were sense checked by the third author. Continuing the process, codes were grouped into first order concepts, which were combined into second-order themes, searching for unifying aggregate dimensions. Coding used participants' own words or 'in-vivo' codes where possible. These concerned prior business and personal experiences, social aims, and perceptions of age's implications. Similarities and differences between these initial codes were, in a process Gioia *et al.* (2013, p.20) describe as "similar to...[the] notion of axial coding", used to develop a more manageable number of first-order concepts (28 in the final framework). To illustrate, using the aggregate dimension 'Strategic Social Business Scaler identity' (Figure 1), SE1's response '*...I see myself as someone who spotted a gap in the market and fulfilled it...*' was coded as 'market gap', whereas SE2's response '*...business and commercial acumen with a social need... age helped because you have been through a lot of stuff...*' was coded as both 'commercial acumen' and 'age as experience' (Figure 1).

[Figure 1]

Next, relationships between first-order concepts and possible explanations for these were repeatedly compared, considered and debated based on the relevance to the research question (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Eight second-order themes were discerned uncovering participants' interpretations of age's role in shaping SEIs. For example, the first-order concepts 'market gap', 'commercial acumen' and 'age as experience' referred to earlier were grouped into the second-order theme 'age-related commercial acumen' (Figure 1).

This iterative process continued, comparing participants' responses and checking potential relationships to reduce first-order concepts and second-order themes to a core set of three aggregate dimensions (Gioia *et al.*, 2013) elaborating participants' constructions of age and SEIs. The second order theme 'age related commercial acumen', when combined with 'age-related cumulative capital' and 'age-related ethical sensitivity/continuity', resulted in the aggregate dimension 'Strategic Social Business Scaler identity' hybridising social and business identities. The second, aggregate dimension 'Social Value Creation identity' comprised second-order themes of 'age-related legacy', 'age-related giving back' and 'age-related strengthening community', prioritising social values over profit. The third, 'Syncretic Social Entrepreneur identity' combined second-order themes of 'adapting mindset' and 'age-related life-long learning' within which LWL SEs shifted from Social Value Creator to Strategic Social Business Scaler. Building on the data structure (Figure 1), the patterns relating to these dimensions were integrated subsequently into the theoretical framework (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

## Findings

The findings illustrate how participants articulate understanding of age's role in shaping SEIs. These were integrated into a theoretical framework comprising three LWL social identity types (Table II). These demonstrate LWL SEs management of self-images and multiplicity of their SEIs and age:

[Table II]

### *LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars*

LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars' primary social motive is helping disadvantaged local communities. When interpreting SEIs, they intertwined their 'collective' hybridised identities of social and business – the Self (I), pursuing social and business interests to allow social value creation – with age, reflecting their commercial acumen, cumulative capital, ethical sensitivity and continuity, forming their SEIs.

SE3, running a social enterprise helping vulnerable street children and supporting minority youth start-ups, demonstrated his complex social identity and self-categorisation. His passion for social entrepreneurialism stemmed from a *'deep search for some spiritual...comfort...doing something useful...not just make money and not to collect anymore...'*. He self-identified with social and commercial, noting: *'the model of social enterprise...should be running like businesses, operating like businesses, trying to make a profit but then redistributing the profit into good causes rather than in the pockets of shareholders'*. Aspects of individual identity emerged when distancing himself from those creating businesses for economic interests (not me) and striving for *'societal change'* (me) with *'money to do it...generate at least some of the charitable funds to make it sustainable and then leverage other funds and allow you to stay in the game...'*

SE3 resonated with business and economic goals. However, he disassociated from categorisation as *'just'* a profit-oriented entrepreneur building businesses to maximise wealth. Instead, he self-categorised as *'an average individual'* wanting to engender social change, drawing on his individual identity of *'ethical fibre'* and *'personal responsibility'*, noting: *'what I am bothered about is that the businesses make money in a fair ethical way, which can then be used to do socially good things....'* He felt SEs should be responsible for *'generating wealth...then deploy that where the help is needed...not making money for themselves or shareholders...'*

SE3 reflected how, with 25 years' business experience, he could leverage resources needed for success. He defined age as commercial acumen and cumulative capital: *'business experience...financial management, financial forecasting, business planning, human capital'* that made a difference to *'one's sense of wellbeing doing it, the comfort of doing it, and also the skills, knowledge, experience of being able to do it to'*. SE3 compared LWL SEs category to younger counterparts *'...trying to pay a mortgage or pay for the family'*. A paradoxical urgency was felt when, despite interpreting his age as *'just getting started'*, he felt anxious that *'time is running out'* with *'loads of things'* to achieve.

SE3 intertwined age with a sense of 'urgency' in leveraging his cumulative capital for 'doing good'. In contrast, SE4 emphasised the strategic advantage of his age and his associated business acumen determined his self-identity. Viewing age as 'meaningless' demonstrated how SE4 formed his SEIs based on personal values of *'egalitarian sharing of gain...co-creation...collaboration'* when founding a 'community utility' social enterprise. When probed regarding age's role in forming his SEIs, he laughed, raised his hands, noting: *'...it's complete denial...brilliant question...I don't think about it...I thought I was gonna die when I was quite young. I'm just so grateful that I'm not dead...'* Capturing what age meant for him and resistance of being associated with a specific 'later life' identity category, he likes how

entrepreneurs *'think...in their processes...'*, hence, *'I don't see any difference between somebody in his 80s or 15s...I enjoy being part of this tribe...how old you are makes no difference to me...'*. In contrast to SE3, who disassociated being perceived as belonging to a profit-oriented type identity (not me), SE4 intertwined identity with entrepreneurship (me), noting: *'...being entrepreneurial is far more fundamental to who we are than what makes us a social or conventional entrepreneur... you want to change the world... ...just go and do it'*.

When disentangling perceptions of his SEIs, SE4 noted being a social entrepreneur gave *'fluidity'* to *'change hats'*, demonstrating the multidimensionality of his social identities, negotiating the interplay between social and business, depending on his embedded context. Describing his self-identity: *'I'm an amoresque for...commercial business. I am a director of 2 or 3 social enterprises.... also a community activist...I wouldn't perceive myself as a social entrepreneur. I would say that one of my roles in my public working life is a social entrepreneur...'* Seeing SEs as a *'community of hope'*, He highlighted ethical sensitivity/continuity: *'there is an emotional dimension to it...social enterprises like any other social model have to be commercially viable... good things are happening, and I am part of that movement...underpinning positivity to it...'*

LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars demonstrated a strong self-identification with *'hybridised'* identities, balancing social and commercial objectives. Despite similarities, they differed in their interpretations of age's role in shaping their SEIs. While SE3's age instilled a *'sense of urgency'* to create a lasting impact, SE4 resisted identifying with his chronological age, instead perceiving age as *'meaningless'* counteracting traditional entrepreneurial stereotypes. Despite the nuanced constructed narratives in how LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars perceived their SEIs, age represented their cumulative capital and commercial acumen enabling them to adopt a *'hybridised'* identity in balancing social with strategic commercial objectives.

### *LWL Social Value Creators*

LWL Social Value Creators perceived SEIs as interplaying with giving back and creating social value within their communities. Each interpreted what ‘social value’ meant and how they self-categorised. While LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars foregrounded hybridised identities (me), with age reflecting commercial acumen and cumulative capital, Social Value Creators resisted categorisation as SEs since they associated entrepreneurs with the profit-oriented entrepreneur, instead linking their individual identities with ‘social value creation’, perceiving age as a catalyst in SEIs formation. Although SE6’s primary motivation was ‘*necessity*’ when made redundant, he attributed the ‘*disconnect between the social side and the need to have some form of income*’ as partly due to associating individual identity with being an ‘*explorer...agitator and an innovator by nature...*’, therefore, ‘*I need people pointing me to the right direction, in terms of getting funding ...*’. He noted embracing his individual identity provided a synergy between self-image and giving back to the community, enabling him to ‘*observe things and then see they can be put together in different ways ...benefit the local communities...people, growers, and food producers*’ However, when discussing the ‘logic of business’, he rejected categorisation as SE (*not me*), as incompatible with his social mission, ‘*engendering social change*’. When asked about age’s role in shaping his SEIs, his reaction was laughing ‘*well I feel greyer*’. He refuted being ‘*pigeonholed as someone interested in this particular thing*’ because of age, identifying age as an ‘opportunity’ to use his ‘life experiences’ enabling him when giving back to be ‘*more confident*’ and ‘*synthesise ideas*’, while challenging negative public age perceptions .

Categorising and self-identifying as Social Value Creators (me) not purely SEs (not me) was a common theme. SE14 when discussing her self-identity, laughingly said: ‘*I’m just a community worker*’. Although SE14 accepted the business logic for sustaining her social enterprise, she distanced herself from self-categorisation as SE (not me) since what mattered was her

strengthening of community: *'being at the heart of the community...have a vision...see where you wanna go and doing what you can to get there...'*. SE14 intertwined SEIs with age, *'...a lot of life experiences build up... somebody who's 23 has got an awful lot of ideas but not maybe the life experiences behind it...not to fall at the first knock...I don't think age is a barrier'*. SE14 recognises age's role (represented in: accumulated lifetime knowledge and understanding) in giving back:

*'there is a level of trust in someone who's more mature than somebody else...I don't think that somebody is gonna walk through the door...who's just lost his job come to some 20-year-old start pouring his family problems and why he needs a food parcel. He wouldn't do it because he would be too embarrassed to do it for that perception...'*

SE28 expressed the intertwining of her SEIs and age in relation to legacy. Instead of perceiving age as a barrier to participation, life experiences *'helped ...because you have been through a lot of stuff...'*. She associated self-identity as a community worker (me) rather than a SE (not me). Compared to SE14, she clearly identified income generation as incompatible with her social mission. She noted: *'...money is not the be and all of everything. First, you need your health and then you need to be happy. You do because you're gonna struggle...'*. Dissociating SEIs from income generation (not me), was critical for SE27, who founded her social enterprise to help children's complex health needs. When asked about self-identification as SE, she had no frame of reference, reacting by raising her hands, laughing: *'I have no idea...all I see is myself somebody who sits up in my office everyday trying to get money...and if that makes me a social entrepreneur, then that's what I am...'*. Probed further, she recognised that she may fit the traditional representation of a SE, someone *'on the fence of social and business...'* rejecting categorisation as SE (not me) as *'...most entrepreneurs are leaving their jobs to do some form of entrepreneurship...develop their company but I didn't want that...I didn't want money for myself...I wanted it for my club...'*. This interplayed with her age's meaning. She

felt work was largely affected by not feeling 72, *'I don't feel any different...if you've got something to occupy your mind and something that you enjoy doing then do you know what? It keeps you young'*.

Social Value Creators identified strongly with their 'social values', age being perceived as a catalyst encouraging them to create meaningful legacy by giving back to their local communities. While SE6 self-categorised as 'innovator' and 'explorer', refuting stereotypical views of 'age', SE14 emphasised 'meeting local community needs' as the main catalyst shaping her SEIs. She drew on the unique strengths of life experience, viewing age as not a barrier to her social entrepreneurial activities. Like SE14, SE28, although self-identifying with her 'community self' and the creation of social value, refuted being perceived as a SE; arguing this was not a term she would use to self-describe. However, both SE28 and SE26 distanced themselves from perceiving chronological age as a barrier, instead representing their age as an 'opportunity', their 'life experiences' better enabling them to make a difference to their communities.

#### *LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs*

LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs were characterised by shifting identities. Although social value creation remained their main frame of reference, they recognised how they re-defined their self-categorisation as they evolved within the social entrepreneurial process. Unlike LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars, whose self-categorisation created no boundaries between social and business, LWL Syncretic SEs re-negotiated the way they self-identified, evolving from perceiving themselves as Social Value Creators towards more 'hybridised' identities in balancing social and business objectives. SE5, running a social enterprise supporting children with communication difficulties, described her self-image continuously shifting throughout her experience as a SE. She went through stages of managing conflicting intersections of identities,

first identifying as a 'mum', because: *'I needed a job that I could work around the children...I'm a mum first...pretending to be a business woman'*, to re-interpreting social identity as a Social Value Creator wanting to 'spread' her classes outside her local community, and finally embracing her hybridised identities (me) upon realising she needed to become more sustainable:

*'...I become smarter and wiser...asking customers for payment by the first of December for January start...I have become better at this...I've made a lot of mistakes over the years...I had to adapt my ways...make a bit of money...a living wage...but it's secondary to what I'm wanting to do...still important but it's secondary...'*

SE5 recognised the difficulties reconciling competing demands stemming from different identities. She described her innate 'friendly' and 'people's person' identities, making it difficult to interact with her role as SE, having to 'push' herself in front of 'strangers' and sell her signing classes. She disassociated (not me) from being seen *purely* as a SE since she could be perceived as 'pushy' and a 'salesperson', which she felt was 'arrogant', hence rejecting fitting this 'mould'. Finding synergy between her individual identity as Social Value Creator and hybridised identities of social and business, she recognised: *"My time is worth the money...my expertise is worth that money. I can't volunteer anymore. I've got that head on. I'm a businesswoman and I need to make some money..."* She spoke about experiencing a transformational shift in how she self-identified, evolving from a purely 'friendly' mindset to embracing her enterprising identity, aligning her work behaviour and actions with market-based practices. She explained: *'I have become more careful with money...I need it for my business to help me bring more money...tailoring my services to my audience...I am building partnerships...I have set up new classes for childminders...set up priority bookings...already 80% rebooking for next term...better than the last term...'*. Distancing herself from the collective SE category (not me) since it did not represent her individual identity (me) and

associated values, SE5 reflected on the intersection of age with self-categorisation, embodying her 'self-awareness' in 'adapting to change', despite intense nostalgia for youth:

*... You know your own mind ...you're confident...you've got that life experience. Everything that I had done previous in my life has led to that moment when I started my own business...I didn't understand at that time what I was doing then but now I think 'wow, yeah I did that...'*

SE16 became a SE initially as 'revenge' against her employer, after redundancy, wanting to gain control over life. She explained her shifting identity occurred upon the realisation '*it was the right age...the mortgage has been paid off...knew I was at the stage I could set up...I was not ready to retire...because I can't believe I'm 60 next year. I feel I'm 40...I spent all this time doing things I wanted to do but not how I wanted to do it...the sort of ethics behind it...*'. Nevertheless, demonstrating conflicting identity interplays, she refused initially categorisation as SE, reacting by saying '*I hadn't*' but upon reflection, noted: '*that's a huge denial...I am really doing it, so I suppose yes*'. This paradoxical tension between private and social identities stemmed from self-belief that she was born with a '*charitable mindset*', finding it difficult to reconcile social with business. Although self-identifying as SE, she distanced (not me) herself from 'business' discourse conflicting with her values. This ambivalence was demonstrated when speaking of the mindset shift experienced in self-categorising as SE embracing her business identity:

*'...your kind of change completely...you get a bit mercenary...this is the good thing about social enterprise. If it was a business, I don't think I could be pushy. So, because I know it's a bloody good cause because I'm not making a profit for me...I think it's for the good of the community. I'm happy to push for that...'*

SE16 aligned her shifting identity with emergent self-transformation, becoming '*braver*' and '*more confident*' in promoting her social enterprise, asking if anyone '*can do fundraising or knows how to do accounts.*' Central to SE16's account was the need to make a difference to her community, with age as a life stage enabling her to '*financially do it...not having to worry about a mortgage...children at school... university...all of that has gone*'.

LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs drew on the 'unique' evolving nature of their social identities within the social entrepreneurial process. While they identified as Social Value Creators, being an integral part of their individual identity (me), they also recognised how they redefined their self-categorisation, shifting towards more 'hybridised identities' of social and business. This illustrates the fluidity of their social identities, which was not bounded by the process of becoming a social entrepreneur, but more by how they had re-negotiated how they perceived themselves and their self-categorisation. Both SE5 and SE16 rejected incorporating the collective label 'SE' as part of their individual identity since it conflicted with what is central to them, which is to create social value. They described how their social identities shifting nature enabled them to adapt and embrace both business and social logics. When probed about age's role in forming their SEIs, SE5 and SE16 recognised how age enabled them to 'adapt' their mindset, and 'learn as they go' providing the opportunity to make a difference in their communities.

### **Discussion and contribution**

SIT posits that social identities are often shaped through interactions with others (Turner and Oakes, 1989; 1997; Turner and Reynolds, 2010). They are dynamic, shifting over time, depending on the context individuals are embedded in (Stets and Burke, 2000); Nevertheless, SIT'S associated self-categorisation lens focuses on individuals' self-categorisation according to their values, feelings and beliefs, acting in ways consistent with individual identity (Turner

and Reynolds, 2010). SIT and self-categorisation reveal interdependence between self (*I*) and collective self (*We*) (Hogg and Terry, 2000), complementing each other. They capture how LWL SEs perceive their SEIs in relation to others, and define age's role in forming their SEIs.

Elaborating on existing broader SEPs and LWL typologies, three distinct identity types of LWL SEs were found: Strategic Social Business Scalars, Social Value Creators, and Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs (Figure 2). These differed in self-categorisation and interpretation of social identities, influenced by long-term favourable or unfavourable stereotypical beliefs about CEs/SEs affecting SEIs (Menke, 2020). However, positive constructions of age commonly shaped SEIs.

In developing LWL SEs identity types, this paper enhances understanding of over-50s' construction of SEIs and how age reflects a continuous representation of experiences, skills, and knowledge, providing urgency to embrace their SEIs (Figure 2).

[Figure 2]

Applying SIT and its linked self-categorisation lens, this analysis examines dynamic interplays between age and SEIs among over-50s SEs. Recent SEP studies highlight the critical role of identity, largely overlooked in SEP literature (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Hockerts, 2017). Calls are made to advance understandings of how SEs, engaging in entrepreneurial activities because of concerns for known or unknown others (Gruber and MacMillan, 2017), negotiate conflicting dimensions of social and business identities (Driver, 2017; Essers and Benschop, 2007; Howorth *et al.*, 2012; Miller *et al.*, 2012; Pache and Chowdhury, 2012; Pan *et al.*, 2019); and how identity construction shapes social enterprise formation (Elfving, 2013). However, scant attention is paid to understanding how over-50s SEs perceive age's role in constructing SEIs. This study adds a *new perspective* by pinpointing interplays between age and SEIs. It demonstrates that social value creation remains the driving force for LWL SEs, emphasising

concerns for known and unknown others (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011) and comparisons between SEs and their commercial counterparts (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Douglas *et al.*, 2021; Douglas and Prentice, 2019; Ip *et al.*, 2021; Mair and Noboa, 2006).

Different interpretations were evident in how participants considered SEIs. Some demonstrated conflicting social identities, distancing themselves from SEs category since they interpreted this as having a misleading association with profit-driven entrepreneurs. Others embraced hybridised identities of social and business, yet still accepted their *own* definition of being a SE. LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars intertwined social and commercial identities, accommodating both their (individual) self-interest alongside social value creation. They fit the ‘mould’ of Darwinian entrepreneurs, launching ventures for personal (I) economic interest (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Gruber and MacMillan, 2017). However, compared to the *collective* identities of Darwinian entrepreneurs, they underscored the unique interplay between their SEIs and age, representing their commercial acumen, cumulative capital, ethical sensitivity and continuity, giving them urgency to give back to society, time being considered scarce. In contrast, LWL Social Value Creators identified with their social self (concern for known others), driven by strengthening community and giving back, thereby *distancing* themselves from SEs category types since it conflicted with their individual identity. They are similar to Communitarian entrepreneurs whose level of self-concept is personal others (we – community) as described in SEP literature (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Miller *et al.*, 2012). However, while embracing their communitarian identities, they emphasised age as a core ‘frame of reference’, representing a catalyst, and an opportunity to create meaningful legacy by giving back to their communities. LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs experienced shifting mindsets, learning to reconfigure identity types from purely social to embracing hybridised identities, demonstrating the shifting and dynamic nature of their social identities as they

evolved within the social entrepreneurial process. In managing these paradoxical identities, they accounted for age's role in SEI formation, representing their self-awareness of their self-identities and shifting mindset.

SEs salient identities relate to concerns for others, with self-concepts differing from those adopting Darwinian identities, pursuing social and economic self-interests (I), and those pursuing 'community' or 'missionary' identities due to concerns for known (we) and unknown others (society) (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). However, LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs demonstrated complexities of identifying with their social identities. They described how they experienced shifting self-perceptions, redefining their understanding of SEIs, embracing social/commercial hybridised identities. Yet, age remains their core frame of reference, representing self-awareness of skills, learning as they go, and adapting to change, intertwined with making a difference.

SIT argues that social identities are shaped by social interactions, including the affective emotional and value significance attached to social groupings (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). SEs identities are shaped by the embedded social context. Nevertheless, they also tend to act and behave in ways congruent with self-defined meanings (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). This research elaborates SEP by adding a new dimension related to the interplay of age with the construction of LWL SEs SEIs. Participants differed in interpreting SEIs. Some distanced themselves from SEs category, others embraced both social and business identities. However, age intersected with their *private* self-identities, shaping self-image and self-categorisation.

The findings highlight the unique interplay of age and social images of the self. SEs relate age to the personal 'we – community', and impersonal 'we -society', their main frame of reference (Bacq and Alt, 2018; Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Gruber and MacMillan, 2017), and actively

develop this frame themselves through their social entrepreneurial endeavours, nurtured by their age, professional and lifetime experiences. This study provides enhanced understanding of the dynamic interplay of age and SEIs in shaping the over-50s' LWL SEs understandings of who they are. This is key to developing extant conceptual understanding of how LWL SEs dynamically construct and define their age and its role in forming their SEIs.

### **Conclusion and future research directions**

Late career entrepreneurship literature has contributed to understanding how LWL entrepreneurs negotiate transitions from employment or retirement to entrepreneurship, influencing self-perceptions and identity construction (Garzia-Lorenzo *et al.*, 2020). This literature highlights how LWL entrepreneurs, while reconciling identification with certain social identity types, such as active agers, autonomy seekers, and communitarian entrepreneurs, tend to focus on non-monetary objectives, shaping their entrepreneurial identities (Soto-Simeone and Kautonen, 2021). However, there is insufficient research addressing how LWL SEs *per se*, whose main motivation is social value – benefits for unknown others and society at large - construct their SEIs. This study identifies and specifies new SEP identity types, examining how LWL SEs construct these through the interplay between their age and SEIs.

Increasingly, researchers emphasise how identity construction enhances understanding of SEIs, providing useful categorisation of SEs with constructions such as activists, missionaries, and communitarians (Elfving, 2013; Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 2008; Ko and Kim, 2020). Nevertheless, little is known of how LWL SEs construct the interplay between their age and SEIs. Using theory elaboration (Fisher and Aguinis, 2017), this study addresses this knowledge deficit, examining participants' subjective interpretations of being SEs and how age, as a defining construct, intertwined with the construction of their SEIs. In line with extant SEP research on social identity, these findings highlight how the over-50s manage their

contested social and business identities (Essers and Benschop, 2007; Howorth *et al.*, 2012; Miller *et al.*, 2012; Pache and Chowdhury, 2012; Pan *et al.*, 2019). However, unlike other category types identified in SEP literature, this study's three LWL social identity types capture how age shapes LWL SEs self-perceptions. LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars identified with hybridised identities and may fit the collective Darwinian entrepreneurial type. However, we extend this theorisation by demonstrating how their self-categorisation 'I' interplayed with age, seen as reflecting commercial acumen, cumulative capital, ethical sensitivity and continuity identifying with age and SEIs as intertwined. LWL Social Value Creators can be categorised as Communitarian SEs (Fauchart & Gruber, 2011; Miller *et al.*, 2012). Nevertheless, age remained their core frame of reference that catalysed urgency to give back and to create meaningful legacy to solve community problems. LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs demonstrated a shift in their self-image 'I' as they matured within the social entrepreneurial process. They illustrated how they re-negotiated their self-categorisation, evolving from perceiving themselves as purely Social Value Creators to embracing both social and business identities. While the shifting of their SEIs demonstrated the fluidity of their social identities, age remained a core frame of reference, demonstrating self-awareness of its role in learning to adapt their mindset.

This study has extended and added to theory, providing a nuanced understanding of complexities inherent in over-50s SEI construction and how these types of SEs negotiate their identification categories. By disassociating from being solely seen as SEs collective category types, they demonstrate the catalytic interplay between perceptions of age and SEIs. This shows the heterogeneity of SEs and the extent age is a focal determinant in understanding how over-50s construct their SEIs.

This study has theoretical implications for future research. First, the re-specification of the age construct can offer a fruitful avenue in theorising its multifaceted role in informing SEIs,

particularly amongst LWL SEs. Second, using a SIT lens, future research might explore the role of self-identity perceptions in developing SEIs, actions, and behaviours, including different SE age groups, like younger-age SEs. Third, these findings have timely implications for those supporting over-50s back into employment. Emphasis on identity construction, together with tailored support, can help raise awareness of SEP for the three types of LWL SEs. LWL Strategic Social Business Scalars can be supported by government agencies or social impact investors to scale social objectives beyond local communities. LWL Social Value Creators can be supported through access to resources enabling solving more acute community problems. Finally, LWL Syncretic Social Entrepreneurs can be supported through business development centres and training opportunities to sustain their novel solutions to social problems.

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**Table I: Research Participants**

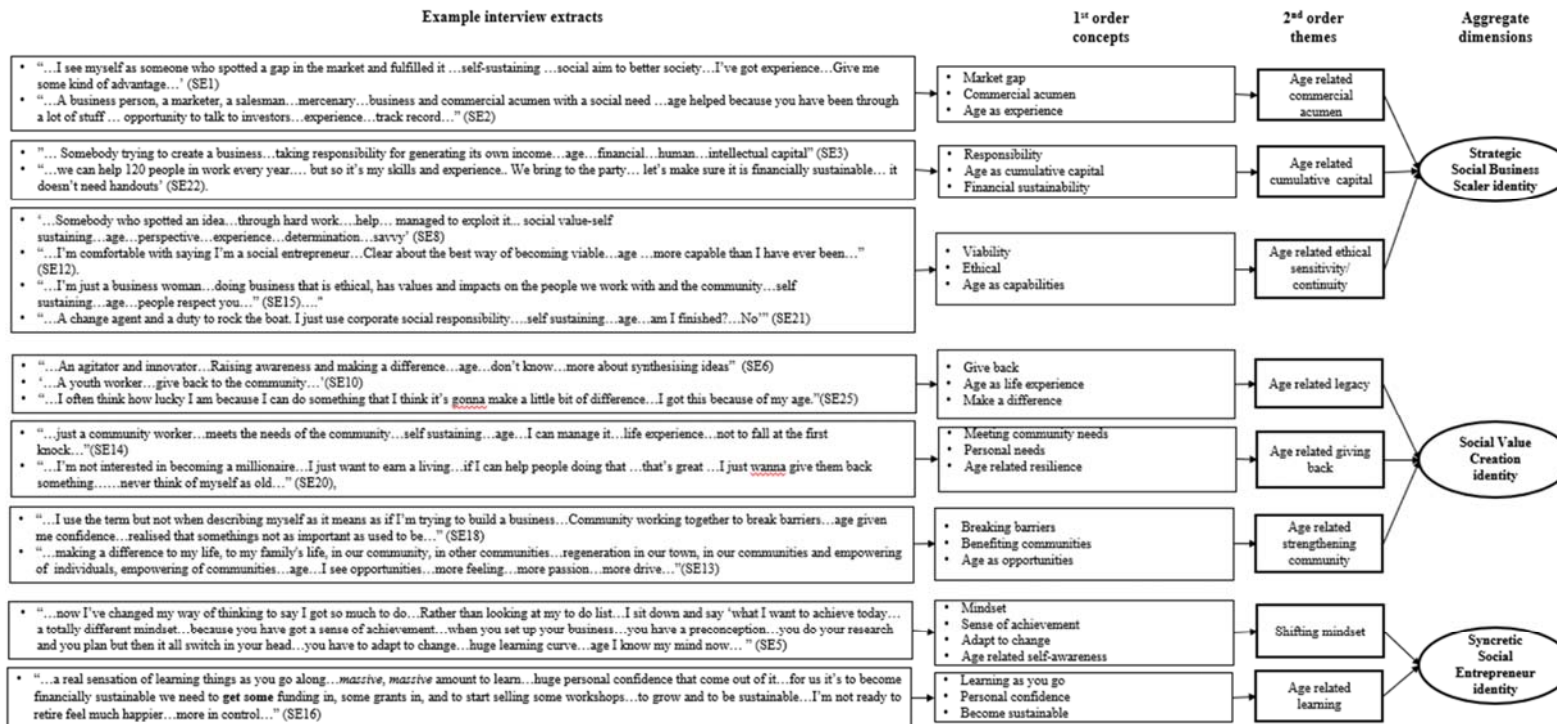
<b>Participant #</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Prior business experience</b>	<b>Prior social enterprise related (and personal) experience</b>	<b>Current social enterprise activity</b>	<b>Current social enterprise aims</b>	<b>Social entrepreneur identity</b>
SE1	M	53	Senior management consultancy (Sales and marketing)/	Volunteering (Own experience of addiction)	Rehabilitation/life coaching for those with addiction	Improving health and social inclusion of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE2	M	54	Prior self-employment in media/ leading role in education recruitment	(Family member affected by dementia)	Recovery digital solution for those with dementia and mental health problems	Improving health and wellbeing of target group through reducing dependency on social care	Strategic social business scaler
SE3	M	53	International management consultancy (for profit and not-for-profit)	Charity experience	Start-up mentoring/ funding for those marginalized/ ex-offenders	Improving social inclusion of disadvantaged youth	Strategic social business scaler
SE4	M	50	Sales and marketing	Charity experience/ sustainability research	Community utility infrastructure/ sustainability	Community cohesion through utility	Strategic social business scaler
SE5	F	50	Human Resources Administration	Volunteering experience (Experience of family member)	Supporting children's emotional development through sign language	Improving children's Emotional intelligence	Syncretic social entrepreneur
SE6	M	53	Horticulture Research/ leading roles in planting	Volunteering experience	Raising awareness of local produce and healthy eating.	Improving health and wellbeing	Social value creator
SE7	F	50	Teaching	Volunteering experience	Cookery classes for those disadvantaged.	Improving employability and social inclusion of those disadvantaged	Social value creator
SE8	M	50	Police Force/ teaching experience		Recycling and a community cafe to help those disadvantaged	Improving social inclusion of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE9	M	54	Police Force	Charity experience	Supporting those at risk or have been	Tackling social inclusion of target group	Strategic social business scaler

Participant #	Gender	Age	Prior business experience	Prior social enterprise related (and personal) experience	Current social enterprise activity	Current social enterprise aims	Social entrepreneur identity
					victims of human trafficking		
SE10	F	54	Public Sector		Arts and crafts youth club tackling anti-social behaviour and social exclusion.	Inclusive arts projects with a particular target group	Social value creator
SE11	M	56	Leading role in Media communication / prior entrepreneurial experience		Elderly care for those with dementia/ suffer from loneliness	Improving wellbeing of target group/ retired recruitment	Strategic social business scaler
SE12	F	55	Public Sector	Previously founded a social enterprise/ volunteering experience	Cookery classes for those disadvantaged	Improving employability/upskilling of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE13	F	55	Community Development/social care	Voluntary experience (own experience of complex health needs)	Cookery classes for those unemployed/ and (or) in poverty	Improving social inclusion of target group	Social value creator
SE14	F	57	Run own business		Food bank and a community training centre for those in need/ ex-offenders	Improving social inclusion in deprived communities	Social value creator
SE15	F	58	Run own business (UK and overseas)		Sewing and upholstery training for women on long-term unemployment or those in probation.	Improving social inclusion of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE16	F	58	Voluntary Sector/intervention therapy long experience		Intervention therapy for families of children with special needs	Improving social inclusion of target group	Syncretic social entrepreneur
SE17	F	58	IT and Computing	Volunteering experience	Bike repair training for those disadvantaged, unemployed or with learning difficulties.	Improving employability and social inclusion of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE18	M	56	Public Sector	Volunteering experience	A community music centre for those at risk of dementia, unemployed and or with mental health problems.	Improving social inclusion of target group	Social value creator

<b>Participant #</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Prior business experience</b>	<b>Prior social enterprise related (and personal) experience</b>	<b>Current social enterprise activity</b>	<b>Current social enterprise aims</b>	<b>Social entrepreneur identity</b>
SE19	M	62	Teaching and composing music	Charity experience	Audio visuals and creative arts for disadvantaged youth	Inclusive arts for those disadvantaged	Strategic social business scaler
SE20	M	61	Sales and Advertising/ self-employment		Local newspaper promoting volunteering and work experience opportunities for those disadvantaged.	Community cohesion through media	Social value creator
SE21	M	60	Social Care	International Volunteering (Own experience of care)	Social Care training to improve outcomes of care for children.	Improving children's care outcomes	Strategic social business scaler
SE22	M	61	Manufacturing/Engineering		Training and upskilling disadvantaged youth	Improving employability of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE23	M	60	Self-employed	(Own experience of addiction)	Rehabilitation programme for those with addiction.	Improving social inclusion of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE24	M	63	Psychotherapy/Horticulture self-employment	Volunteering experience	Horticulture centre to support those with dementia and mental health problems	Improving physical and psychological wellbeing of target group	Strategic social business scaler
SE25	F	64	long term experience in Horticulture/gardening		Outdoor activities for those with dementia/mental health problems	Improving physical and psychological wellbeing of target group	Social value creator
SE26	F	65	Voluntary Sector		Food bank support for families in need.	Improving social inclusion of target group	Social value creator
SE27	F	71	Education Sector	(Experience of family member with complex needs)	Swimming club for children with complex health needs.	Improving social inclusion of target group	Social value creator
SE28	F	74	Public Sector/ self-employment		Career/professional development for disadvantaged youth.	Improving employability of target group	Social value creator

Source: Authors' own work

Figure 1: Data categorisation process (following Gioia *et al.*, 2013)



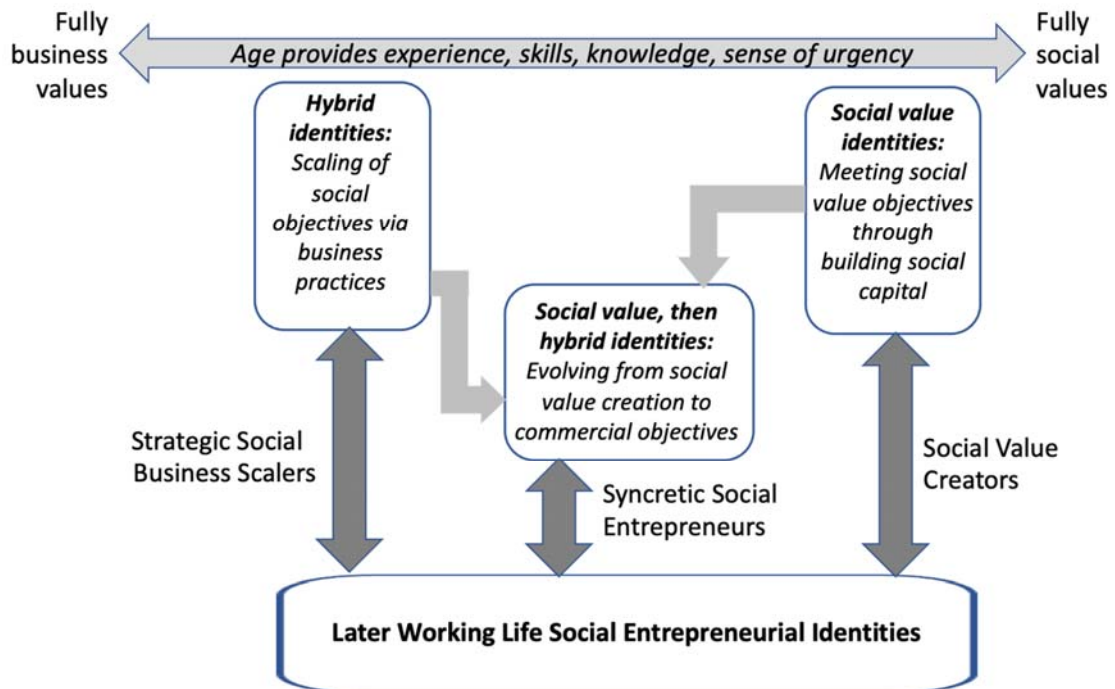
Source: Authors' own work

**Table II: Later Working-Life Social Entrepreneur identity and illustrative self-ascribed meanings of age**

<b>Identity</b>	<b>Self-ascribed meaning of age</b>
<b>Strategic social business scaler</b>	<p>“...obviously the advantages you get with age is experience...if I’m lucky enough to get investment to put in a facilities manager to run this to allow me to go off to do the sales and business development... I can focus on building strategic partnerships with commercial people...‘we will have six times as much revenue I strongly believe, and if we do that, we can help 120 people in work every year. Those sorts of volumes I’m predicting. So, this is what it can do...” (SE22)</p> <p>“...none of us is getting younger... that’s where the difference comes in ...ok we do have to survive and we are trying to make a living. We do need to make a living and if we got families, it needs to be worthwhile, why struggle when you could be doing another job and being ok. Why do this and have to struggle? So, we do need to make a living, but the whole point is to have some social impact and I think what’s being a social entrepreneur is all about...” (SE19)</p> <p>“...I couldn’t have done this when I was 30 or 40...you need experience...we made more of a social enterprise than charity, seeking to have some sort of sustainability in it rather than continually needing to go and look for funds and supporters...this is a new model for charities. That is what they should be doing. Running like businesses, operating like businesses, trying to make a profit but then redistributing the profit into good causes rather than into the pockets of shareholders...” (SE3)</p>
<b>Social value creator</b>	<p>“...age...maybe energy and stamina that a young person would have ...it’s best to call us mature people rather than old...I don’t expect to make money out of this...I’m someone trying to make good in the community...” (SE28)</p> <p>“...Not at all, I don’t feel 72...personal salary...it wouldn’t work...not what I’m after...I only wanted money for the club...” (SE27)</p> <p>“...I think there is a level of trust in someone who’s mature...being at the heart of the community. Just making sure that you know what’s going on and everybody knows that we’re here. When we get people who say we didn’t know you were here, we get quite upset, how didn’t you know we are here? [Laughter]...” (SE14)</p>
<b>Syncretic social entrepreneur</b>	<p>“...the big thing with age is that financially I can do it...you kind of change completely. You get a bit mercenary and you don’t...actually, this is the good thing about social enterprise. If it was a business, I don’t think I could be pushy. So because I know it’s a bloody good cause. Because I’m not making a profit for me, ideally yes as yet it hasn’t. I think if it is for the good of the community, I’m happy to push for that.” (SE16)</p> <p>“... As an adult, I always have been and I think having to push myself into strangers has been difficult. You know, just to stand out in the corner [laughing] shoving my nose, it doesn’t do anybody good. You have to take deep breath and then go in ‘ha ha ha’. So, yeah, yeah pushing myself...people that are pushy and they are very arrogant sometimes, I don’t want to become that but sometimes you’ve gotta to go in and say, ‘this is what I do’. So, I find that hard pushing myself forward and realising that my time is worth the money and realising that my expertise is worth that money. I can’t volunteer anymore. I’ve got that head on. I’m actually a business-woman and I need to ... my children’s and my family’s. You know this affects them so I need to make some money out of this. It’s hard because you don’t get back in the early days what you put in. Emotionally, positive thing to do. Financially, I don’t but then again who knows where I’d be in a year’s time ...” (SE5)</p>

Source: Authors’ own work

**Figure 2: Later-working-life social entrepreneurial identities: A dynamic self-categorisation theoretical framework**



Source: Authors' own work