

Entrepreneurship in Klarendal

A qualitative study on neighbourhood liveability and social value creation in Arnhem



Source: Own picture

Robert Blankvoort (s1124760)

Master thesis

Supervisor: R.G. van Melik

Second reader: H.G. Pettit

Date: 06-07-2025

Abstract

This thesis explores how local entrepreneurs contribute to social value creation through liveability in the residential neighbourhood of Klarendal, Arnhem. Since the development of the Modekwartier, entrepreneurs have become a central part of the strategy to improve neighbourhood liveability. This thesis is in collaboration with housing corporation Volkshuisvesting Arnhem (VHV), which owns the majority of both social housing and commercial properties in Klarendal. This research investigates the extent to which entrepreneurs contribute to liveability, how they perceive the concept, and which characteristics underlie these contributions.

Based on semi-structured interviews with 20 respondents, this qualitative study reveals that entrepreneurs contribute to liveability through three interconnected practices: everyday presence and small gestures, enhancing public quality and atmosphere, and community-oriented initiatives. In doing so, they adopt roles as good neighbours, attractors, and social connectors. These contributions are not self-evident but depend on financial stability, a sense of responsibility, and foundational conditions provided by institutions such as VHV and the municipality. The findings show that social value creation is grounded in local embeddedness, shared ownership of the environment, and a collective commitment to neighbourhood identity. In Klarendal, it is not the type of business that matters most, but the connection with their environment, because besides being an entrepreneur, they are residents during the day too.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	6
1.1 Introduction	6
1.2 Research objective and questions.....	7
1.3 Relevance	8
1.3.1 Societal relevance.....	8
1.3.2 Scientific relevance	9
1.4 Reading guide.....	10
2. Literature review	11
2.1 Local social value creation	11
2.2 Liveability	12
2.2.1 Definition	12
2.2.2 Mixed use	12
2.2.3 Housing corporation views.....	13
2.3 Entrepreneurs	14
2.3.1 Social vs. commercial entrepreneurs.....	14
2.3.2 Drivers of social entrepreneurial behaviour	15
2.3.3 Actions and practices of social value creation	16
2.3.4 Entrepreneurial characteristics	17
2.4 Conceptual framework	18
3. Methodology and ethics	18
3.1 Case study of Klarendal	18
3.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	20
3.3 Avoiding desirable questions and research fatigue.....	24
3.4 Ethical considerations	26

3.5 Analytical framework	27
4. Klarendal as a context	27
4.1 A short history on decline and resilience.....	28
4.2 The creation and the role of the Modekwartier	28
4.3 Friction and connection: residents and entrepreneurs	30
4.4 Social dynamics and neighbourhood identity	31
4.5 Remaining challenges and persistent stigma.....	32
4.6 Conclusion.....	34
5. Results	34
5.1 Perceptions of liveability.....	35
5.1.1 Clean, whole, safe, and social	35
5.1.2 Comparing institutional and entrepreneurial perceptions of liveability.....	37
5.2 Entrepreneurial practices that contribute to liveability	38
5.2.1 Everyday presence and small gestures	39
5.2.2 Reinforcing public quality and atmosphere	39
5.2.3 Community-oriented practices	40
5.3 Entrepreneurial characteristics	42
5.3.1 Personal characteristics	42
5.3.2 Business characteristics.....	43
5.3.3 Entrepreneurial motivations	45
5.3.4 Entrepreneurial roles within the neighbourhood.....	46
5.4 Synthesis.....	48
6. Conclusion and discussion	50
6.1 Answer tot he main research question.....	50
6.2 Conditions for local social value creation	52
6.3 Theoretical reflection	53
6.4 Limitations	55

6.5 Concluding statement	56
7. Recommendations	56
8. References	57
Appendices	62
Appendix 1: Respondent overview	62
Appendix 2: Interview guide.....	63

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Klarendal is a popular neighbourhood in Arnhem known for its strong social cohesion, troubled past, and distinct local identity. Over the past two decades, the neighbourhood has undergone a transformation through the development of the Modekwartier. This urban renewal project aimed to revitalise the area surrounding the two main commercial axes in Klarendal by investing in commercial properties to stimulate creative entrepreneurship and contribute to the liveability. Local entrepreneurs have since become key actors in shaping the social and spatial dynamics of the neighbourhood

Since 2015, the housing act of the Netherlands stated that housing corporations are not allowed to develop or invest in new commercial property (Rijksoverheid, 2024). The commercial property that housing corporations own at that time remains theirs to develop. This raises the question for many housing corporations on what to do with the commercial property that they have in their possession. The primary task of housing corporations in the Netherlands is to provide housing, which is why they are not allowed to invest in new commercial properties anymore. A second task most housing corporations have is to ensure neighbourhood liveability, which improves housing conditions, and on the long term the property value.

What is interesting is the unique position of the housing corporation Volkshuisvesting Arnhem (hereafter: VHV) in Klarendal, a residential neighbourhood in Arnhem. VHV is the biggest housing corporation in Arnhem and owns the majority of the social housing in Klarendal, where 53% of the housing is in corporate ownership (AlleCijfers.nl, 2025). This gives them a sort of monopoly in the neighbourhood. In addition, they own commercial properties in Klarendal that they rent out to entrepreneurs, which puts them in a position to practice their second task: ensuring liveability (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025). VHV utilises the entrepreneurs in their commercial property as a means to safeguard and contribute to the liveability. However, ensuring liveability is an investment that does not lead to immediate financial profit for housing corporations.

During the development of the Modekwartier in Klarendal in 2006, entrepreneurs were strategically utilised to enhance the social value in the neighbourhood. But if, how, and why do local entrepreneurs currently contribute to liveability and local social value creation within the neighbourhood? What role do they play in safeguarding these qualities today? In this research, local entrepreneurs are defined as those who have established their business within Klarendal,

and local social value creation will be defined as the following: The contribution of local entrepreneurs that create short-, intermediate or long term non-financial impacts that serve the local community by resolving social issues, problems and satisfying needs. Within this definition, the local community is not only limited to the residents of Klarendal, but includes everyone who lives, works, or recreates in and around Klarendal that benefits from the social value. Lastly, in this research, liveability from a residential perspective is defined as healthy and comfortable living environment. However, an understanding of the term liveability needs to be approached from the perspective of the people that live or work in the environment (Leby and Hashim, 2010).

1.2 Research objective and questions

The objective of this research is to gain insight into the local social value creation of local entrepreneurs located in commercial properties of housing corporations in the residential neighbourhood Klarendal. In this research, the local social value creation is measured through contributions to the liveability, as it aligns with the goals of VHV and offers a more measurable and tangible framework. VHV has the goal of improving liveability through entrepreneurs, and this research is designed to understand how successful that is and what some of the conditions are.

This research explores whether, how, and why entrepreneurs contribute to the liveability of the neighbourhood. In doing so, it provides insight into the entrepreneurial characteristics and actions that help safeguard a pleasant living environment in Klarendal. The findings enable housing corporations to develop neighbourhood-specific and socially oriented strategies for their commercial properties, tailored to the local context of the neighbourhood.

The following research question is formulated to structure and guide the research: To what extent do local entrepreneurs in the residential neighbourhood of Klarendal contribute to social value creation, as expressed through neighbourhood liveability?

In addition, three sub-questions have been formulated to help answer the research question and to further structure the research. The first sub-question is as follows: (1) What are views of local entrepreneurs on liveability in Klarendal? This sub-question explores how entrepreneurs perceive liveability and how they believe they contribute to it. Leby and Hashim (2010) state that an understanding of the term liveability needs to be approached from the perspective of the people that live or work in the environment. It also examines whether the understanding of liveability among the entrepreneurs and VHV align. Understanding the perspective from a wide range of entrepreneurs reveals what they find important and what

should be taken into account to safeguard and strengthen the liveability of the neighbourhood.

The second sub-question is: (2) How do local entrepreneurs contribute to the liveability in Klarendal? This sub-question explores which direct and indirect actions entrepreneurs perform to safeguard and strengthen the liveability of the residential neighbourhood. It considers how these actions reflect their own understanding of liveability and whether they can be generalised or are specific to the local context.

The final sub-question is: (3) What entrepreneurial characteristics contribute to local social value creation? This sub-question explores both personal traits, such as motivation, values, engagement, and business-related aspects, such as opening hours, reach, and type of clientele. This sub-question identifies which characteristics, both personal and operational, support socially engaged behaviour and benefit the liveability.

1.3 Relevance

1.3.1 Societal relevance

Klarendal has been a problematic neighbourhood in the past, dealing with deterioration in the 70's, riots in the 80's, criminality, drugs nuisance, vacancy, bad public spaces, and multiple failed attempts for renewal (Van Melik et al., 2018). During the last 20 years, Klarendal has risen from the ashes and went through a massive transformation, partly with the development of the Modekwartier (Lagendijk, 2018). VHV feels responsible for the liveability of the neighbourhood due to the high amount of housing they own in Klarendal. VHV is in a unique position where they are able to invest in the social value of Klarendal through local entrepreneurs located in their commercial properties. Instead of selling their commercial properties to developers that develop expensive apartments, they choose to rent them with to local entrepreneurs to create more liveliness. To keep doing this in the future, they need to know how these local entrepreneurs create local social value and how it increases the liveability of Klarendal. This allows VHV to create future strategies regarding their commercial properties to ensure the liveability of Klarendal.

Opposed to financial value, housing corporations need to gain insight into the social value creation of local entrepreneurs located in their commercial properties. This allows the housing corporation to justify practicing their second task: increasing liveability. Furthermore, this prevents gentrification and homogenisation of the neighbourhood. If the social value of these small businesses is clear, housing corporations have more reason to keep investing in them instead of redeveloping. There is no financial incentive, merely the social interest of

housing corporations to ensure the living conditions of the areas where they own property. This requires a medium-long term perspective, instead of a short-term perspective that is focussed on profit maximalisation.

This research will uncover the social value creation by local entrepreneurs, which includes direct and indirect practices of social value creation, entrepreneurial characteristics, and their perceptions of liveability. Additionally, this research will show how this social value increases the liveability of Klarendal. Hereby, recommendations for housing corporations can be made on future strategies regarding their commercial properties. This helps housing corporations understand the important role entrepreneurs play in residential neighbourhoods. In addition, this research has been requested by VHV itself, which expresses their need for research on this topic. This research is not just relevant to VHV, but to all housing corporations with the ambition to invest in the liveability of neighbourhoods.

1.3.2 Scientific relevance

Although the social value of entrepreneurship has gained increasing attention in the literature (Austin et al., 2006; Zahra and Wright, 2016), most research focuses on either social enterprises or NGO's. However, less is known about how small scale entrepreneurs in everyday neighbourhood contexts contribute to social value, especially those within the institutional frameworks of housing corporations. This research addresses that gap by examining Klarendal, a unique case where entrepreneurs are not only local actors, but are also part of a strategic liveability policy of a housing corporation.

Within local social value creation there are direct and indirect forms as practiced by entrepreneurs. Direct forms lead to local social value through material contributions, such as cash donations, free goods and services and sponsorships (De Beer, 2018). Indirect ways include boosting the local environment's image or through local business cooperations. The presence of 'good' entrepreneurs means the absence of vacancy and 'bad' or 'unwanted' business, such as massage salons or phone shops that are prone to undermining according to VHV, who have experience with these situations. Local firms may also become local meeting places, which stimulates social interaction (Schutjens and Völker, 2010).

Lepoutre and Heene (2006) distinguish four drivers for social entrepreneurial behaviour. The four drivers are personal characteristics of the entrepreneur, organisational characteristics, contextual drivers and local issue characteristics. Recent work by De Beer (2018) adds to this by introducing the importance of local social networks as a key factor in social entrepreneurship. Building on this, this research aims to gain more insight into how institutions

such as housing corporations may be another enabling factor for social entrepreneurship for local entrepreneurs.

While this research builds on the work of De Beer (2018), who investigated local social value creation by entrepreneurs in residential neighbourhoods, it distinguishes itself by focusing on a single case in which housing corporations actively shape entrepreneurship in the neighbourhood through property ownership and selection mechanisms. This makes Klarendal a unique context to study how institutional structures and entrepreneurial characteristics interact in shaping neighbourhood liveability.

Within the current debate, there is little empirical research on the group of entrepreneurs located in residential neighbourhoods who may be socially engaged (Korsgaard and Anderson, 2011). This research is going to fill this gap in the literature. The target group of this research is local entrepreneurs located in commercial properties of housing corporations in the residential neighbourhood Klarendal in Arnhem. Due to the small size of these entrepreneurial businesses, this research follows the theory of Boluk and Mottiar (2014) that every form of entrepreneurship entails in social value creation. Therefore, this research does not primarily focus on either social or traditional entrepreneurs, but on the locality of entrepreneurs in a residential neighbourhood.

Additionally, this research seeks to investigate how social value creation by local entrepreneurs affects the liveability of the Klarendal. Small local entrepreneurs often do not have the capacity or resources to address local issues or add social value (Omoredede, 2014). This may reveal an important position and new dimensions for the role of housing corporations within social value creation. Furthermore, this research expands on the existing empirical literature on Klarendal, consisting of literature from De Haan (2022), Van Melik et al. (2018), Gourzis (2014), Lagendijk (2018), Friesenecker and Lagendijk (2018).

1.4 Reading guide

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, questions and relevance. Chapter 2 presents the literature review, elaborating on key concepts within this research. Chapter 3 elaborates on the methodology, including the case study approach, interview strategy, analytical framework and some ethical considerations. Chapter 4 provides context on Klarendal, covering its history, urban development, and social dynamics. Chapter 5 presents the results of the interviews and the thematic analysis based on the sub-questions. Chapter 6 concludes the findings, answers the main research question, discusses theoretical implications, and addresses the limitations of this research. Finally, chapter 7 offers

recommendations for VHV, other housing corporations, municipalities and entrepreneurs regarding liveability and commercial property strategy.

2. Literature review

2.1 Local social value creation

Currently, there is a debate on the social value of entrepreneurship to society (Austin et al., 2006; Zahra and Wright, 2016). In the literature, social value creation is intertwined with entrepreneurship, as the definition of social value creation is often seen as the mission of social entrepreneurship (Austin et al., 2006; Lorenzo-Afable et al., 2023). Social entrepreneurship is entrepreneurial behaviour with an embedded social purpose (Austin et al., 2006). This can be practiced by all entrepreneurs. However, there is a distinction between social entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurs, which will be further elaborated in chapter 2.3.1.

Social value can be referred to as non-financial impacts by organisations, including the wellbeing of individuals and communities, social capital and the environment, which are often difficult to quantify and measure (Mulgan, 2010). Therefore, compared to economic value, social value creation remains what Korsgaard and Anderson (2011) describe as a conceptual black box; significant but not understood. Khan et al. (2021) describe social value creation as the outcome of social entrepreneurship that creates short-term, intermediate or long-term impacts and brings about outcomes in the form of social change while resolving social issues, problems and satisfying needs. This definition adds clarity to the black box, focusing on concrete contributions over time. A broader perspective is given by De Beer (2018), who sees social value creation as the social contribution of entrepreneurs to society.

Additionally, De Beer (2018) brings a new perspective to social value creation in her research by focusing on a residential neighbourhood, creating the term local social value creation. When scaled down to the neighbourhood level, social value creation becomes more concrete and reveals new dynamics that differ from mission-driven NGO's and formal CSR-strategies. As De Beer (2018) shows, local entrepreneurs do not contribute to their environment through structured programmes, but through an embeddedness in community life. At this level, social value becomes relational, often expressed through visibility, contact with neighbours and informal support. In addition, De Beer (2018) emphasises that local entrepreneurs often do not articulate their actions as creating social value, but their embeddedness in the neighbourhood ensures that their practices shape the local social fabric. This reveals that on a neighbourhood level, social value is less about intention and more about position and participation.

This research is a case study of the residential neighbourhood of Klarendal. The following definition of local social value creation will be used in this research, as a combination

of the abovementioned aspects: The contribution of local entrepreneurs that create short-, intermediate or long term non-financial impacts that serve the local community by resolving social issues, problems and satisfying needs. Within this definition, the local community is not only limited to the residents of Klarendal, but includes everyone who lives, works, or recreates in and around Klarendal that benefits from the social value. In fact, a study by Brieger et al. (2020) reveals that entrepreneurs report higher job satisfaction when they believe their organisation creates social value. This leads to believe that social value creation has a wider impact than just the residents.

According to Lorenzo-Afable et al. (2023), the outcome of social value creation is social impact. However, the concept of social impact is not elaborated beyond describing it as social change and improved quality of life. An improved quality of life, satisfying local needs or resolving social issues in a neighbourhood perspective can be compared to liveability aspects such as social contact, engagement, safety, and social cohesion.

2.2 Liveability

2.2.1 Definition

Liveability is a term with varying definitions, as the meaning of liveability depends on the object of measurement. Van Dorst (2011) defines liveability as the quality of the match between people and their living environment. Another definition is that liveability encompasses all of the characteristics of urban environments that make them attractive places to live (Throsby, 2005). Due to their approach on measuring liveability from an urban neighbourhood perspective, this research follows the concept of liveability as described by Leby and Hashim (2010) as creating a healthy and comfortable living environment. They state that an understanding of the term liveability needs to be approached from the perspective of the people that live or work in the environment.

In their research, Leby and Hashim (2010) distil four indicators on which liveability issues in urban neighbourhoods can be measured: social, physical, functional and safety. Social indicators focus mainly on the elements of community life and social contact. Physical indicators focus on how physical spaces have positive or negative impact on people's perception and feeling, such as green spaces, pollution, litter, noisiness, and building maintenance (Leby and Hashim, 2010). Functional indicators measure how a good location of communication systems, shops, schools and other services function and how it leads to more well-being. Finally, safety and crime indicators reflect on the fact that all people desire to live in a safe

neighbourhood without crime. They measure the neighbourhood's safety level based on frequency of crime, incidents, and subjective safety (Leby and Hashim, 2010).

This research builds on the theory of Leby and Hashim (2010) that liveability should be approached from the perspective of the people that live or work in the neighbourhood. This research will create a neighbourhood specific definition of liveability, built from the perceptions of the concept by local entrepreneurs. Indicators stated by Leby and Hashim (2010) such as safety, physical, functional, and social will be the starting point for this research.

2.2.2 Mixed use

Housing corporations and municipalities have previously used local entrepreneurship to enhance neighbourhood liveability. In the Van der Pekbuurt in Amsterdam Noord, housing corporation Ymere invested in the commercial property to attract entrepreneurs and to counter decline. According to a report by RIGO (2017), these relatively modest investments led to measurable improvements in liveability, including increased safety, stronger social cohesion, and engagement. Importantly, the presence of entrepreneurs attracted other entrepreneurs and visitors, strengthening the liveliness. The study also found a positive effect of the investments in the local economy on the living pleasure of residents (RIGO Research en advies, 2017). This case illustrates that entrepreneurship can be a cost-effective tool for increasing liveability.

Mixed use remains an important theme within urban planning and development. A mixed-use of housing and commerce is said to contribute to urban vitality (Gehl et al., 2006; Jacobs, 1961). The diversification of residents and pedestrians provides a natural surveillance, which enhances street safety and vitality (Gehl., 2006; Jacobs, 1961). Additionally, Gehl et al. (2006) states how the visual quality of the plinth is an important factor for the experience of the pedestrian. Mixed-use creates life, due to the continuous flow of people at different times.

A report by Pols et al. (2009) shows a strong correlation between mixed-use areas and an increase in liveability according to the 'Leefbaarometer', a Dutch tool to measure liveability. However, Harbers et al. (2024) argue that this correlation is dependent on the type of commerce and the grit size of the mix. A mixed use between housing, commerce and facilities is strongly recommended for new developments, as stated by the European commission and the state (European Commission, 2016; Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2018). This shows that the present mix of housing and commerce needs to be nurtured.

2.2.3 Housing corporation views

The link between mixed use and liveability is also noted by housing corporations. Vivare and VHV, both housing corporations with property within Arnhem, noted that more and more neighbourhoods are under pressure in terms of liveability. In their vision and strategy for commercial property document (Vivare, 2023), Vivare sees positive influences on the liveability of neighbourhoods when a social initiative or a socially-oriented entrepreneur can set up shop there, which is why Vivare plans to retain their commercial property. Even in neighbourhoods with a relatively high proportion of social housing, retaining these small-scale properties can add to the resilience of the neighbourhood. For instance, in the form of community rooms or places where residents from the neighbourhood do business. In relatively more vulnerable neighbourhoods, Vivare sees risks in disposing of commercial property. The visual quality and impact on the neighbourhood of a building with a bad tenant has a negative influence. This is a reason for them to retain control, especially in less resilient neighbourhoods (Vivare, 2023).

In their renewed business plan, the primary goal of VHV is to create vital neighbourhoods, of which liveability is a core factor. The business plan defines vital neighbourhood as a place with a clean, whole and safe living environment, suitable housing, where you can grow up healthy, where you meet your neighbours, help each other, and where you can resiliently move with social developments (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025). As seen in the definition of a vital neighbourhood, liveability consists of three factors: clean, whole, safe. Their ambitions regarding liveability are to stimulate liveability projects that contribute to a clean, whole, and safe living environment, to address nuisance and undermining, and to support neighbourhood initiatives (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025). VHV utilises their commercial property as a means to achieve the goal of increasing the liveability.

2.3 Entrepreneurs

2.3.1 Social vs. commercial entrepreneurs

In the literature, social value creation is often related to social entrepreneurship. Within the debate on social value creation, a distinction is made between commercial entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs. The purpose of social entrepreneurship is creating social value for the public good, whereas commercial entrepreneurship aims at creating profitable operations resulting in private gain (Korsgaard and Anderson, 2011). Entrepreneurs are considered social when social value creation is specifically mentioned in their business plan (Austin et al., 2006;

Zahra et al., 2009). This can be in the form of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR refers to a company's effort, investment and activities aimed to improve relations with stakeholders such as customers, investors and communities (Zahra and Wright, 2015). However, while the primary goal of a commercial entrepreneur is to make profit, this does not mean that they cannot contribute to social value creation. According to Austin et al. (2006), the central driver for social entrepreneurship is the social problem being addressed, and that it is irrelevant which organisational form it takes. It has been argued that every form of entrepreneurship, both social and commercial, entails in social value creation (Boluk and Mottiar, 2014; Korsgaard and Anderson, 2011). This means that social entrepreneurship or social entrepreneurial behaviour can be practiced by both social and commercial entrepreneurs.

Building upon the theory of Boluk and Mottiar (2014) and Korsgaard and Anderson (2011) that both social and traditional entrepreneurs engage in social value creation, the focus of this research is not on either social or commercial entrepreneurs. This research focusses on local entrepreneurs in commercial property of housing corporations within the residential neighbourhood Klarendal, both social and commercial. On top of this, due to the relatively small size of the shops in Klarendal, a presumption can be made that these entrepreneurial businesses are relatively small and therefore do not have a CSR-strategy. Due to these abovementioned reasons, no particular focus on type of entrepreneur has been made and the focus remains on the location, hence the name 'local' entrepreneurs.

2.3.2 Drivers of social entrepreneurial behaviour

The motivations behind the engagement of entrepreneurs in social entrepreneurship have been widely discussed in the literature. The four drivers for social entrepreneurial behaviour, as stated by Lepoutre and Heene (2006), form a strong basis within this debate. The four drivers are personal characteristics of the entrepreneur, organisational characteristics, contextual drivers and local issue characteristics. First the personality drivers consider the entrepreneurs' personality and their personal beliefs. According to the model of Mair and Noboa (2006: 126), these personality drivers consist of four aspects: empathy, moral judgement, self-efficacy and social support. In addition, there are personality traits that may be important drivers of local social behaviour, such as risk-taking, pro-activity and innovativeness (Zahra and Wright, 2016).

The organisational drivers refer to firm characteristics, such as the firm's business sector and the firm's role within its value chain (Campin et al., 2013). The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes are an important factor in this. CSR refers to a company's

efforts, investment and activities aimed to improve relations with communities (Zahra and Wright, 2016). A study by Kechiche and Soparnot (2012) shows that small-sized firms are less likely to have a CSR strategy because of the perceived costs and their limited resource availability. Therefore, they are only willing to contribute to social value creation when they can obtain firm benefits (Santana, 2015).

Contextual drivers shape and are shaped by entrepreneurs (De Beer, 2018). These contexts can be divided into economic, institutional, and social contexts (Lepoutre and Heene (2006). Economic context can be the general welfare level or level of unemployment, which may lead to the need of social value creation or social change (Lepoutre and Heene, 2006). Examples of institutional context are governmental practices and initiatives. The social contextual factors may be the most influential for local entrepreneurs, because they are formed by the social relationships a firm has. Research by Bosma et al. (2016) found out that communities with high levels of efficacy and cohesion may stimulate social entrepreneurship, but a lack of community action can also lead to the development of social entrepreneurship initiatives.

Finally, social issues can be drivers for social value creation. Social problems can range from issues at a local level, such as litter or vandalism, to broader societal issues, such as structural unemployment or poverty (Trivedi and Stokols, 2011: 25). While small entrepreneurs have less resources and a limited capacity to address local social issues, they may be more alert to specific problems as they draw from their own personal experiences with those issues (Omoredede, 2014). This can be a cause of the argument made by Kechiche and Soparnot (2012) that small-sized firms are less likely to have a CSR strategy because of the perceived costs and their limited resource availability.

De Beer (2018) argues that there is a fifth important driver of social entrepreneurial behaviour, the local social network. She argues that due to a local presence, local entrepreneurs are able to build strong local relationships with residents and other entrepreneurs, which forms an additional driver of their local social value creation (De Beer, 2018). This perspective is specifically for research on local entrepreneurs in residential neighbourhoods.

2.3.3 Actions and practices of social value creation

Within local social value creation there are direct and indirect forms as practiced by entrepreneurs. Direct forms lead to local social value through material contributions, such as cash donations, free goods and services and sponsorships (De Beer, 2018). Direct actions can also be initiatives that visibly improve the liveability of a neighbourhood. These include

maintaining or sponsoring greenery near the storefront, improving the appearance of business facades, supporting neighbourhood events, and offering their premises as venues for community activities (Lloyd et al., 2016; Szibbo, 2016). In addition, entrepreneurs may invest in lighting or decoration of nearby public space, facilitate safe and inclusive customer environments, and promote walkability by making shopfronts more accessible (Mouratidis et al., 2021). Such actions are concrete, often low-threshold, and embedded in the local context, making them particularly valuable in disadvantaged areas (Bernt & Holm, 2005).

Indirect forms of social value creation refer to entrepreneurial practices with no direct social goals, but strengthen the social value anyway. Local firms may also become local meeting places, which stimulates social interaction (Schutjens & Völker, 2009). As Jane Jacobs (1961) argued, a diversity of small businesses creates constant street-level activity, which enhances natural surveillance and promotes a sense of safety and vitality, which are phenomena she refers to as “eyes on the street.” This everyday presence contributes to the social cohesion and attractiveness of neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, entrepreneurs who actively collaborate with one another can reduce fragmentation and reinforce the collective image of a neighbourhood, indirectly fostering liveability (Schutjens & Völker, 2009). Brieger et al. (2020) note that entrepreneurs who believe in creating social value are more likely to adopt socially engaged behaviour, which may translate into improved neighbourhood image, inclusivity, and perception of quality of life. These indirect investments may not always be material or visible, but they contribute to a sense of liveability that is essential for resilient and connected urban communities.

2.3.4 Entrepreneurial characteristics

Entrepreneurs who contribute to local social value often have personal traits that support social goals. Brieger and De Clercq (2018) show that entrepreneurs with strong human and social capital, such as education, community ties and access to resources, are more likely to focus on social value creation. Traits like self-confidence, initiative, risk-taking and responsibility also play an important role. Jarboui and Chikha (2018) found these traits to be reliable predictors of social entrepreneurial intention. Similarly, Pandey, Uprety and Risal (2023) found that personality traits such as being helpful, open to new ideas and organised are linked to stronger interest in social entrepreneurship. Mouratidis et al. (2021) highlight that conscientious entrepreneurs who are active in their community are more likely to invest in visible improvements that help make neighbourhoods more welcoming and liveable.

However, the roles that entrepreneurs take on within the neighbourhood may be even

more important than their personality. Schutjens and Völker (2009) describe how local entrepreneurs often act as informal meeting points, where residents interact and build social ties. Lloyd, Fullagar and Reid (2016) explain that small businesses can function as “anchor points” in daily life, offering not only goods but also emotional support, advice and opportunities for spontaneous encounters. Sharp and Flora (1999) use the term entrepreneurial social infrastructure to describe how small local firms help shape neighbourhood resilience and collective initiatives. Westlund and Bolton (2003) add that entrepreneurs can serve as connectors of social capital by linking residents, organisations and local actors through their daily presence.

In addition, shops and small businesses can be seen as part of the social infrastructure of residential areas. Latham and Layton (2021) argue that those places, such as cafés, bakeries and neighbourhood shops, are essential for creating opportunities for people to meet, experience a sense of community and feel included. These places play an important role in reducing loneliness and encouraging public life across different social groups. Even though their main function is economic, their social role is equally important in promoting liveability and community cohesion.

2.4 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework (figure 1) has been made to summarize the abovementioned theory in the literature review. In the conceptual framework can be seen how the contribution of the entrepreneur to liveability is based on their characteristics, their actions and practices, and their perception of liveability. Safeguarding or contributing to liveability is the way through which entrepreneurs can create local social value within the residential neighbourhood context.

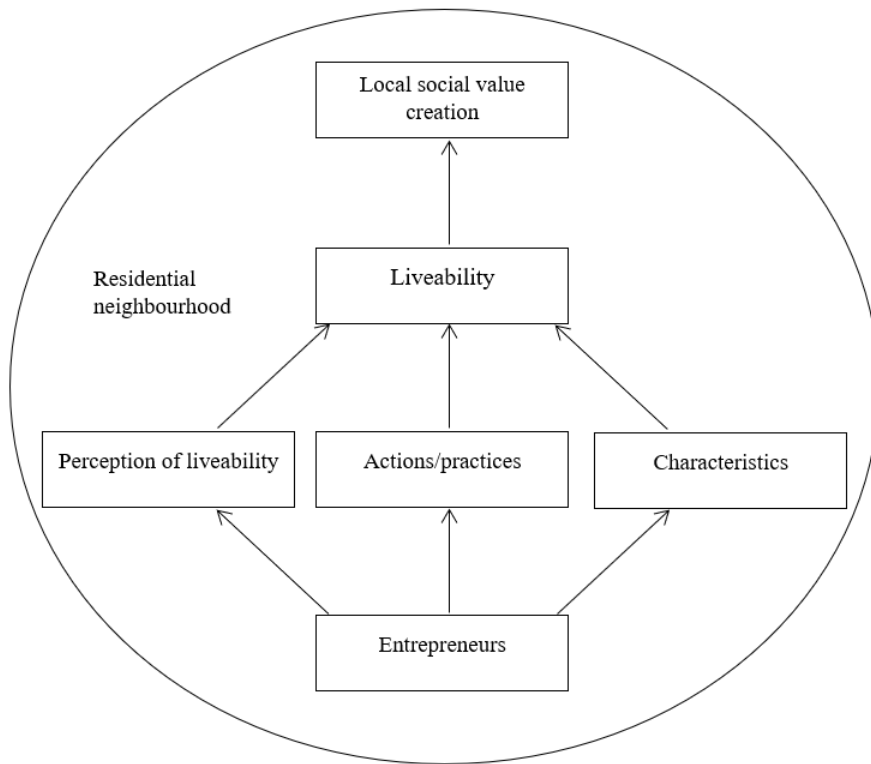


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

3. Methodology and ethics

3.1 Case study of Klarendal

This research approached the concept of local social value creation by local entrepreneurs, using Klarendal in Arnhem as case study based on 15 interviews with 20 respondents. The 20 respondents consist of 14 local entrepreneurs, 2 VHV employees, an employee of the municipality of Arnhem, the chair of the business association, a resident and a former employee of VHV. An overview of respondents can be found in Appendix 1.

This research has been carried out with help of VHV, which is why the case study is focused on a neighbourhood where VHV owns a majority of the property, as seen in figure 2. Therefore, the social value creation of local entrepreneurs directly benefits their property.

Besides being beneficial for VHV, Klarendal was a suited neighbourhood to conduct this research, as it is a residential neighbourhood, it is home to many entrepreneurs, and it has gone through a massive transformation with the development of the Modekwartier. Additionally, as noted in the business plan of VHV (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025), Klarendal is one of the neighbourhoods where the liveability is under pressure. The high amount of corporation property allows housing corporations to exert influence on the situation in Klarendal, meaning that they can safeguard the liveability needs. Furthermore, Klarendal is a residential neighbourhood, which allows this research to fill the empirical research gap as stated in the scientific relevance. Further information on the dynamics and relevant history of Klarendal will be discussed in chapter 4.

In Klarendal, there are currently 77 commercial shops, of which 60 are properties of VHV (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025). The interviewed entrepreneurs in this research form a selection of 14 out of these 77. Instead of researching entrepreneurs through the entirety of Klarendal, this research is concentrated on 2 commercial axes in Klarendal: the Sonsbeeksingel and the Klarendalseweg. The Hommelseweg is also a commercial axis and forms the border between Klarendal and Sint Marten. However, due to the connectedness of the Hommelseweg to Sint Marten and the city centre, entrepreneurs from this street are not included in this research, as they are too disconnected from Klarendal. Therefore, the Sonsbeeksingel and the Klarendalseweg form the frameworks of the research area, which are marked purple in figure 2.

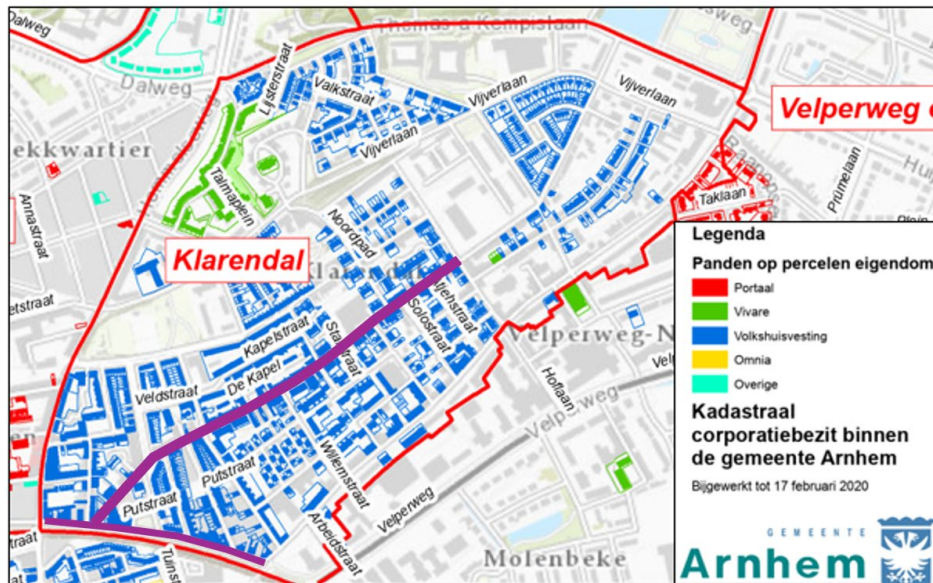


Figure 2: Map of orporation property Klarendal (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025)

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

As stated in the literature review, local entrepreneurs located in commercial properties of housing corporations are a highly specific and understudied group. This research examines entrepreneurs located in Klarendal. This group has been chosen because local entrepreneurs in residential neighbourhoods are an understudied group in the debate on local social value creation and entrepreneurship (Austin et al., 2006; Zahra and Wright, 2016). As said before, out of an estimated population of 77 entrepreneurs in Klarendal, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 14 entrepreneurs using purposive and snowball sampling.

Purposive sampling allowed for the deliberate selection of participants based on relevant criteria (Cresswell & Poth, 2016). Snowball sampling was used to reach additional entrepreneurs that were not selected through referrals (Noy, 2008). The respondents for the interviews were selected together with the advisor commercial property at VHV. She is the contact person of VHV for the entrepreneurs in Klarendal. A selection of entrepreneurs was made, because Klarendal has over 70 commercial shops, and due to the large number of entrepreneurs, it seemed fit to narrow down the pool of possible participants. However, the selection process may have steered the research in a different direction than when all of the entrepreneurs had been approached. The advisor commercial property has a lot of contact with the entrepreneurs, so she has a clear image of the entrepreneurs and those willing to participate with this research. This allowed for quick recruitment of respondents. With the participant selection, we aimed to get a general image of all sorts of entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood to avoid the research having an unconscious focus on a particular type of entrepreneur. In our

selection, a wide variety of entrepreneurs were chosen within a range of aspects, to make the group of respondents as representative as possible for the heterogeneous population of entrepreneurs in Klarendal. The following aspects were discussed for the selection.

(1) Since this research is conducted at VHV, all selected entrepreneurs are either current or former tenants of VHV. This allowed for easy access to the entrepreneurs through the connections at VHV. Respondents range from current tenants, to former tenants, to no tenants. (2) The type of business activities entail the different nature of business activities, such as retail, hospitality, crafts, design or services. Different types of businesses have different needs, customer needs and interactions with the neighbourhood. (3) The time of establishment entails how long the entrepreneur has been operating in Klarendal, ranging from newly established businesses to long standing ones. New entrepreneurs may face different challenges than those who have been in the neighbourhood for longer. (4) The member of Docks entails whether or not entrepreneurs are a member of the business association. Docks members may be more actively involved and engaged in community initiatives or have stronger ties to the business network. Respondents range between current members, old members and no members. (5) The aspect of commercial and social entrepreneurs entails the extent to which the main focus of the business is to make profit or social impact. The different goals may influence if and how entrepreneurs contribute to the neighbourhood. Respondents range between commercial and social. (6) The location of where the business is located within Klarendal is also of importance. Participants must represent the entirety of the Klarendalseweg and Sonsbeeksingel, as there may be location-based issues or engagement. Respondents were chosen for their distribution across the research area.

After a few interviews, two new aspects were found to be of importance to ensure diversity in respondents. (7) Opening times entail the business's operational hours. The respondents range between open on certain days, open all days of the week, no opening times, and appointment-only. (8) The residence location entails whether the entrepreneurs also live in the neighbourhood, or only work there. Entrepreneurs who live nearby may have a stronger connection to the community or feel socially more responsible. Respondents range between being a 'Klarendaller', living in the neighbourhood, living near the neighbourhood, or living further away from the neighbourhood. Klarendallers are long time residents who were born in the neighbourhood. This is a separate but important and dominant group in the neighbourhood. The pool of respondents regarding these aspects were diversified during the snowballing method.

A large part of the selected group of entrepreneurs is affiliated with the local business

association Docks. Therefore, an email was sent to the chair of Docks in advance, so that she could inform the entrepreneurs about the research. After that, an email invitation was drafted, which was reviewed by VHV employees. With approval from the chair of Docks, an invitation was sent to 13 selected entrepreneurs. Out of the 13 selected entrepreneurs, 7 responded within a week.

To gather more respondents, the snowballing method was applied by asking every interviewed entrepreneur what other local entrepreneurs they recommend. These suggestions did not have to be current tenants of VHV, which helped to diversify the group of respondents. Furthermore, these suggestions are valuable, as they are seen as potentially relevant contributors to this research by the respondents. With this, two additional local entrepreneurs were gathered for interviews. In addition, while being in Klarendal for the first interviews, some of the entrepreneurs that did not respond to the invitation were visited. With this, two more interviews with entrepreneurs were arranged, totalling to a combined 14 entrepreneurs.

In total, 11 interviews were conducted with entrepreneurs. In some cases, two respondents were interviewed together, often because they run a business together. In the analysis, these respondents are treated as separate individuals (e.g., Entrepreneur 9 and 10), but they share a single interview transcript.

The sampling strategy focused on achieving variation across relevant dimensions of the entrepreneurial population, which strengthens the analytical scope and credibility of the findings (Patton, 2002). The goal was not to generalize statistically, but to collect information-rich cases that reflect the diversity of entrepreneurial experiences in Klarendal. This approach ensures that the study captures multiple perspectives and situational contexts relevant to the research question. Table 1 shows a list of the interviewed entrepreneurs with the abovementioned selection criteria. Due to the confidentiality, the type of business activity is generalised to broad categories, as their business activities are easily traceable.

Table 1: Entrepreneurs and selection criteria

Reference to respondent	Tenant of VHV	Type of business activity	Time of establishment	Member of Docks	Commercial vs. Social	Location	Opening times	Residence location
Entrepreneur 1	Former tenant	Niche	2011	Docks	Commercial	Sonsbeekselingel	Appointment only	Near Klarendal (has lived in Klarendal)
Entrepreneur 2	Tenant	Hospitality	2022	Former member	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Tuesday-Saturday	Near Klarendal (has lived in Klarendal)
Entrepreneur 3	Tenant	Niche / Community	2020	Docks	Commercial	Sonsbeekselingel	Wednesday-Saturday (May-Sep 6 days)	Near Klarendal (has lived in Klarendal)
Entrepreneur 4	Tenant	Niche / Fashion	2015	Docks	Commercial	Sonsbeekselingel	Appointment only	Outside Klarendal
Entrepreneur 5	Tenant	Hospitality	2022	Docks	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Tuesday-Saturday	Near Klarendal
Entrepreneur 6	Tenant	Craft	2022	Docks	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Tuesday-Saturday	In Klarendal
Entrepreneur 7	Tenant	Craft	2022/2023	Docks	Commercial	Sonsbeekselingel	No opening times	Outside Klarendal (has lived in Klarendal)
Entrepreneur 8	No tenant	Commercial	1997 (took over in 2007)	No member	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Every day	Klarendaller
Entrepreneur 9	Tenant	Fashion	2010 (current shop 2023)	Docks	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Wednesday-Saturday	In Klarendal

Entrepreneur 10	Tenant	Fashion	2010 (current shop 2023)	Docks	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Wednesday-Saturday	In Klarendal
Entrepreneur 11	Tenant	Social collective	2015	Docks	Social	Klarendalseweg	Monday-Friday	Klarendaller
Entrepreneur 12	Tenant	Social collective	2015	Docks	Social	Klarendalseweg	Monday-Friday	Outside Klarendal
Entrepreneur 13	Former tenant	Craft	1994	No member	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Tuesday-Saturday	Near Klarendal
Entrepreneur 14	Former tenant	Craft	1994	No member	Commercial	Klarendalseweg	Tuesday-Saturday	Near Klarendal

Ideally, interviews are conducted in enclosed spaces, to make the conversation come across clearly with as few interruptions and distractions as possible. For this study, the interviews were conducted at a location of the respondent's choice. This was mainly in the entrepreneurs' shop, but also on a roof terrace of the building and on the terrace at the backside of the shop. The reason for this was not only to make the entrepreneur feel at ease, but also to experience the environment that the entrepreneurs operate in. By interviewing within the shop of the entrepreneur, some spontaneous interactions between entrepreneurs and passersby arose. This way, social value creation was seen in action, such as waving to former entrepreneurs, a neighbour coming to ask for help, or volunteers collaborating on an initiative. A conscious decision was made not to use observation as a data collection method, but to write down noteworthy things during the interviews. These small things are a good addition for this research, as it can show involvement, knowledge with the neighbourhood, and motives. In addition, topics of conversation arise that otherwise would not. This was very valuable for this study on ways to contribute to liveability, because it became visually clear. Liveability is, of course, also a piece of perception. I described these remarkable things in field notes after the interviews and was confirmed while transcribing my interviews.

Out of the 11 interviews with entrepreneurs, 7 were conducted during opening hours. Most of the time, the respondent was able to let a colleague run the shop, except for a few cases where the respondent sometimes had to help a client. At times when the interview got interrupted by an acquaintance or a client, I patiently waited for the respondent to get back to me. The duration of the interviews varied between 50 minutes and 2 hours. Some interviews were conducted with two respondents at the same time, which allowed them to complement each other.

Interviews with non-entrepreneurs have not been recorded and transcribed, because they are not the target group of this research. Instead, interview notes have been taken and were used to make interview reports. The interviews with the VHV employees are an exception, as they gave insight into the perspective of VHV on the concept of liveability. The interview with the employee of the municipality of Arnhem was used to gain insights into the perspective of the municipality and has not been used to answer the research questions. For this reason, this interview has not been recorded and no interview report has been made.

3.3 Avoiding desirable questions and research fatigue

During an interview, there are several ways in which socially desirable answers might occur. To prevent this as much as possible, special attention was given to the role and

positioning of the researcher. Awareness of the dual position as a student at Radboud University and intern at VHV was important. Prior to the interview phase, a colleague at VHV shared that the organisation had experienced difficulties with repairs in commercial properties, which were reportedly more complex than those in residential units. This had led to complaints from some entrepreneurs. To avoid being perceived as a representative of VHV and thus potentially influencing the respondents' answers or encouraging them to voice complaints, it was made a priority to clearly present myself as a Master's student in Human Geography – Urban and Cultural Geography, conducting independent research in collaboration with VHV for thesis purposes. This helped distinguish the role of student from that of intern, and no complaints were filed during the interviews. I felt that during the interviews, I successfully distinguished myself from VHV, as all complaints and notes they had for VHV were not directed at me, were vocally emphasized towards the recording device on the table.

Secondly, the term “interview” was deliberately avoided. This term can create a formal setting in which one party asks questions and the other simply provides answers. Instead, the word “conversation” was used to create a more informal and open atmosphere. In line with this approach, the conversations were allowed to flow naturally. Flexibility was maintained to deviate from a pre-set list of questions, and follow-up questions were asked to explore topics in more depth. Discussions typically revolved around themes such as the neighbourhood, the business, and personal motivations of the participants.

Lastly, as advised by Moser and Korstjens (2018), leading questions were avoided as much as possible to prevent steering the respondents' answers. The aim was to let participants speak freely and reflect on their own experiences. Each new topic was introduced through a broad, open-ended question to elicit the respondent's perspective (Appendix 2). These were followed by probing questions to explore relevant areas in greater detail. In cases where essential but unmentioned aspects arose, carefully worded questions were used to gently introduce the topic without imposing a specific direction.

Additionally, awareness of research fatigue was crucial in approaching participants. Klarendal is a well-known neighbourhood that has received a lot of media and academical attention over the years. As a result, some entrepreneurs may feel over-researched or sceptical about the impact of another study. To address this, care was taken to be transparent about the scope and purpose of the research, and to emphasise the specific and practical relevance of the study for them as entrepreneurs. In addition, the entrepreneurs had free range to talk about the topics that were important to them, allowing them to speak freely without confining them to the frameworks of my research. This caused the interviews to be longer, more engaged with the

entrepreneur. Efforts were made to show appreciation for their time and insights, and to approach each conversation with respect and genuine interest in their experiences.

3.4 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are essential in ensuring that research is conducted responsibly, respectfully and in accordance with academic and legal standards. This section outlines the ethical measures taken to protect participants' rights, maintain data confidentiality and uphold the integrity of the research process. The ethical measures can be seen in appendix 2.

Before every interview, participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research, what was expected of them, and that their involvement was voluntary. Participants could withdraw from the interview at any time or refuse to answer a question without giving a reason. The participants were requested to give consent to the use of a recorder, in order to work out the interviews more effectively later. Every participant has given explicit consent for recording and to participate in the interview. To protect the anonymity of participants, all personal identifiers were removed. Anything that was said during interruptions of third parties or things that were requested to be deleted by the respondent were removed from the transcript. Data was handled confidentially and stored securely, accessible only to me. Interview data was stored on a password-protected cell phone and was solely used for transcribing the interviews. The data will be deleted after the thesis is completed.

As mentioned before, this research was conducted in collaboration with VHV, the largest housing corporation present in Arnhem and Klarendal. Therefore, it was important to be aware of my dual position as student and intern. As mentioned before, even though the access to the entrepreneurs was facilitated through VHV, participants were ensured of the academic independence of the research from the organisation. A personal approach was used to strengthen the relationship with the respondents and to build more trust.

Additionally, an ethical consideration was needed regarding the one-sided focus on entrepreneurs rather than residents. The focus on entrepreneurs was a deliberate methodological choice aimed at ensuring the reliability of the respondent group. While including both residents and entrepreneurs could have enriched the understanding of liveability in Klarendal, this approach would have resulted in a smaller and more fragmented respondent pool, given the scope and timeframe of this research. This would likely have reduced the depth and consistency of the data. It is important to note that several of the interviewed entrepreneurs also live in the neighbourhood, and additional interviews were conducted with other stakeholders, including a resident. These participants were able to offer meaningful insights into the resident perspective,

although not to an academic reliable degree. This decision was made consciously, with full awareness that the resident perspective is underrepresented in this study.

3.5 Analytical framework

The empirical data gathered through the semi-structured interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis. This method was chosen to systematically identify, analyze and interpret patterns within the qualitative data. This is in line with the description of Braun and Clarke (2006), who describe thematic analysis as a flexible and theoretically independent approach well-suited to capturing the richness of meaning in interview data.

Due to the large number and length, all interviews were transcribed with the assistance of a secured online transcription tool. However, because of the suboptimal audio quality in several recordings, due to the alternating locations, an additional manual review was conducted to correct spelling errors and ensure that misheard segments were properly addressed. This verification step helped to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the data, which is essential for high-quality thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017).

After the transcribing, the data was imported into ATLAS.ti 25, a software tool for qualitative data analysis (ATLAS.ti, 2025). Using this tool, the transcripts were coded and organized into meaningful categories. Before coding, initial code groups were categorized based on the research questions and the questions in the interviews. Hereafter, thematic codes were created based on the data in the interviews. This approach allowed for the identification of overarching patterns in how local entrepreneurs perceive and contribute to neighbourhood liveability and therefore social value creation.

4. Klarendal as a context

This chapter gives background information on Klarendal, as some context is needed in order to show the climate in which the local entrepreneurs operate. It discusses the history of Klarendal as disadvantaged, the development of the Modekwartier, the unique characteristics of Klarendal, the relationship between residents and entrepreneurs, current socio-economic challenges. Understanding this context is essential to interpret the actions and roles of local entrepreneurs in relation to liveability.

The contextual overview presented in this chapter is based on a combination of sources, including interviews with a former employee of VHV and a long time resident (Klarendaller), and a locally produced film series in which the history of Klarendal is elaborated. This film series was produced by a former employee and long time resident, in which they used old film, news articles and images to visualise the history of Klarendal. The film series is not publicly accessible and it has been requested not to share. These sources provide an inside understanding of how the neighbourhood has developed over time and how this history continues to influence the current dynamics.

4.1 A short history on decline and resilience

Klarendal has historically been considered a disadvantaged neighbourhood, caused by structural neglect and urban restructuring. Klarendal has been through three waves of urban renewal in 1901, 1965, and 2006, aiming to address poor housing conditions. While Klarendal used to have vibrant and lively commercial axes, the neighbourhood suffered from disinvestment following WWII, as attention shifted to new developments in the city (Klarendal Film Series, n.d.).

Following this neglect of existing housing, much of the housing in Klarendal was decaying, and shops increasingly left the area. The urban renewal in 1965 added large scale social housing, but it coincided with the development of Spijkerkwartier, causing the drug activity and prostitution to move to Klarendal. Klarendal lacked the resilience and institutional support to face these developments. Well-paid residents moved away, vacancy increased, windows were boarded up, and Klarendal became associated with drug use, nuisance, prostitution, and insecurity.

In 1989, tensions peaked. With little trust in local authorities or institutions, the residents took matters into their own hands by kicking out the drug dealers and addicts and reclaiming their neighbourhood. This highlighted the strong, direct, proud, and protective local identity of

the Klarendallers. The sense of solidarity and mistrust shaped the social fabric still present to this day.

4.2 The creation and the role of the Modekwartier

This period of social and physical deterioration ultimately laid the groundwork for the most recent phase of urban renewal in 2006: the creation of the Modekwartier. Initiated by a collaboration between the municipality of Arnhem, VHV, and ArtEZ University of Arts, the goal was to improve liveability through small-scale interventions. As described by Gourzis (2014), the introduction of fashion and creative industries into Klarendal was a deliberate strategy to rebrand the neighbourhood, attract new visitors, and stimulate economic activity. Lagendijk (2018) notes how the focus on creative entrepreneurs fits within a broader trend of neighbourhood upgrading through creative branding. While this strategy can stimulate economic vitality, it also risks contributing to cultural displacement and social tensions (Lagendijk, 2018).

VHV played a central role by purchasing and renovating large numbers of houses and commercial properties, which were then made available to new creative entrepreneurs. The development theme was based on the strategy of building on what was already present, which was a demand for ateliers and shops among fashion students. The aim was not to create a fashion district per se, but to reactivate street life and fill vacant shops with visible, creative activity. A former VHV employee noted: “It could just as easily have become the Butcher’s Quarter if there had been a lot of butchers” (Respondent 19).

Today, the Modekwartier is considered a breeding ground for small-scale creative entrepreneurs who focus on craft, fashion, and sustainability. Relatively low rents compared to the city centre allow these businesses to establish. The unique mix of shops and ateliers has made the Modekwartier as an attraction, drawing visitors from outside the neighbourhood. The initial focus on fashion has now been softened, allowing creative entrepreneurs in a wider range to establish. The hospitality sector played an important factor in the development of the Modekwartier.

To maintain the intended identity and scale, VHV and the business association in Klarendal coordinate a selection process. New entrepreneurs must pitch their business plans to a review group, demonstrating both financial sustainability and that they fit in the concept of the Modekwartier. This pitch club plays a key role in preventing commercial properties from being rented to the highest bidder. Even though the aim of the pitching is to see if the concept fits in the Modekwartier, the main aim is to keep storefronts active and prevent the entry of

businesses with a high chance of undermining, such as phone shops or massage salons.

While the Modekwartier is praised as a successful revitalisation, it also shows characteristics of gentrification. De Haan (2022) describes gentrification not only as a physical upgrading process, but also as a socio-cultural reconfiguration involving exclusion, identity conflicts, and symbolic displacements. With this in mind, De Haan (2022) sees Klarendal as a hybrid case of gentrification. Although the transformation has not resulted in a large scale physical displacement due to the high proportion of social housing and the strong position of VHV, elements of symbolic and cultural displacement are clearly visible (Friesenecker & Lagendijk, 2021). Some long time residents experienced a shift in the everyday life of their neighbourhood, as Klarendal was increasingly branded as a creative and fashion oriented hotspot. This branding contributed to a sense among some residents that their strong identity is overshadowed by a new external culture. This tension is reinforced by the us-them dynamic described by Van Melik et al. (2018), where old and new residents negotiate conflicting ideas of what the neighbourhood should represent.

Despite these tensions, Klarendal cannot be directly be compared to other gentrification cases such as De Pijp or De Jordaan in Amsterdam. As mentioned before, this is mainly due to the high proportion of social housing controlled by VHV. However, as described by Entrepreneur 8, who is a Klarendaller, the perception that entrepreneurs are prioritised over affordable, everyday amenities reinforces an us-them thinking. In this way, Klarendal represents a careful combination of revitalisation through the Modekwartier, while simultaneously navigating the risks of exclusion and symbolic displacement as perceived by residents. Even though the common narrative suggests that the neighbourhood has improved through the revitalisation, the reshape in social dynamics has led to rising tensions between residents and entrepreneurs.

4.3 Friction and connection: residents and entrepreneurs

The initial development of the Modekwartier caused resistance among Klarendallers. As some respondents explained, the project was experienced as a top-down intervention, initiated by the municipality and VHV without involvement of local residents. This approach clashed with the strong, protective identity of the Klarendallers and their lack of trust of the institutions. Decisions were perceived as being made about Klarendal, rather than with Klarendal. Entrepreneur 8, a Klarendaller, described this sentiment:

“It was very hard because Klarendal did not accept it. They said “listen up, this is our Klarendal, you are coming into our Klarendal and are calling it the Modekwartier”. This caused some commotion.”

— **Entrepreneur 8**

As a result, the new entrepreneurs were not fully accepted by everyone in the neighbourhood. Some respondents interpreted this friction as generational, while others believed it would persist regardless of time. This division is reinforced by the misconception that Klarendallers believe entrepreneurs are subsidised, while residents are being neglected. Additionally, there is a misconception that the creative businesses are unaffordable for Klarendallers, and many residents expressed frustrations and the need for everyday shops, such as a butchery and a bakery. However, some entrepreneurs note that the absence of bakeries and butchers is due to their own change in demand for supermarkets. These misconceptions contributed to a sense of us-them thinking, further distancing residents from the creative entrepreneurs. These tensions reached their boiling point at ‘Nacht van de Mode’, an event originally intended to promote local creative businesses. A small vocal group demonstrated against the entrepreneurs, criticising them for excluding the local community.

Despite such moments of polarisation, most respondents noted that relationships have improved over time. Several respondents say they have a good connection with their surrounding neighbours and other residents. According to Entrepreneur 8, most residents acknowledge the added value of the Modekwartier for the liveability of Klarendal. It is important for the relationship between the entrepreneurs and the residents that there is a mutual respect for the social context. Nearly all interviewed entrepreneurs said to have a good relationship with their neighbours. As several respondents noted: contact creates understanding.

4.4 Social dynamics and neighbourhood identity

Klarendal is characterised by a strong and distinctive social fabric. One of the most important features is the strong presence of informal social control and social cohesion. Residents greet each other in the street, keep an eye out for one another, and make small talk in casual encounters. This quality is often associated with the identity of Klarendal as a popular neighbourhood. This social attitude can be derived from its troubled past. As Entrepreneur 3 stated, “those who have less, share more”.

This social culture is expressed in what many respondents refer to as the

‘voortuintjescultuur’ or front garden culture, a phenomenon where residents sit outside their front doors when the weather is good. This creates spontaneous moments of contact and visibility, enhancing the social control and social cohesion. Van Melik (2018) adds that the front garden culture is a form of informal social infrastructure that sustains everyday community life. Interestingly, many entrepreneurs mirror this behaviour in their own way, by sitting outside their shopfront during breaks, chatting with residents, or simply being present in the street. These practices contribute not only to the liveliness of Klarendal, but also represent an entrepreneurial form of social anchoring, supporting neighbourhood cohesion (Latham and Layton, 2021). A lot of respondents note that they feel safe because of it.

The residents of Klarendal are often described as direct, down-to-earth, and unpretentious, but also generous and emotionally invested in their environment when trusted. It is this combination that gives Klarendal its strong identity. Klarendal is often referred to as a village within a city. While many refer to Klarendal as a bubble, Entrepreneur 3 offers a more nuanced view:

“There is hardship in the world, and you can see it here. That is reality. In some neighbourhood you see it less. Those are the bubbles for me.”

— **Entrepreneur 3**

The current neighbourhood composition is more diverse than it used to be. Klarendal used to be a predominantly white neighbourhood, consisting of the Klarendallers and other working-class residents. In time, new residents came to the neighbourhood, consisting of entrepreneurs, students and people of various ethnic and social backgrounds. Despite the diversity, the sense of community is still very present. Entrepreneur 12, who does not live in Klarendal, described being “in love” with the neighbourhood. When asked why, she simply responded that it could not be explained: “It is something irrational, it is a feeling”.

Together, these elements illustrate that the strength of Klarendal does not lie in its economic prosperity or physical transformation, but in the everyday social practices that connect people to the place and each other.

4.5 Remaining challenges and persistent stigma

Despite the significant improvement in physical quality and reputation through the development of the Modekwartier, Klarendal continues to face several challenges. The neighbourhood still struggles with drug issues, a concentration of vulnerable people, nuisance in public space, and a persistent negative stigma. Even though it prevented physical

displacement and therefore complete gentrification, the high proportion of social housing is an important underlying factor of the abovementioned issues. Combined with a high proportion of assisted living facilities, these aspects lead to a greater presence of people with complex support needs. Many entrepreneurs feel that VHV is the responsible party for this, as they are in charge of the social housing units. This perceived lack of control by VHV contributes to a sense of frustration among many local entrepreneurs, although Entrepreneur 6 has an opposing view about the issues:

“Is that Klarendal per se? No. I think that if you go to another neighbourhood, it will be just the same. Only here they immediately say “Oh it must be Klarendal again”.”

— **Entrepreneur 6**

Even though this view opposes that of other entrepreneurs, it still suggests institutions on a higher level such as municipalities and housing corporations bear responsibility for a safe and liveable foundation. The issues in Klarendal can be seen as wicked problems on a city or even nationwide scale that move around as how Entrepreneur 14 described as a waterbed effect: fixing an issue in one place shifts the issue to another. This reflects broader urban dynamics where local measures alone are insufficient to address deep-rooted systemic problems (De Haan, 2022).

Within the dynamics of the Modekwartier and Klarendal there is a divide in perceptions. While the Modekwartier is often framed as “good”, Klarendal remains strongly associated with the “bad” factors, such as nuisance and drug-related issues. Entrepreneur 9 describes the contrast with more wealthy neighbourhoods the following:

*“There, the Picnic van delivers crates of wine and it is called ‘Burgundian living’.
Here, it is called alcoholism.”*

— **Entrepreneur 9**

This quote illustrates the persistent stigma attached to Klarendal, and how similar behaviours are interpreted depending on the social context. Such framing processes play a significant role in shaping external and internal perceptions of liveability and belonging (Gourzis, 2014; van Melik et al., 2018). A few entrepreneurs also pointed out that the high concentration of vulnerable people tend to reinforce each other’s problems rather than solve them. As they explain with personal examples, these residents often interact with each other, with drug dealers, and with other negative influences, leaving them with few positive role models or structures. This mutual reinforcement creates a downward spiral, making it even

harder for vulnerable people in the neighbourhood to break out of this cycle. These entrepreneurs note how this affects the overall perceived liveability of the neighbourhood.

This is particularly visible in the case of Entrepreneur 8, who operates in an area where the presence of vulnerable people increasingly impacts their daily business. This is also related to the type of business they run, which attracts a different kind of public compared to other shops in Klarendal. In response, Entrepreneur 8 has placed a sign on their door explicitly asking visitors not to give money to beggars (figure 3). This sign functions as both a symbolic boundary and a practical measure to protect the business atmosphere. The sign illustrates the tension between maintaining an accessible, inclusive shop for everybody and confronting the social reality to protect the business atmosphere.

These dynamics further illustrate the divide that is sometimes felt between residents and entrepreneurs. While entrepreneurs actively contribute to what they believe the neighbourhood needs, they are also limited by what they can offer and sustain within their business operations. The ongoing tensions are felt by entrepreneurs in their daily practices and sense of belonging in Klarendal. This highlights the constrained agency of local entrepreneurs in addressing broader social issues and their position between economic renewal and community needs (Friesenecker and Lagendijk, 2021).

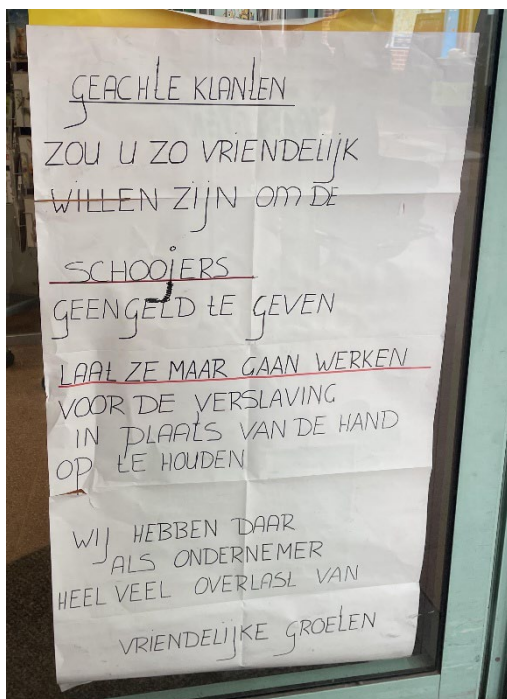


Figure 3: Sign on door of Entrepreneur 8 (own picture)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the transformation of Klarendal is rooted in a combination of historical neglect, waves of urban renewal, and recent creative rebranding and revitalisation through the Modekwartier. While these interventions have improved physical conditions and attracted new visitors, they have also introduced tensions, symbolic displacement, and persistent social challenges. The strong identity of the neighbourhood, social cohesion, and front garden culture illustrate its resilience and the ongoing divide between Klarendallers and new entrepreneurs. Issues such as stigma, concentrated vulnerability, and differing perceptions of liveability continue to shape daily life and social dynamics. These underlying dynamics are essential for interpreting the findings in the next chapter, where entrepreneurial contributions to liveability must be understood in relation to Klarendal's unique social, historical, and spatial character.

5. Results

This chapter presents the key themes that emerged from a thematic analysis of 11 semi-structured interviews with 14 entrepreneurs in Klarendal. Drawing on 12 code groups, the findings are organised into overarching themes, each representing distinct dimensions of how entrepreneurs perceive and contribute to the liveability in the neighbourhood. Each theme is substantiated with quotes and analytically interpreted in relation to the sub-questions. The list of entrepreneurs and their business types can be found in table 1.

5.1 Perceptions of liveability

To understand how entrepreneurs contribute to the liveability of Klarendal, it is first necessary to explore how they perceive the concept itself. As highlighted in the literature review by Leby and Hashim (2010), the concept of liveability must be approached from the perspective of the people who live or work in the environment, as their perceptions determine whether a place is experienced as liveable. These perceptions reveal what they value in their environment and may shape their actions to contribute to it. As said in the literature review, liveability does not have a singular definition, so the entrepreneurs' practices may differ based on how they view the concept. This question also explores the differences and similarities between perceptions of liveability between entrepreneurs and VHV, which helps VHV formulate their strategies with a neighbourhood approach, as the values of Klarendal may differ from their perception.

5.1.1 Clean, whole, safe, and social

When asked how they understood the concept of liveability, most entrepreneurs in Klarendal did not offer a formal definition. Instead, they described their experiences and values through concrete, grounded references. A dominant narrative that emerged was what several respondents either explicitly or implicitly referred to as a neighbourhood that is “clean, whole, and safe.” This phrase is in line with the definition used by VHV in their business plan and reflects a shared baseline understanding of liveability as the presence of order, care, and personal safety.

“You can have facilities and places to meet like a playground, but when there are vulnerable people doing drugs, you cannot use the playground. To use those spaces you have to feel good, and that comes down to clean, whole, and safe.”

— **Entrepreneur 2**

This perspective was especially important among entrepreneurs who live in the neighbourhood with children, for whom liveability is tied to the ability to let their children play outside without fear. For the clean aspect, respondents often implicitly referred to the broken window theory, both as a motivation to keep the area clean and as a behavioural norm. The broken window theory suggests that signs of disorderly and petty criminal behaviour trigger more disorderly and criminal behaviour (Keizer et al., 2008). In the case of Klarendal, it means that visual litter attracts more litter, which causes feelings of discomfort or unsafety. A well-maintained environment reinforces a sense of safety through visual quality, and in turn, safety is a condition for social engagement in public space.

“Trash leads to more trash. If you don’t clean it up, people think, ‘Oh, clearly no one cares here.’”

— **Entrepreneur 1**

In addition to these physical and safety-related indicators, several respondents added a more socially grounded interpretation of liveability. For them, a liveable neighbourhood is one where people feel welcome, where there is a sense of mutual recognition, and where informal interaction between neighbours is part of daily life.

“Liveability is about knowing your neighbours. Not just your direct ones, but your whole block. It’s about greeting people, talking to each other regardless of background or beliefs.”

— **Entrepreneur 11**

Entrepreneurs expressed that a neighbourhood becomes liveable when it supports social cohesion and a feeling of belonging. This was often framed as a form of “gezelligheid”, an untranslatable Dutch term that conveys warmth, sociability, and informal connection. A few respondents described a liveable neighbourhood as a place where “you are seen” and where even brief contact with others adds to a sense of acknowledgement and recognition, which is important for the residents of this popular neighbourhood.

Others, however, approached liveability more pragmatically, referring to basic living conditions such as proper housing, financial security, and access to essential services. These elements were mentioned alongside location-related advantages, such as proximity to the train station, green space, or the city centre.

Entrepreneur 5 offered a unique definition of the term, stating that “liveability is the absence of unsafe factors.”, reversing the mainstream definition of liveability as the presence

of good factors or conditions. Rather than listing the qualities that make a neighbourhood pleasant, this respondent emphasised the need to avoid unsafe factors, such as drug issues, criminality, and disruptive neighbours.

Even though the neighbourhood has reportedly been dealing with these unsafe factors, nearly all respondents perceive Klarendal as liveable. Generally, the respondents experience the nuisance and perceive it as negative, but they see it as something that happens in every neighbourhood and focus on the positive aspects the neighbourhood has to offer. The following quote encapsulates the importance of Klarendal's social strengths, such as its human nature, social control, and social cohesion, as key elements of liveability.

“I personally find this a liveable neighbourhood. To me, it feels more liveable than the wealthier areas, because those places just don't feel human.”

— **Entrepreneur 3**

Notably, entrepreneurs also acknowledged that liveability can be highly subjective and fragmented. Localised issues, such as disruptive behaviour, can make daily life feel unliveable, even in an otherwise liveable neighbourhood. Entrepreneur 8 perceives Klarendal as unliveable, as this entrepreneur constantly has to take action to avoid nuisance affecting their daily business. As mentioned before, this entrepreneur operates in an area with more nuisance than elsewhere. This position illustrates the tension between maintaining an accessible, inclusive shop for everybody and confronting the social reality to protect the business atmosphere. This entrepreneur is more on the preventing unsafe factors side of liveability than others. Entrepreneur 2 stated that “it is as liveable as your neighbour”. This statement encapsulates a recurring insight, that liveability is not merely a set of environmental or infrastructural conditions, but a lived, relational experience. Small-scale interactions and interpersonal tensions can shape how entrepreneurs and residents experience their neighbourhood.

5.1.2 Comparing institutional and entrepreneurial perceptions of liveability

The institutional vision of liveability by VHV shows both similarities and differences with the ways in which entrepreneurs perceive liveability in Klarendal. In their business plan, VHV defines liveability within their concept of a vital neighbourhood as clean, whole, and safe (Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, 2025). This formulation is in line with the most frequently mentioned definition among local entrepreneurs. Both parties view order, care, and safety as fundamental conditions for a liveable neighbourhood.

However, interviews with VHV employees revealed an important nuance. While the

clean, whole, and safe creed remains the formal formulation of VHV's liveability approach, employees also acknowledge that stimulating social cohesion is a critical, yet underrepresented element in the business plan. They observed that many entrepreneurs naturally foster social cohesion and that the presence of entrepreneurs adds to the liveability. Both the VHV employees and entrepreneurs partake in activities for street-level greening and stimulate social cohesion. For this, it seems like the practice of employees differ from the definition in the business plan.

At the same time, many entrepreneurs have concerns about a decline in institutional attention, both from VHV, the municipality, and the police. Several respondents felt that they are left alone to deal with visible decline, vulnerable groups, and unsafe situations. While respondents actively report nuisance and safety issues, follow-up is often lacking.

“They need to stay involved. Because otherwise, this place will start slipping. It only takes a few things, and people start saying again, ‘That neighbourhood is lost.’”

— **Entrepreneur 9**

This concern reflects the expectation of entrepreneurs of institutional parties to enable a safe and clean living environment. Entrepreneur 1 argues that entrepreneurial contributions to liveability can succeed if institutions create the right conditions.

“Some things simply cannot be left to the market. I actually believe every person is capable of taking responsibility, but sometimes institutions need to create the conditions for that. You need to make sure there is a foundation, a broad social foundation.”

— **Entrepreneur 1**

Some of the aspects that contribute to a liveable neighbourhood, such as safety, cannot be fully safeguarded by entrepreneurs, and institutional control is necessary to create a strong foundation. This foundation includes visible institutional involvement, consistent policy, attention to the symbolic reputation of the Modekwartier, and control over placement of vulnerable people. While entrepreneurs do not seek institutional control, they do require a visible and supportive presence from both VHV and the municipality. With this stability, entrepreneurs can keep contributing to the liveability of the neighbourhood.

5.2 Entrepreneurial practices that contribute to liveability

The way entrepreneurs contribute to liveability in Klarendal is based on how they perceive the concept itself. As shown in 5.2, their understanding of liveability goes beyond

physical cleanliness and safety. It includes social connection, informal contact, mutual recognition, and a sense of belonging in a community. What entrepreneurs value most in their environment often becomes what they seek to maintain, safeguard, or stimulate and improve.

Rather than distinguishing strictly between direct and indirect forms of contribution, this section groups entrepreneurial practices based on their function. The findings reveal three overarching types of contributions: everyday presence and small gestures, reinforcing public quality and atmosphere, and community-oriented practices.

5.2.1 Everyday presence and small gestures

Entrepreneurs in Klarendal contribute to the neighbourhood in ways that are often informal, low-threshold, and embedded in daily life. Their practices include greeting passers-by and residents, maintaining close contact with neighbours, and performing small neighbourly acts of support, such as looking out for each other, offering a drink, accepting mail, helping with gardening, or checking in on someone who is sick or going through a difficult time. These actions are not solely out of business interests, but also out of personal enjoyment of entrepreneurs from being connected with their surroundings.

“I think participating in a neighbourhood is easier than we sometimes think. It is about saying good morning to the man that is walking his dog.”

— **Entrepreneur 1**

These continuous interactions with the local community strengthens their social rootedness in the neighbourhood. It aligns with the small-scale, social nature of Klarendal, where informal contact plays a vital role in shaping a sense of mutual recognition. By being visible and approachable, often by simply sitting outside their shop during a break, entrepreneurs become informal welcoming points on the street. Their visible presence in the daily life on the street reinforces their presence as part of the neighbourhood, while also contributing to the liveliness. These gestures may seem minor, but this everyday contact creates an understanding between entrepreneurs and their environment.

“The moment you talk with each other, there is an understanding. That is why I find it important to be involved as an entrepreneur, and not to just open your shop.”

— **Entrepreneur 2**

5.2.2 Reinforcing public quality and atmosphere

A second way in which entrepreneurs contribute to the liveability of Klarendal is by investing in the public spaces and visual quality of the street. This is done through a range of physical and symbolic actions. One of the most frequently mentioned practices is simply keeping their own doorstep clean, and perceived as self-evident by nearly all respondents. This also includes holding others accountable when they litter or do not clean up after their dog. Several entrepreneurs mentioned that they picked up litter beyond their own doorstep. While these actions benefit their own business by improving the visual quality of their shop, they also contribute to a cleaner and more welcoming street environment, preventing a broken window effect. In addition, these small acts show a responsibility for the neighbourhood and reinforce behavioural norms: good behaviour sets the tone.

“If we as entrepreneurs keep our doorstep clean, it is a small action, but then the entire street is clean .”

— **Entrepreneur 6**

In addition to cleaning, some entrepreneurs actively engage in maintaining and planting greenery around their street. Others contribute by improving the visual quality through the creation of murals to prevent graffiti and tagging. These murals are less likely to be defaced and help maintain a pleasant visual quality. Even though the respondents did not explicitly say it in the interviews, a lot of their actions are focused on maintaining a good visual quality.

Besides these direct actions, the presence of an active entrepreneur plays a role in the visual and social quality of Klarendal. An open shop window, a lit interior, and regular activity on the sidewalk all add life to the street. When entrepreneurs are frequently open and visible, they contribute to a sense of liveliness and stability. Their regular presence adds to the informal surveillance or “eyes on the street” (Jacobs, 1961), complementing the natural social control already present in Klarendal. This leads to a greater subjective safety in the neighbourhood.

“I think you contribute by just being present. I attract a lot of people who park here, who create social control in their turn.”

— **Entrepreneur 4**

Finally, entrepreneurs also attract visitors that diversify foot traffic and creates a sense of movement and liveliness. In this way, entrepreneurs in Klarendal not only maintain the appearance of their own business, but they also enhance the atmosphere and experience of the

public spaces. Through these practices, visibility becomes more than just a sign of activity, it symbolises care, presence, and a shared responsibility for the street.

5.2.3 Community-oriented practices

The third way in which entrepreneurs contribute to the liveability of Klarendal is through active and intentional engagement in stimulating social cohesion and cooperation. This is often expressed through the participation in and organisation of neighbourhood activities, such as street markets, public art projects, movie nights, exhibitions, school projects, communal lunches, or game nights. These events form a connecting factor between residents and entrepreneurs.

An important activity for the neighbourhood that has been organised by a collective of entrepreneurs active within Docks is the Nacht van de Mode (Fashion Night). Nacht van de Mode was a festival in Klarendal where entrepreneurs focused on fashion and crafts show their products and art to visitors with catwalks, shows, and music. As mentioned before, the organisation was done by entrepreneurs, but some residents were included in the organisation to seek the connection with the local community. Although it was a popular event that attracted over 10.000 visitors, the Nacht van de Mode has stopped this year. According to Entrepreneur 9, who has been an active member in organising the event, the organisation became too time-consuming and intensive, the tensions between some residents rose, and the initial goal of the event was lost.

The social collective of Entrepreneur 11 and 12, but also the social hospitality business of Entrepreneur 5, focus on organising activities for everybody that wants to join. They stress the importance of the accessibility of the activities, making them nearly all free of charge, or at least as cheap as possible to participate. Some activities, such as the plant market, are organised with help of other entrepreneurs. During the interview with Entrepreneurs 9 and 10, Entrepreneur 11 walked in to ask for help with a tarp for organising a movie night. In addition, they discussed the planning for the plant market, how Entrepreneur 5 could help with this, and how Entrepreneur 6 would organise an activity during the market.

Entrepreneurs also make space within their own businesses for local talent and initiatives. This includes offering a platform for musicians, performers, visual artists, but also reading clubs or the local newspaper. In doing so, they facilitate not only creativity, but also social inclusion by creating accessible spaces for people. In addition, these business employ locals.

“We also have musicians that live here and that want to perform here. I prioritise them. I find it important that they feel at home”

— **Entrepreneur 5**

Finally, entrepreneurs not only actively invest in the social ties with residents, but also with each other. This can be through a form of collaboration, local sourcing, or simply shopping or dining at each other’s businesses. A particular way in which Entrepreneur 4 supports others is through referring customers to other businesses in the Modekwartier. This is a gesture that takes little effort but contributes a lot to the visibility and vitality of the local economy. Although these referrals are informal, Entrepreneur 4 does note that he expects a mutual collaboration. Entrepreneurs in Klarendal are part of a collective Modekwartier, and recognise the importance of mutual reinforcement within this collective. In this way, they do not only function as connectors amongst themselves, but also as social bridges between them and the residents.

5.3 Entrepreneurial characteristics

To understand how entrepreneurs contribute to liveability in Klarendal, it is not only important to examine their actions, but also who they are, what motivates them, and how they position themselves within the neighbourhood. This section explores the characteristics and roles of local entrepreneurs, focusing on both personal motivations and business related traits that shape how they contribute to the social value of the neighbourhood. This section focuses on who the entrepreneurs are and how this identity interacts with the dynamics of Klarendal.

5.3.1 Personal characteristics

Out of the interviews, both desired and actual personal traits of the entrepreneurs have been established. While the desired traits have been explicitly asked out, the actual traits have been implicitly distilled out of the answers of the entrepreneurs. The actual and desired traits often overlap, as desired traits are mostly based on the entrepreneurs’ personal motivations or other entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood.

According to the majority of the respondents, the most important personal characteristic of entrepreneurs in Klarendal is that they have an entrepreneurial attitude, meaning that they know what it takes to run a business. This mainly means that they are economically sustainable, but it also implies that they are client-oriented, that they work hard, that they consider all of the factors that make their business a success, but also that they take advantage of opportunities, such as seasonal busyness, altering opening times for profit, and

more. Some entrepreneurs adapt and diversify their product or services to sustain, while still being present in their shops. In the end, economic sustainability is key.

“Entrepreneurship itself is just one thing: making sure you earn more money than you spend. That’s it”

— **Entrepreneur 5**

Seeing that almost all of the respondents own relatively small commercial shops in a neighbourhood that does not have a natural flow of people, economic stability and sustainability is the foundation in order to invest in the social value. Entrepreneur 5 considers their business as a social hospitality business, and even though their focus is to add social value, their initial goal remains to make profit.

While commercial stability remains essential, nearly all respondents emphasized that entrepreneurship in Klarendal is not purely profit-driven, but also being socially oriented. This includes a connecting and cooperating personality, a certain sensitivity to neighbourhood connection, openness and inclusiveness. These entrepreneurs actively greet pedestrians and make small talk with residents. Some entrepreneurs in Klarendal even value morals, contribution, and enjoyment over profit. Entrepreneur 3 owns a commercial business, with which he serves a niche community in Arnhem. Besides being open to sell his product, he is open to serve as the only place in the city where this community can gather, meet, and connect. While other cities may be more profitable, he is fulfilling a need of this specific community in Arnhem by being a meeting place for them.

“If I were doing this just for myself, I would be better off quitting.”

— **Entrepreneur 3**

This social behaviour also comes with a certain flexibility, because they are willing to sacrifice profit in order to make a social contribution, altering their normal way of doing business. The entrepreneurs are part of a community, not only with other entrepreneurs, but also with residents in the neighbourhood. Therefore, they acknowledge a certain social responsibility they have as entrepreneurs in a residential neighbourhood, and show empathy for their environment. They recognise a shared ownership of the environment.

“You rent within those four walls, but you are also renting within the neighbourhood.”

— **Entrepreneur 2**

Beyond the abovementioned characteristics, several respondents also highlighted other valued traits. These include being proactive, environmentally aware, direct, unpretentious, open-minded, down to earth, honest, and consistent. Some also emphasized care for employees and willingness to hold others accountable, further reflecting the social and ethical dimension of entrepreneurship in Klarendal.

5.3.2 Business characteristics

The commercial entrepreneurial businesses in Klarendal can be divided into three groups: Niche, regular, and hospitality. All three types of shops contribute to the liveability in Klarendal in their own way. First of all, niche businesses are the businesses with a unique concept, that are one of a kind in the city or region. These businesses attract visitors on a citywide, regional and sometimes even national scale. However, these businesses are used less by local residents. Two of the respondents with niche businesses work by appointment in order to have attention for their customers, deliver quality in the product, and to sell an unique experience. These businesses are unique in the way that they do not benefit from foot traffic customers. While they often do not serve the residents of the neighbourhood, they contribute by attracting visitors from outside that benefit the other shops and diversify the pedestrians. Despite working by appointment, they are still present in their property and enact in social entrepreneurial behaviour, such as actively greeting and having contact with neighbours. One of the entrepreneurs even refers their clientele to other businesses in Klarendal, stimulating the local economy.

“I like working together. I just want the best for a lot of people, it costs me nothing to promote someone else.”

—**Entrepreneur 4**

Regular businesses are called regular, because they are the businesses that you can walk in and have a look around, which has nothing to do with how unique their concept is. These businesses serve visitors, regulars, and residents of the neighbourhood. Even though the products or services they sell may be unique and attract regulars, these entrepreneurs are partially dependent of foot-traffic, which is why they benefit from actively stepping outside and being engaged. They contribute to the neighbourhood, because they are the glue that holds the commercial axes together. Respondents noted that these businesses benefit from being inclusive, approachable, open, and affordable. These entrepreneurs have the most influence in actively greeting, making a chat, and their open character.

The hospitality sector is often described as the most important businesses of Klarendal, as they are a connecting factor within the neighbourhood. The cafés and restaurants attract visitors from outside of the neighbourhood, but are at the same time an informal meeting place regulars, residents, and other entrepreneurs. They add to the total experience of the neighbourhood for visitors and are an approachable place for residents. It is important to note that the cafés and restaurants take their direct environment in account by not being disturbing or causing nuisance. This demands a sensitive connection and consideration for the direct neighbours.

“This (terrace) is a part of this, because after 10 pm I don’t play any loud music because kids sleep in those houses.”

—**Entrepreneur 5**

Businesses in Klarendal are relatively small in size, due to the spatial restrictions of the properties. Not all entrepreneurial businesses have to tick all of the abovementioned boxes, as they mostly contribute to the neighbourhood in their own way. The goal is to have a healthy mix of these characteristics, creating a symbiosis that strengthens all others. These businesses are reliant on each other. However, most respondents note that being frequently open is a condition, because it offers stability and allows other entrepreneurs to profit from it. Most respondents expressed their concerns about businesses that are not as often open as they should be. Some businesses in Klarendal are not economically stable enough, which is why some entrepreneurs have a second job on the side. This may result in these businesses being less open. Often being closed does not only hurt other entrepreneurs by not attracting customers, but it also affects the visual quality of the neighbourhood.

“Stagnation is also a form of vacancy.”

—**Entrepreneur 3**

5.3.3 Entrepreneurial motivations

While fashion entrepreneurs benefit from Modekwartier as a destination, a lot of other respondents’ motivation to establish in Klarendal was not profit-oriented, because another location such as the city centre would be way more profitable due to its natural flow of people. Respondents mainly chose for Klarendal because of its cheaper rental costs compared to the city centre, which enabled them to maintain greater autonomy in their business operations.

Entrepreneurs’ motivations rest on a sense of responsibility. This responsibility is partly based on their part of the community.

“I can see what I can do to make this place of value for someone. If you live here it is your environment. So it is your environment and also a bit my environment, so we have to find a symbiosis. I have a big part in that.”

—**Entrepreneur 5**

This quote stresses the importance of a shared responsibility between residents and entrepreneurs, stating that it is their shared environment. However, this feeling of responsibility is not shared by every entrepreneur. One entrepreneur stated that their responsibility is limited to their own doorstep, because they are merely an entrepreneur, and that residents have more responsibility because they are more exposed to neighbourhood problematics. Others, however, say that there is a certain entrepreneurial responsibility of establishing in Klarendal. They find it a social norm to contribute to the liveability, something self-explanatory that is your task as a human. Even though most entrepreneurs have a sense of responsibility to contribute to the neighbourhood, this responsibility is often limited to their direct surroundings.

“I am not responsible for the neighbourhood. I am responsible for my block, and my block is more fun when the neighbourhood is good.”

—**Entrepreneur 2**

Respondents indicated that investing in a liveable environment often stems from self-interest, as such improvements ultimately benefit their own business. As an entrepreneur, you take a risk, and you want to mitigate those risks as much as possible. Their business benefits from a clean, whole, and safe environment, which is why they choose to take initiative to invest in the liveability. Additionally, their business benefits from good contact with their neighbours to prevent complaints or rising tensions. Due to the small business sizes and the lack of natural flow of people, most entrepreneurs are reliant on being engaged with their surroundings. Entrepreneurs have to prove themselves harder than in the city centre, and for that reason it helps to have your neighbours with you than against you. This self-interest is not just for economic gain, but also for the enjoyment of the work.

“It is a big part of my life, please let me have fun in it. I would rather earn less with more enjoyment than the other way around.”

—**Entrepreneur 2**

5.3.4 Entrepreneurial roles within the neighbourhood

Entrepreneurs in Klarendal do more than run businesses, they assume socially embedded roles that shape how they interact with and contribute to the neighbourhood. These roles emerge from the synthesis of their personal traits, business characteristics, motivations and Klarendal's residential context. Three roles were most prominent in the data: the good neighbour, the attractor, and the social connector.

The role of the good neighbour reflects entrepreneurs' sense of local responsibility. This role is enacted through everyday practices such as informal greetings, keeping the street tidy, or maintaining positive relations with neighbouring residents and entrepreneurs. Being a good neighbour involves mutual respect, approachability, and the recognition that running a business in a popular neighbourhood like Klarendal requires social sensitivity. While this role does not necessarily involve deep friendships, it does indicate a form of place-based embeddedness, where entrepreneurs see themselves as co-inhabitants of the neighbourhood, which aligns with the findings of De Beer (2018). This role contributes to the social aspect of liveability, strengthening the already present social cohesion and social control in Klarendal.

“We do not have to be friends, but we are neighbours. We do not have to visit each others homes, but we have to greet each other and work together.”

—**Entrepreneur 2**

Secondly there is the attractor role, linked closely to business type and customer flow. Entrepreneurs contribute to the liveability of Klarendal by attracting visitors on a citywide, regional, and even national scale, which enhances street activity and subjective safety. This aligns with the notion of “eyes on the street” from Jacobs (1961), where visible, active presence fosters public life. The attractor role requires a careful balance between attracting external visitors while remaining accessible and relevant to the local community. The goal is to have a healthy mix of niche, regular, and hospitality businesses, creating a symbiosis that strengthen each other. These businesses are mutually beneficial for each other. This mix supports visibility, diversity, and economic resilience of the commercial axes in Klarendal, and creates a complete experience for visitors.

“I think our visitors get a complete experience and I think that is a big difference from the city centre.”

—**Entrepreneur 9**

The third role is that of the social connector or informal living room. This role is mostly visible in the hospitality sector, but also in other businesses that provide space for spontaneous encounters, community support, or social rituals. Combined with stepping outside as an entrepreneur, these shops create fuss and liveliness in front of the shop. These entrepreneurs not only offer products or services, but actively foster social infrastructure, aligning with the theory of Latham and Layton (2021). They host, connect, and create a sense of belonging. Some entrepreneurs adopt this role intentionally, driven by social values or personal commitment to a particular community. Others adopt this role out of necessity, due to the location of their business or position of trustee. In both cases, these entrepreneurs create a safe and inclusive space for spontaneous and informal meeting, which aligns with Schutjens and Völker (2009).

“I think that if you open a shop in Klarendal, in a popular neighbourhood, that you are automatically a welcoming point. That is part of it.”

—**Entrepreneur 9**

These three roles are not exclusive to each other, and entrepreneurs may shift between them depending on the context and need of their surroundings. Together, these roles show how entrepreneurs in Klarendal are not merely commercial entities, but play a crucial part in the social control and cohesion of the neighbourhood.

5.4 Synthesis

The revitalisation of Klarendal through the Modekwartier shows the relationship between the strong social fabric of the neighbourhood and the ways in which local entrepreneurs contribute to liveability. Klarendal’s history of decline, neglect, and collective self-sufficiency has created a proud local identity. The distinct front garden culture in Klarendal fosters informal social control and community interaction. Some entrepreneurs actively mirror this behaviour by being visibly present outside their shops, greeting neighbours, and engaging in small, everyday acts of connection. Their contributions reinforce the social practices of residents, showing that entrepreneurs and Klarendallers are more similar than thought.

Entrepreneurs strengthen liveability through three main practices: everyday presence and small gestures, reinforcing public quality and atmosphere, and community-oriented initiatives. These practices align with theories on mixed use vitality and eyes on the street (Jacobs, 1961; Gehl et al., 2006). However, these contributions can only thrive when institutions such as the municipality and housing corporations provide essential structural conditions to guarantee safety and social stability. Without this foundation, entrepreneur’s contributions on

liveability remain overshadowed by city- or even nationwide urban challenges, such as persistent nuisance and concentrated vulnerability.

A fundamental duality emerges in the extent to which entrepreneurs can contribute socially alongside their primary economic goals. As most entrepreneurs in Klarendal are small-scale and independent, their first priority remains ensuring economic survival and stability. The effort required to make ends meet means that their ability to consistently contribute is not guaranteed, neither can it be forced. This highlights the importance of economic stability among entrepreneurs and shows that not every entrepreneur is able to consistently invest in the neighbourhood. At the same time, the respondents strongly value social connections and consider them an essential component of a liveable neighbourhood. While clean, whole, and safe are seen as the necessary foundation, the social domain of Klarendal is regarded as its strength. Therefore, most entrepreneurs feel motivated to contribute to it if they are able to do so. Even though they may not feel responsible for the entire neighbourhood, they are committed to contribute and safeguard the wellbeing of their own block.

The engagement and contributions of entrepreneurs take shape through different roles. As good neighbours they maintain daily informal contact and mutual respect. As attractors they draw visitors and increase street-level activity which enhances the atmosphere and safety of the neighbourhood. As social connectors they create spaces for interaction and foster a sense of belonging among residents and visitors. Even if their contributions are sometimes economically limited, their social norm as individuals in the neighbourhood allow them to contribute through low-threshold practices. The fact that entrepreneurs continue to emphasise the importance of social ties show how important the social fabric is to the identity of the neighbourhood and resilience.

Although entrepreneurs have not been fully accepted by everyone and likely never will be, the connection with the majority of the residents has improved over time. Acknowledgement and a mutual understanding have grown, especially around the businesses themselves, where entrepreneurs have close and frequent contact with their neighbours. As several respondents noted, contact creates understanding, and entrepreneurs are becoming residents of the day through their presence and accessibility. The daily presence enhances trust and familiarity, reinforcing their dual role as entrepreneurs and neighbours. Entrepreneurs who live in Klarendal feel more of a shared responsibility for the environment, as it is their residential and entrepreneurial environment. Perhaps complete acceptance is not achievable, but the importance of mutual understanding and the role as a good neighbour remains vital in safeguarding and strengthening the social fabric of Klarendal.

The arrival of the Modekwartier has introduced what can be understood by De Haan (2022) as symbolic displacement. However, it can be argued that rather than a full displacement of the original identity, the process is better described as a symbolic split or synthesis, where a new strong culture has accompanied the existing one. For some residents, the top-down creative rebranding felt as though their neighbourhood had been taken over, shifting the neighbourhood from something purely theirs to a shared ownership. This transformation sparked the initial resistance and us-them tensions. Yet, over time, direct contact and shared experiences have softened the tensions for the majority and strengthened a shared sense of place.

A crucial part of Klarendal is the entrepreneurial selection through the pitch club. The pitch club safeguards the unique identity of the Modekwartier and prevents the emergence of a situation such as the Steenstraat, where individual ownership of properties and a lack of collective control led to an increase of undermining businesses. By carefully selecting entrepreneurs who align with the neighbourhood's vision and social values, the pitch club acts as a protective filter, ensuring that Klarendal remains a supportive incubator for small-scale creative and socially engaged entrepreneurs. However, while the selection of entrepreneurs helps preserve the entrepreneurial climate and economic balance, it also reinforces underlying tensions around inclusivity and symbolic belonging. The act of gatekeeping of who can or cannot enter the commercial properties raises questions about who decides what fits the collective identity.

While Klarendal is formally seen as a residential neighbourhood, its culture, strong collective identity, village like character and social fabric set it apart from other residential neighbourhoods. These unique features make it that the dynamics in Klarendal may not be fully generalisable, which will be further elaborated on in the conclusion.

Ultimately, this synthesis reveals that entrepreneurs in Klarendal are not merely economic actors but social anchors who navigate the balance between commercial survival and social value creation. Their contributions are embedded in everyday social practices and local identities, and while they require supportive institutional conditions to sustain, the contributions come from their own embeddedness, sense of responsibility, social norms, and commitment to safeguard the social fabric of Klarendal.

6. Conclusion and discussion

6.1 Answer to the main research question

This research focused on Klarendal as a residential neighbourhood, but interviews and contextual analysis reveal that Klarendal should be understood as a unique case, best described as a popular neighbourhood. The strong social cohesion and informal control, the tight networks and the village-like character are unique features and are therefore not representative of all urban residential neighbourhoods. Investments in liveability are closely connected to the identity of the neighbourhood. Entrepreneurship in Klarendal differs fundamentally from entrepreneurship in other neighbourhoods or cities.

This research examined how entrepreneurs contribute to social value creation through liveability by studying their perceptions of liveability, their characteristics and their actions and practices. The main research question is as follows: To what extent do local entrepreneurs in the residential neighbourhood of Klarendal contribute to social value creation, as expressed through neighbourhood liveability? The findings demonstrate that local entrepreneurs in Klarendal contribute to neighbourhood liveability mainly through three interconnected and context-dependent practices: everyday presence and small gestures that foster social trust and recognition, practices aimed at maintaining and enhancing public space and atmosphere, and community-oriented initiatives that strengthen social cohesion and inclusivity. Because liveability in Klarendal is strongly shaped by social connections and a sense of belonging, these contributions are closely linked to social value creation.

This section now elaborates on the key findings that support this conclusion, including the entrepreneurs' perceptions of liveability, their practices, and their characteristics. As stated in the literature review by Leby and Hashim (2010), the definition of liveability strongly depends on the perceptions of those who live, work, and recreate in an area. According to the respondents, liveability is a combination of physical and social factors. For them, a liveable neighbourhood is clean, whole, and safe, but equally important are social cohesion, informal interactions, and sense of belonging. They describe liveability as being recognised and connected to others. Despite local challenges, most entrepreneurs see Klarendal as liveable due to its human scale, strong community ties and authenticity. This stresses the importance of the social dimension of liveability.

Entrepreneurs contribute through everyday presence and small gestures by being visible, greeting people, maintaining contact with the neighbourhood, and actively stepping outside.

These practices create a sense of recognition and personal connection with surrounding residents, which strengthens social safety and trust. Additionally, they enhance social cohesion and neighbourhood ties, as daily interactions support informal social control. Moreover, they contribute to the sense of sociability and human scale in Klarendal, integrating entrepreneurs into the neighbourhood's social infrastructure.

Entrepreneurs also reinforce public quality and atmosphere by keeping their doorsteps clean, keeping their business open and visible, creating murals, removing litter, and attracting visitors. These direct and indirect efforts improve the visual quality of the neighbourhood, prevent the broken window effect, and promote a shared sense of care and responsibility among entrepreneurs, residents, and visitors. This reinforces the argument of Jacobs (1961), that lively and well-maintained streets increase perceived safety and contribute to an inviting atmosphere.

Finally, entrepreneurs engage in community-oriented practices, such as organising activities, providing space for local talent, stimulating the local economy, mutual referrals, and collaborating within the neighbourhood. These initiatives strengthen the sense of togetherness, foster inclusivity and social participation among residents, and reinforce the existing social fabric in Klarendal.

While entrepreneurs often state that their responsibility is limited because they are not present in the evenings, they effectively become the residents of the neighbourhood during the day. Not all entrepreneurs are equally active or able to contribute, but nearly all acknowledge the importance of good relationships with their neighbours. Whether motivated by self-interest or self-imposed social norms, they see themselves as a part of the neighbourhood and feel responsible for maintaining strong ties. The most simple and accessible way of doing so is greeting and engaging with surrounding residents, as contact creates understanding.

Entrepreneurs in Klarendal safeguard and strengthen liveability in various ways, but these contributions also involve challenging dualities. Contributions strongly depend on local context and often require a delicate balance between liveability factors, such as maintaining openness and accessibility on the one hand and preventing feelings of unsafety on the other. This balance reveals different degrees to which entrepreneurs navigate their perceptions of liveability.

As far as entrepreneurial characteristics go, financial stability and an entrepreneurial attitude form the essential foundation for social engagement. Boluk and Mottiar (2014) and Korsgaard and Anderson (2011) suggest that both social and commercial entrepreneurs can engage in social value creation. This research argues that small entrepreneurs in residential or popular neighbourhoods, particularly in areas with less natural foot traffic like city centres,

engage more deeply in social value creation. This is because their business depends on high engagement with the environment. The location in a residential context contrast with city centre dynamics, as entrepreneurs in Klarendal have more time and space to build personal relationships and invest in the social. Businesses with a social orientation benefit from lower rents and a less competitive environment, allowing them to focus more on social connection and cohesion. Entrepreneurship in Klarendal is therefore more personal.

6.2 Conditions for local social value creation

While entrepreneurs in Klarendal play an important role in shaping liveability through everyday social and spatial practices, their contributions are not self-evident and depend on several structural and contextual conditions that enable and sustain their engagement. Entrepreneurial contributions to the liveability have a limited reach and are not able to address broader urban challenges that are visible in the everyday life of the neighbourhood. Therefore, entrepreneurs stress the importance of a continuing presence of VHV and institutions to provide a strong social foundation. This institutional support is essential to address persistent issues such as the high concentration of vulnerable people, nuisance and drug issues. This foundation allows entrepreneurs to continue to focus on their local contributions.

Another fundamental condition is the collective ownership of property maintained by VHV. The collective ownership prevents commercial parties and private developers from rising rents and ensures that Klarendal remains an accessible creative breeding ground for small entrepreneurs. In this structure, collective ownership works as a safeguard for maintaining the identity of the neighbourhood.

A central mechanism within this structure is the pitch club, which prevents undermining businesses and maintain entrepreneurial quality. While the pitch club has played a critical role in preserving the Modekwartier, it has also reinforced perceptions of inaccessibility and exclusivity, which contradict the openness entrepreneurs are expected to embody. This tension highlights the need for a re-evaluation of the pitch club and a broader rethinking of the Modekwartier concept as a whole.

For this, we must return to the original question posed during the development of the Modekwartier: what is happening in the neighbourhood and how can we improve the liveability with it? In this context, key issues are financial instability among some entrepreneurs and the lack of connection with local residents. Diversification in retail offer can help strengthen liveability by better fulfilling the needs of residents and by preventing vacancy.

As the results show, the type of business is not decisive for local social value creation.

Beyond running a commercial shop, entrepreneurs also take on a social role, which is a responsibility tied to being part of a collective like the Modekwartier. A financially stable entrepreneur can contribute more effectively than an entrepreneur with a fitting concept who struggles to remain open due to financial instability. As Entrepreneur 3 noted, “Stagnation is also a form of vacancy”.

This does not mean that the creative focus of the Modekwartier should be abandoned, but it requires more flexibility. Creativity remains a crucial part of the neighbourhood’s renewed identity as creative breeding ground and must certainly be preserved. However, the true strength of the Modekwartier lies in the small-scale businesses and the sense of responsibility of the entrepreneurs, which are rooted in the popular character of Klarendal.

6.3 Theoretical reflection

The findings of this study confirm and refine key theoretical insights on liveability and social value creation as mentioned in the literature review. Aligning with De Beer (2018), local embeddedness is crucial for entrepreneurs’ social contributions. Respondents living in or near Klarendal showed a stronger sense of responsibility to invest in its social value. However, rather than having a strong social mission, contributions often emerge out of necessity, as entrepreneurs depend on local trust and relationships for their survival.

The ways entrepreneurs shape liveability reflects principles from Jacobs (1961) and Gehl et al. (2006), who emphasise the value of lively, mixed-use streets and everyday informal social control. In Klarendal, entrepreneurs actively invest in visual quality, greet residents, attract visitors, and create a welcoming atmosphere, creating eyes on the street.

Moreover, this study supports Austin et al. (2006) and Korsgaard and Anderson (2011), showing that the organisational form or as social mission such as a CSR are not a condition for social value creation. In a residential or popular neighbourhood with no natural flow of people as Klarendal and where entrepreneurs cannot afford to have a CSR, commercial entrepreneurs often take on a social role by necessity. This is because the survival of their business depends on social embeddedness.

This study also expands on Schutjens and Völker (2009) and Lloyd, Fullagar and Reid (2016), highlighting how entrepreneurs act as informal meeting points and anchor points, fostering daily social contact and familiarity. In Klarendal, not only the hospitality sector takes on this role, but also other consistent entrepreneurs in the neighbourhood.

A central contribution to the literature is that entrepreneurs' practices are highly context-dependent. In Klarendal, where "clean, whole, and safe" form the physical foundation,

entrepreneurs especially prioritise the social dimension of liveability, emphasising community connections, familiarity, and a sense of belonging. This study highlights that the specific popular identity and social fabric of Klarendal shapes the perceptions of liveability and the contributions to it. As a result, the initial conceptual framework requires an adjustment to emphasise the importance of local context, but also because the results of this study may not be representative for other residential neighbourhoods.

These insights underline that in neighbourhoods like Klarendal, social value creation and liveability are not abstract policy ideals but emerge through everyday practices of locally embedded entrepreneurs, highlighting the importance of context-sensitive, neighbourhood-oriented approaches.

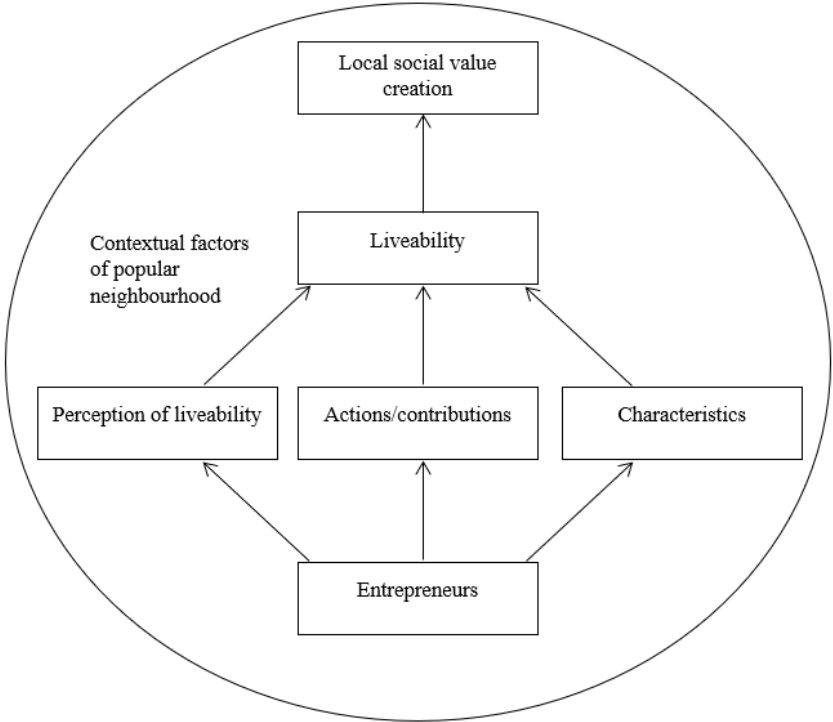


Figure 4: Adjusted conceptual framework

6.4 Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of entrepreneurs in shaping liveability, several methodological limitations should be acknowledged.

First, this research focused primarily on entrepreneurs and their perceptions of

liveability, which allowed for a deeper understanding of entrepreneurs' views. By centring entrepreneurs' views, this study did not fully capture the perceptions of residents on liveability, which are crucial for understanding the broader needs and social dynamics of the neighbourhood. Future research that includes the perspective of residents would provide a more comprehensive understanding of liveability in line with the argument of Leby and Hashim (2010).

Second, the selection of respondents through VHV may have acted as a gatekeeping mechanism, potentially limiting access to the entire population of entrepreneurs. The selection process mostly included socially engaged entrepreneurs who actively participate in the neighbourhood. Entrepreneurs who are less active or who choose not to engage were underrepresented, which may have introduced a bias towards more socially oriented practices. Further research should include a broader range of entrepreneurs to capture more diverse entrepreneurial strategies and motivations, including those who do not actively contribute to social value creation.

Lastly, the results of this study are highly context-specific and shaped by the unique characteristics of Klarendal as a popular neighbourhood with strong social cohesion. This specific context limits the generalisability of the findings to other urban or residential neighbourhoods. Future studies could explore similar dynamics in different contexts to examine how neighbourhood-specific factors influence entrepreneurial contributions to liveability and social value creation.

6.5 Concluding statement

Ultimately, this study illustrates that in a neighbourhood like Klarendal, liveability and social value creation are not abstract policy ideals but tangible, everyday outcomes shaped by socially embedded and context-driven entrepreneurial practices. These contributions highlight that it is not the type of business that matters most, but rather an entrepreneurial mindset combined with a strong sense of social responsibility, supported by structural conditions such as collective ownership and institutional guidance. As one entrepreneur said before:

“I can see what I can do to make this place of value for someone. If you live here it is your environment. So it is your environment and also a bit my environment, so we have to find a symbiosis. I have a big part in that.”

—**Entrepreneur 5**

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for policy makers, institutional actors, and entrepreneurs.

First, it is crucial for VHV or other housing corporations in the same position to maintain commercial property in collective ownership. Liveability is not a one time investment, and requires further nurture. This prevents businesses being left to the commercial market, prevents rising rents, and safeguards liveability in neighbourhoods with a complex social past. Although VHV is currently taking on this role, this does not exclude other parties who see the value of upholding the concept of the Modekwartier. Further research of alternative ownership structures that do not compromise liveability is recommended.

Second, VHV and other housing corporations in the same position should ensure that attention is not only given to the central commercial axes, but also to the smaller side streets and back alleys, where broader social and urban challenges are more visible. These challenges affect the liveability and force entrepreneurs to prevent unsafe factors instead of contributing to the strengths of Klarendal.

Third, the pitch club has to be more flexible in selecting entrepreneurs in order to diversify the retail offer in Klarendal. The focus should be more on small businesses with financial stability and a community value in order to secure a shared responsibility. This aligns with the demand for shops that fulfil the needs of the residents.

Lastly, entrepreneurs in Klarendal should be aware of the unique social dynamics and historical context of the neighbourhood they enter. To prevent further polarisation, it is essential for them to acknowledge this history and collaborate with residents, rather than operate in isolation. Instead of micromanaging, which often clashes with local sensibilities, entrepreneurs should focus on taking care of their own space, remain open and accessible, and act as good neighbours within the community. Investing in visibility, everyday presence, and local relationships should not be seen as a separate social task, but as a part to meaningful entrepreneurship in a popular neighbourhood. Because besides being an entrepreneur, they are residents during the day too.

8. References

- AlleCijfers.nl. (2025, 16 juli). *Wijk Klarendal (gemeente Arnhem) in cijfers en grafieken*. <https://allecijfers.nl/wijk/klarendal-arnhem/>
- ATLAS.ti. (2025, 6 mei). *ATLAS.ti | The #1 Software for Qualitative Data Analysis*. <https://atlasti.com/>
- Austin, J., Stevenson, H., & Wei-Skillern, J. (2012). Social and commercial entrepreneurship: same, different, or both?. *Revista de Administração*, 47(3), 370-384.
- Bernt, M., & Holm, A. D. (2005). Exploring the substance and style of gentrification: Berlin's 'Prenzlauer Berg'. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(1), 15–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2005.00568.x>
- Boluk, K.A., & Mottiar, Z. (2014). Motivations of social entrepreneurs: Blurring the social contribution and profits dichotomy. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 10(1), 53-68.
- Bosma, N., Schutjens, V., & Volker, B. (2016). Local social entrepreneurship and social capital. In *Handbook of social capital and regional development* (pp. 55-81). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Brieger, S. A., De Clercq, D., & Meynhardt, T. (2020). Doing Good, Feeling Good? Entrepreneurs' Social Value Creation Beliefs and Work-Related Well-Being. *Journal Of Business Ethics*, 172(4), 707–725. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04512-6>
- Campin, S., Barraket, J., & Luke, B. (2013). micro-Business Community Responsibility in Australia: Approaches, Motivations and Barriers. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 115, 489-513.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- De Beer, M. (2018). Local social value creation by neighborhood-based entrepreneurs. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 14(4), 450–469. <https://doi.org/10.1108/sej-01-2018-0005>
- De Haan, F. (2022). *Counter-actualizing Gentrification: A study of problems and practices of displacement in Arnhem, Vienna and Istanbul*. <https://hdl.handle.net/2066/250927>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. sage.

European Commission. (2016). State of European Cities Report 2016. In *ec.europa.eu*. https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/urban-development/cities-report/state_eu_cities2016_en.pdf

Fossey, E., Harvey, C., McDermott, F., & Davidson, L. (2002). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian & New Zealand journal of psychiatry*, 36(6), 717-732.

Friesenecker, M., & Lagendijk, A. (2021). Commercial gentrification in Arnhem and Vienna: Governing the retail revolution. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09697764211012345>

Gagliardi, L., & Sorenson, O. (2023). Entrepreneurship and gentrification. *Work. Pap., Bocconi Univ., Milan, Italy*.

Gourzis, K. (2014). *Fashion in Gentrifying Urban Spaces: The case of the Fashion Quarter in Klarendal, Arnhem* (Doctoral dissertation, Master's thesis, Radboud University).

Harbers, A., Van Amsterdam, H., Spoon, M., PBL Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, Meta Berghauser Pont, Birgit Hausleitner, Joost van den Hoek, Berend Hoffmann, Marjolein Peters, Frits Erdmann, Martijn Veenstra, Bart Rijken, & Frans Schilder. (2022). *Ruimtelijke dichtheden en functiemenging in Nederland*. PBL Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving. https://www.pbl.nl/uploads/default/downloads/pbl-2022-rudifun-2022-ruimtelijke-dichtheden-en-functiemenging-in-nederland_4150.pdf

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House.

Jarboui, A., & Chikha, L. (2018). Personality traits and social entrepreneurial intentions: A study among university students. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*, 3(2), 100–109.

Kechiche, A., & Soparnot, R. (2012). CSR within SMEs: Literature review. *International Business Research*, 5(7), 97.

Keizer, K., Lindenberg, S., & Steg, L. (2008). The Spreading of Disorder. *Science*, 322(5908), 1681–1685. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1161405>

Khan, S. H., Yasir, M., Shah, H. A., & Majid, A. (2021). *Role of social capital and social value creation in augmenting sustainable performance of social enterprises: Moderating role of social innovation*. <https://hdl.handle.net/10419/233770>

Klarendal Film Series. (n.d.). [Video].

Een filmreeks over de geschiedenis van Klarendal en de ontwikkeling van het Modekwartier

Korsgaard, S., & Anderson, A. R. (2011). Enacting entrepreneurship as social value creation. *International Small Business Journal Researching Entrepreneurship*, 29(2), 135–151. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266242610391936>

Lagendijk, A. (2018). Modekwartier Klarendal: Wijkontwikkeling door vermarkting creatieve activiteiten. In H. Ernste & A. Lagendijk (Eds.), *Creatieve steden in transitie* (pp. 89–102). Nijmegen: Radboud University.

Leby, J. L., & Hashim, A. H. (2010). Liveability dimensions and attributes: Their relative importance in the eyes of neighbourhood residents. *Journal of construction in developing countries*, 15(1), 67-91.

Lepoutre, J., & Heene, A. (2006). Investigating the impact of firm size on small business social responsibility: A critical review. *Journal of business ethics*, 67, 257-273.

Lloyd, B., Fullagar, S., & Reid, S. (2016). Where is the ‘social’ in constructions of ‘liveability’? *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 27(3), 167–176. <https://doi.org/10.1071/HE15105>

Lorenzo-Afable, D., Lips-Wiersma, M., & Singh, S. (2023). A Narrative Synthesis of The Empirical Literature on Social Value Creation in Social Entrepreneurship: Gaps and Opportunities for Future Research and Action. *Journal Of Social Entrepreneurship*, 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19420676.2023.2195868>

Mair, J., & Noboa, E. (2006). Social entrepreneurship: How intentions to create a social venture are formed. In *Social entrepreneurship* (pp. 121-135). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties. (2018). Kabinetsperspectief NOVI. In *open.overheid.nl*. <https://open.overheid.nl/documenten/ronl-4cba9013-8d4f-42f3-873f-843c6da2df55/pdf>

Mouratidis, K., Papageorgiou, G., & Apostolopoulou, E. (2021). A critical review of liveability approaches and their dimensions. *Cities*, 119, 103389. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2021.103389>

Mulgan, G. (2010). Measuring social value.

- Noy, C. (2008). Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal Of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645570701401305>
- Omoredede, A. (2014). Exploration of motivational drivers towards social entrepreneurship. *Social Enterprise Journal*, 10(3), 239-267.
- Pandey, D. L., Uprety, S. K., & Risal, N. (2023). Personality traits and social entrepreneurial intentions of management students: a test of the Big Five approach. *Journal of Innovation & Entrepreneurship*, 12(72). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13731-023-00342-8>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (Vol. 3). Sage.
- Pols, L., Van Amsterdam, H., Harbers, A., Kronberger, P., & Buitelaar, E. (2009). Menging van wonen en werken. In *Mening van wonen en werken*. Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving. https://www.rivm.nl/bibliotheek/digitaaldepot/Functiemenging_web.pdf
- RIGO Research en Advies. (2017). Bedrijfsruimte als instrument voor wijkontwikkeling: Een kosten-baten analyse voor inzicht in effecten. In *RIGO Research en Advies BV* (report Nr. 31840). RIGO Research en Advies BV. <https://www.rigo.nl>
- Rijksoverheid. (2024, 23 april). *Woningwet: regels voor woningcorporaties*. Rijksoverheid.nl. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/woning-verhuren/woningwet-regels-voor-woningcorporaties>
- Santana, A. (2015). Disentangling the knot: Variable mixing of four motivations for firms' use of social practices. *Business & Society*, 54(6), 763-793.
- Schutjens, V., & Völker, B. (2010). Space and social capital: The degree of locality in entrepreneurs' contacts and its consequences for firm success. *European Planning Studies*, 18(6), 941-963.
- Szibbo, N. (2016). Assessing neighborhood livability: Evidence from LEED® for neighborhood development (LEED®-ND). *Urban Affairs Review*, 52(2), 248–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087414558047>
- Throsby, D. (2005). Cultural heritage as financial asset in strategies for urban development and poverty alleviation. In *International Conference for Integrating Urban Knowledge and Practice* (pp. 2-14). Formas.

- Trivedi, C., & Stokols, D. (2011). Social enterprises and corporate enterprises: Fundamental differences and defining features. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 20(1), 1-32.
- van Dorst, M. (2011). Liveability. In *Sustainable Urban Environments: An Ecosystem Approach* (pp. 223-241). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- van Melik, R. G. (2018). Op de stoep: Het straatleven van Klarendal. In H. Ernste & A. Lagendijk (Eds.), *Creatieve steden in transitie* (pp. 71–87). Nijmegen: Radboud University.
- Van Melik, R. G., Haan, F. D., Lagendijk, A., Ploegmakers, H., & Ernste, H. (2018). Klarendal: tussen volksbuurt en elitewijk. In *Geografie. Vaktijdschrift Voor Geografen* (Vols. 5–2018, pp. 6–8) [Article / Letter to editor]. <https://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/197690/197690.pdf>
- Vivare. (2023). *Visie en strategie voor Bedrijfs-, Maatschappelijk- en Zorg onroerend goed (BMZ)* [Unpublished internal document]
- Volkshuisvesting Arnhem. (2025). *Kadastraal corporatiebezit binnen de gemeente Arnhem* [Unpublished internal document]
- Volkshuisvesting Arnhem. (2025). *Ondernemingsplan Volkshuisvesting Arnhem*. <https://www.volkshuisvesting.nl/media/1834/241212-volkshuisvesting-arnhem-ondernemingsplan-v16-web.pdf>
- Volkshuisvesting Arnhem. (n.d.). *Over volkshuisvesting Arnhem*. <https://www.volkshuisvesting.nl/ik-huur/algemene-informatie/hfdstk-1-Over-VHV-Arnhem-definitief.pdf>
- Westlund, H., & Bolton, R. (2003). Local social capital and entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics*, 21(2), 77–113.
- Zahra, S. A., & Wright, M. (2016). Understanding the social role of entrepreneurship. *Journal of management studies*, 53(4), 610-629.
- Zahra, S. A., Gedajlovic, E., Neubaum, D. O., & Shulman, J. M. (2009). A typology of social entrepreneurs: Motives, search processes and ethical challenges. *Journal of business venturing*, 24(5), 519-532.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Respondent overview

Reference to respondent	Function	Type of business activity	Interview nr.
Entrepreneur 1	Entrepreneur	Niche	Interview 1
Entrepreneur 2	Entrepreneur	Hospitality	Interview 2
Entrepreneur 3	Entrepreneur	Niche / Community	Interview 3
Entrepreneur 4	Entrepreneur	Niche / Fashion	Interview 4
Entrepreneur 5	Entrepreneur	Hospitality	Interview 5
Entrepreneur 6	Entrepreneur	Craft	Interview 6
Entrepreneur 7	Entrepreneur	Craft	Interview 7
Entrepreneur 8	Entrepreneur	Commercial	Interview 8
Entrepreneur 9	Entrepreneur	Fashion	Interview 9
Entrepreneur 10	Entrepreneur	Fashion	Interview 9
Entrepreneur 11	Entrepreneur	Social collective	Interview 10
Entrepreneur 12	Entrepreneur	Social collective	Interview 10
Entrepreneur 13	Entrepreneur	Craft	Interview 11
Entrepreneur 14	Entrepreneur	Craft	Interview 11
Respondent 15	VHV employee	Housing corporation	Interview 12
Respondent 16	VHV employee	Housing corporation	Interview 12
Respondent 17	Chair of Docks	Business association	Interview 13
Respondent 18	Resident	Resident	Interview 14
Respondent 19	Former employee VHV	Housing corporation	Interview 14
Respondent 20	Employee municipality	Municipality of Arnhem	X

Appendix 2: Interview guide

Introductie

Goedemorgen. Allereerst wil ik u bedanken voor uw tijd en dat u mee wilt werken aan dit onderzoek. Mijn naam is Robert Blankvoort en ik ben een Masterstudent aan de Radboud Universiteit in Nijmegen. Zoals u al in de mailwisseling heeft kunnen lezen voer ik namens Volkshuisvesting een onderzoek uit naar hoe lokale ondernemers bijdragen aan de maatschappelijke waarde in Klarendal. Dit interview helpt mij om beter te begrijpen hoe en waarom ondernemers bijdragen aan de maatschappelijke waarde en leefbaarheid van de wijk.

Uw antwoorden worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en uw gegevens blijven anoniem. De data wordt alleen gebruikt voor academische doeleinden en veilig opgeslagen volgens de richtlijnen van de universiteit. Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is volledig vrijwillig. Als er vragen zijn waar u zich ongemakkelijk bij voelt, kunt u deze overslaan. Ook kunt u op elk moment het interview beëindigen. Met uw toestemming zou ik dit interview graag opnemen, zodat ik uw antwoorden later nauwkeurig kan uitwerken. U kunt op elk moment vragen om de opname te stoppen. Heb ik uw toestemming om het gesprek op te nemen?

Het interview zal ongeveer een uur duren. Ik zal enkele vragen stellen over uw onderneming, Klarendal en de leefbaarheid. Als u vragen heeft, stel ze gerust. Heeft u nog vragen voordat we beginnen?

Interviewvragen

1. Wat is de naam van uw bedrijf?
2. Wat voor soort bedrijf is het?
3. Wie zijn jullie vaste Klanten? (wijkbewoners / mensen van buitenaf)
4. Hoe lang bent u al in Klarendal gevestigd?
5. Waarom heeft u gekozen om uw bedrijf in Klarendal te vestigen?
6. Woont u ook in Klarendal / heeft gewoond?
 - a. Zo ja, hoe lang woont u hier?
7. Wat zijn uw toekomstplannen m.b.t. uw onderneming? (vestiging, groeien)
8. In hoeverre voelt u zich betrokken bij de wijk?
 - a. Waarom? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?
9. Hoe zou u Klarendal omschrijven?

10. Waar heeft de wijk volgens u behoefte aan?
11. Wat zijn de uitdagingen van Klarendal?
12. Wat gaat (in algemene zin) goed in de wijk?
13. Waar liggen kansen?
14. In hoeverre voelt u zich sociaal verantwoordelijk voor de wijk?
15. Op welke manieren (hoe laagdrempelig ook) draagt u bij aan de wijk?
 - a. Waarom vindt u het wel/niet belangrijk om bij te dragen?
16. Heeft in uw ogen de wijk economie een positieve impact op de maatschappelijke waarde?
17. Welke persoonlijke eigenschappen zijn naar uw mening van belang voor een ondernemer om bij te dragen aan de wijk?
18. Wat verstaat u onder leefbaarheid?
19. Wat vindt u belangrijke eigenschappen van een leefbare wijk?
20. In hoeverre vindt u Klarendal een leefbare wijk?
 - a. Waarom wel/niet?
21. In hoeverre vindt u het de taak van de ondernemer om bij te dragen aan de leefbaarheid?
 - a. Welke rol hebben zij in de aanpak van leefbaarheid in de wijk?
22. Hoe kijkt u naar de verhouding tussen (mode) ondernemers en wijkbewoners?
23. Wat vindt u belangrijke eigenschappen voor nieuwe ondernemers in de wijk?
24. Wie zijn de dragers van de wijk?
25. In hoeverre ziet u risico's als het concept van het Modekwartier wordt losgelaten?
26. Met welke andere ondernemers moet ik hierover in gesprek gaan?
 - a. Waarom zij?
27. Zijn er verdere dingen die u kwijt wilt? Zijn er onderwerpen die we niet hebben besproken? Wilt u nog iets benadrukken?