Meaningful urban neighbourhoods, measurable social impact

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An explorative study on the strategy compliance of developers with the CSRD – ESRS S3 reporting guideline and the impact on affected communities in the Dutch built environment.

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Colophon

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Preface

This thesis constitutes as the completion of the master programme Management in the Built Environment at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment of Delft University of Technology. The research conducted focuses on how social sustainability can be better understood, operationalized and measured withing urban redevelopment projects with specific value for affected communities.

The motivation for this research stems from my interest in the relationship between social dynamics, belonging and identity within the built environment. Throughout my studies, social sustainability was not often discussed in strategies and policies, and when it was, it remained difficult to capture the meaning of it for people. My curiosity, shaped by my own experiences and by observing how others experience their environment, led me to explore how redevelopment processes influence everyday life, community dynamics, and social meaning. The research process not only deepened my academic understanding, but also highlighted the importance of recognizing local narratives, social dynamics and lived experiences within large-scale urban redevelopment processes.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Gerard van Bortel and Roberto Rocco, for their guidance, critical feedback, and continued support throughout the research process. Their complementary perspectives significantly contributed to the depth and clarity of this thesis. I am also grateful to the experts, developers and representatives of municipalities and local organizations who generously shared their time, knowledge and experiences. Without their openness and engagement, this research would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, friends, and fellow students for their encouragement, patience and support throughout this journey. Their trust and understanding provided invaluable motivation during the writing process.

I hope that this thesis contributes to ongoing discussions on social sustainability in urban redevelopment and supports a more nuanced understanding of how social impact can be made not only measurable, but also meaningful.

With a warm heart,
Ruba Ammiwala

Abstract

In response to the growing emphasis on social sustainability in urban redevelopment, this thesis investigates how Dutch developers define and implement strategies concerning affected communities in the built environment. With the recent introduction of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the associated ESRS S3 standard on affected communities, developers are increasingly expected to disclose the social impacts of their projects. However, translating these abstract and high-level regulatory principles into practice remains a challenge, particularly in the absence of sector-specific tools.

To address this gap, this research compares and integrates the ESRS S3 standard with the academic framework of Shirazi & Keivani (2018), which results in an adapted framework that combines regulatory expectations with socio-spatial indicators. Experts were interviewed to refine and validate the framework. The adapted framework is then applied to two redevelopment cases, Katendrecht (Rotterdam) and Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (Den Haag). Through interviews with developers, the study identifies their definitions, strategies and objectives surrounding social sustainability and affected communities. These are mapped onto the adapted framework to assess where they align, diverge or extend its dimensions. Additional interviews with municipal representatives and local community actors further broaden and deepen the understanding of how social sustainability is interpreted and experienced in practice.

Findings show that developers increasingly recognize social sustainability as a multidimensional and collaborative practice, but their approaches remain strongly shaped by system-world logic, such as policy, targets, feasibility and formal participation processes. Local representatives reveal how lived experiences, identity, cultural practices and everyday routines shape the perceived impact of redevelopment, factors that are often underrepresented in formal strategies. The analysis highlights a reoccurring tension between system world requirements and lifeworld realities, underscoring the need for context sensitivity, long-term governance and continuous engagement.

The study concludes by refining the adapted framework and presenting operational tools that enable developers to translate social sustainability principles into concrete, measurable and meaningful practices, contributing to socially responsible reporting and to the creation of *meaningful neighbourhoods with measurable social impact*.

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List of Acronyms

CSRD   – Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive

ESG   – Environmental, Social, Governance

ESRS   – European Sustainability Reporting Standards

SS   – Social Sustainability

SD   – Sustainable Development

Triad   – Triad of Social Sustainability

UD   – Urban redevelopment

1 INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is widely recognized as the balance between economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection (Elkington, 1994; Campbell, 1996; Sachs, 1999). The Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach, as visualized in figure 1, emphasizes that sustainability is achieved when these three dimensions-people, planet, and profit are integrated into decision-making processes (Elkington, 1997), which encourages organizations to consider long-term perspectives in decision making (Purvis et al., 2019). While economic and environmental sustainability have been extensively addressed in urban development policies, social sustainability, which focuses on fostering inclusive, resilient, and equitable communities, has received comparatively less attention (Dempsey et al., 2009; Cuthill, 2010; Vavik and Keitsch, 2010) (figure 2) and remains difficult to operationalize in practice (Dempsey et al., 2009; Colantonio, 2009).
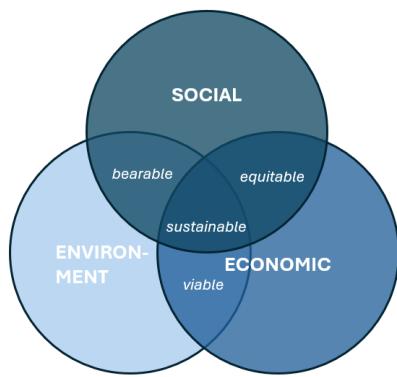
Figure 1 Triple Bottom Line approach by Elkington (1994)
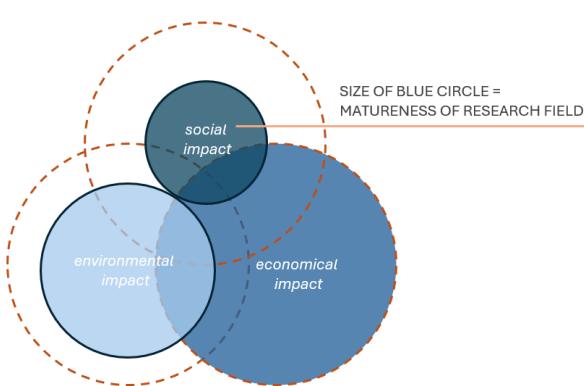
Figure 2 Matureness of research field in comparison (adapted from van der Wal, 2020)

CSRD & ESRS

In response to the growing need for standardized sustainability reporting, the European Commission has introduced in 2022 the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) (DIRECTIVE (EU) 2022/2464), which replaces the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD), and came into effect in 2024 (RVO, 2025). The CSRD significantly broadens the scope of required disclosures by mandating companies to not only report their financial risks related to sustainability but also on how they operate impact on people and the environment. This marks the first steps to transparency on the actual impact of an organizations activities in relation to sustainability (Baumüller & Sopp, 2022). The reporting standards of the CSRD, the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), are set out by The European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) and must be followed by companies to ensure transparency and comparability (Directive 2022/2464, recital 39). The framework is structured in ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) topics, laid out in figure 3. Among the topics of Social, the ESRS S3 principal focusses on Affected Communities. This particular principal is relevant for the built environment as it incorporates impacts on local communities which can be affected by developments.

ESRS EXPOSURE DRAFTS
by EFRAG

CROSS-CUTTING STANDARDS	ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIAL	GOVERNANCE
General principles	Climate change	Own workforce	Governance, risk management and internal control
General, strategy, governance and materiality assessment disclosure requirements	Pollution	Workers in the Value Chain	
	Water & Marine Resources	**Affected communities**	Workers in the Value Chain
	Biodiversity and ecosystem	Consumers and end-users	
	Resource Use and CE		

Figure 3 ESRS guideline including ESG principles by ERFAG (adapted from DFGE, 2022)

A foundational principle of the ESRS is double materiality (RVO, 2025), which obliges companies to assess and report both how sustainability issues affect their business (financial materiality) and how their operations affect society and the environment (impact materiality) (Chen et al., 2018). In this way, the CSRD and ESRS aim to bridge the gap between internal corporate priorities and broader societal outcomes, including those shaped by urban development.

It is important to note that urban and real estate developers in the Netherlands are not always directly subject to the CSRD reporting requirements yet. However, developers are increasingly becoming aware of the implications of sustainability reporting as an strategic tool in the broader funding landscape (BPD, 2024). As institutional investors, banks and funders, who are often required to comply with the CSRD and report their performance, begin to prioritize ESG performance in their portfolios, developers find strategic value in aligning these standards to improve competitiveness and attract capital (KPMG, 2024). Companies that fail to demonstrate sustainability commitments might find themselves at a disadvantage in accessing capital or securing investment. This shift in the funding landscape incentivizes developers to align their strategies with ESG expectations which makes reporting not only regulatory but also a financial and reputational incentive (de Graaf, 2025).

Urban development and affected communities

Urban development, especially in the context of neighbourhood redevelopment, plays a central role in shaping the lived experience of communities. While such projects can bring economic revitalization, they also pose challenges to social sustainability. Residents, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, often face disruptions to their social networks, are affected by rising housing costs, and lack involvement in the planning processes (Van der Pennen & Van Bortel, 2015; Tonkens & De Wilde, 2014; Parés et al., 2014). Common issues of urban renewal or redevelopment include gentrification and displacement (Lees et al., 2015), increased social exclusion of certain groups within the local community (Steen-Johnsen, 2004; Murie & Musterd, 2004), and the sidelining of community voices in favour of profit-driven strategies (Ha, 2001). Ha (2001) argues that the goal of benefiting local communities by urban policy cannot be achieved if people are not able to make themselves heard of can take actions themselves. As a result, affected communities are often left with poorer access to affordable housing in their own neighbourhood, increased inequality and exclusion, also in the form of accessibility to services and the dislocation of vulnerable groups (Turk, 2021).

Despite the ESRS S3's emphasis on community impacts, it remains a high-level, principle-based framework. For developers, translating these principles into project-specific strategies is challenging due to the absence of sector-specific operational tools or benchmarks (Jonsdottir et al., 2022; Baumüller & Grbenic, 2021). This gap is visually highlighted in the representation of ESG focus across scales, where European directives – such as CSRD-tend to dominate the environmental (E) and governance (G) dimensions, but fall short in capturing the local complexity and relevance of the social (S) dimension. Figure 4 illustrates how 'local impact' extends beyond the current reach of European Directives despite its effort. This underscores the need for context-specific frameworks that translate broad regulations into place-based social value outcomes.

EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES

LOCAL IMPACT

E S G
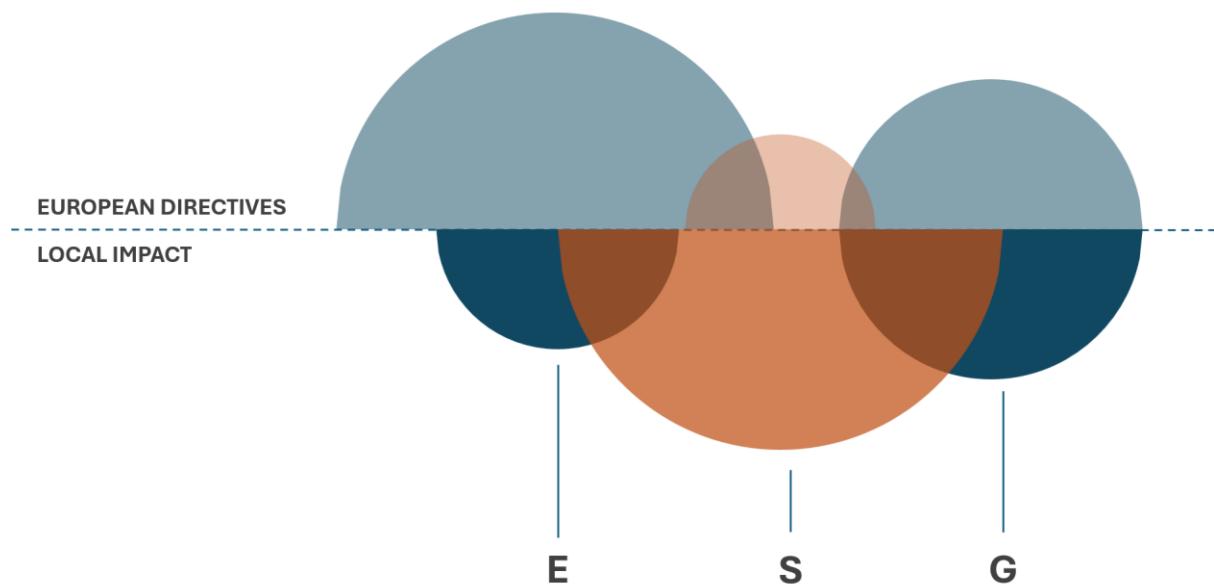
Figure 4 ESG principles focus in European Directives versus the Local impact by Vith, Wupperfeld & Nevejan (adapted from citiesDAO, 2024)

Regulatory frameworks like ESRS S3 reflect system logic, standardizing social impact reporting (system world), whereas community values and experiences are more nuanced, emotional, and context-dependent, referred to as the lifeworld (Habermas, 1987; Van der Pennen & Van Bortel, 2015).

Crossing frameworks – bridging the gap

This underscores the need for context-specific frameworks that translate broad regulations into local place-based outcomes. To address the implementation gap, this thesis draws on the academic framework by Shirazi & Keivani (2018), which offers a threefold structure on social sustainability; Neighbourhood (physical infrastructure), Neighbouring (activities and interactions) and Neighbours (demographic mix), as illustrated in figure 5.

In this light, the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework offers an academically grounded and operationalizable structure to assess social sustainability through a community-centred lens, helping to bridge the gap between institutional reporting and the contextual realities of urban neighbourhoods. The Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework offers an academically grounded and operationalizable structure to assess social sustainability through a community-centred lens, helping to bridge the gap between institutional reporting and the experiences of affected communities.
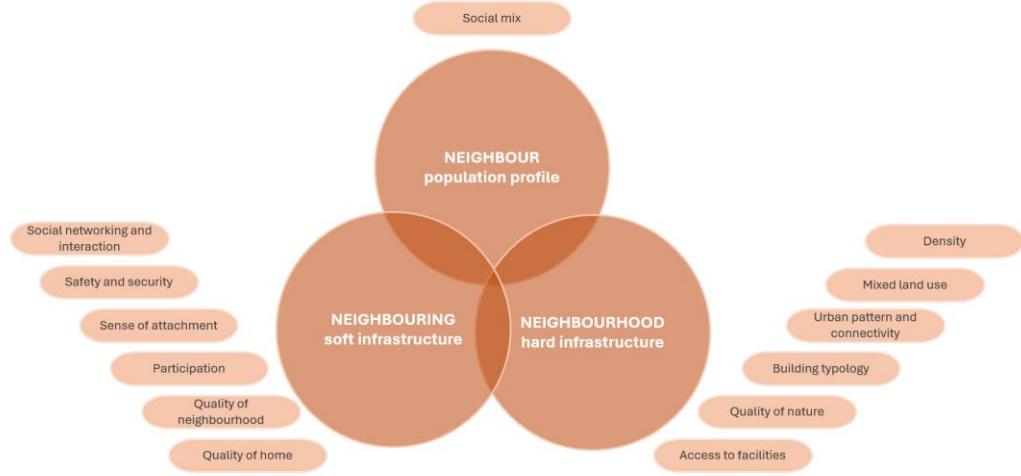
Figure 5 Neighbourhood, Neighbouring and Neighbours framework on social sustainability (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)

By combining the regulatory lens of CSRD/ESRS with the theoretical framework of Shirazi & Keivani, this research explores how social sustainability can be more meaningfully defined, operationalized, and reported in the context of urban redevelopment. In doing so, it seeks to uncover how developers in the Netherlands interpret their responsibilities toward affected communities and whether their strategies align with both regulatory expectations and community needs.

1.2 Problem statement

The implementation of the CSRD with the ESRS guidelines marks a turning point in how companies are expected to assess, communicate and report their impacts. Urban redevelopment affects communities in both positive and negative ways. Despite the growing regulatory pressure and financial incentive to align strategies with ESG, developers in find it hard to translate abstract principles of social sustainability on affected communities (as described in the ESRS – S3), into tangible strategies and reporting practices. At the same time, research on social sustainability in academia has increased in the past decades, offering frameworks that are useful in practice (e.g. McKenzie, 2004; Chiu, 2004; Colantonio & Dixon, 2009; Colantonio, 2010; Bramley et al., 2009; Dempsey et al., 2009; Dixon & Woodcraft, 2013; Shirazi & Keivani, 2018; Akcali & Cahantimur, 2023). However their remains a gap between the alignment of strategies to the CSRD and the contextual factors of affected communities due to lack of data, resources, or knowledge (Morsky, 2024) about the local context. Nevejan (BPD, 2024) argues that effective alignment with frameworks requires specific knowledge and data about neighbourhoods and communities, which can be referred to as the lifeworld. The disconnect between the regulatory directives, the academic insight, the developers incentives and the local context of communities makes up for a language barrier between the system- and the lifeworld as illustrated in figure 6.

Figure 6 Language barrier between the system world and the lifeworld (author, 2025)

1.3 Aim of this study

The aim of this research is to examine how developers in the Netherlands interpret and implement strategies around social sustainability in urban redevelopment, and how these strategies align with the ESRS S3 reporting requirements on affected communities. By integrating the ESRS S3 standard with the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) academic framework, this study seeks to construct an adapted framework that provides a more operational understanding of social sustainability in the built environment. The research investigates how current developer strategies correspond to this framework and identifies key gaps and overlaps. Through expert validation, it further aims to explore how these misalignments can be addressed, offering recommendations for aligning regulatory demands with socially meaningful practice in neighbourhood development.

1.4 Research Questions

The main research question sought to be answered in this study is: *How do developers in the Netherlands interpret and integrate social sustainability in neighbourhood development, and how does this align with ESRS S3 reporting requirements on affected communities?*

To support this main research question, the following sub questions are derived:

SQ1: How do the ESRS S3 standard and the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework compare and contrast in their treatment of social sustainability in urban redevelopment, and how can their integration inform an adapted, more operational framework?

SQ2: How do Dutch developers define and strategize around social sustainability and affected communities in urban redevelopment projects?

SQ3: Where do the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in the urban redevelopment cases align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework?

SQ4: How can representatives of the local community and the municipality broaden or deepen the understanding of strategies on affected communities in urban redevelopment projects for developers?
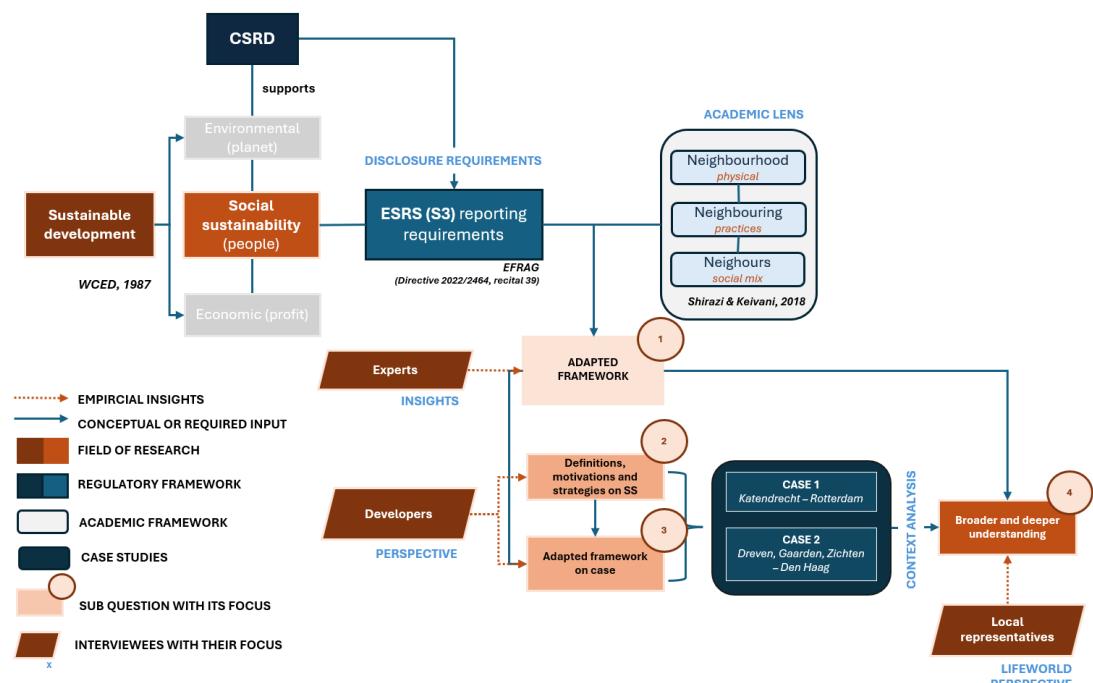
Figure 7 Research framework identifying the field of research leading to the SQs (author, 2025)c

Figure 7 illustrates the research framework of this thesis and shows the flow of the research with the sub-questions. It starts with the field of research on sustainable development, which is reported through the CSRD which is based on the ESG principles. The focus of this thesis is on the Social pillar, which then leads to the ESRS S3 reporting guideline on affected communities. This guideline forms the core reporting requirement examined in this research. This regulatory framework is placed in dialogue with the academic framework of Shirazi & Keivani (2018), which defines social sustainability through three dimensions: Neighbourhood (spaces), Neighbouring (practices), and Neighbours (social mix). These two perspectives are integrated into an adapted framework, developed through expert input (SQ1).

The adapted framework is then applied to developer case studies (SQ2 and SQ3) to analyze how social sustainability is operationalized in Dutch redevelopment projects. The final step (SQ4) involves turning to the affected community through local representatives for the two cases. Local actors, participation specialists and municipal representatives are interviewed to broaden and deepen the understanding of the effects of urban redevelopment on the affected communities and how this is reflected in the adapted framework.

1.5 Relevance

Scientific relevance

This research contributes to the academic discourse on social sustainability in the built environment by operationalizing the abstract ESRS S3 standard using the theoretically and academically grounded framework of Shirazi & Keivani (2018). While much of the existing literature explores definitions and principles of social sustainability (e.g. Dempsey et al., 2009; Woodcraft, 2012), this thesis bridges regulatory and academic perspectives through the development and validation of an adapted framework on affected communities specifically. The study offers a structured approach to understanding the spatial, relational, and demographic dimensions of social sustainability in the built environment. This study contributes to the ongoing debate on how urban redevelopment strategies influence and are influenced by community experiences.

Furthermore, this thesis is among the first to explore the intersection between social sustainability theory and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS S3). In doing so, it offers a critical academic perspective on how emerging regulatory frameworks influence organizational behaviour, especially in sectors like real estate where social reporting remains underdeveloped. The research builds a bridge between normative concepts of sustainability and system-based governance tools, providing a foundation for future research on the effects of sustainability regulations like CSRD and ESRS on urban planning, design, and real estate development.

Societal relevance

The study offers practical value to urban developers, municipalities, and other relevant stakeholders by identifying the misalignments between top-down ESG expectations and operationalized strategies of developers. As the ESRS S3 standard becomes mandatory under the CSRD, many developers face uncertainty about how to translate broad social goals into reportable and measurable strategies. By clarifying the links between regulatory obligations and practical implementation strategies, this thesis supports developers not only in aligning their ambitions with emerging reporting requirements but also with contributing meaningfully to inclusive urban redevelopment. This supports fairer redevelopment processes that are more responsive to the realities of affected communities.

By testing the applicability of the ESRS S3 standard in a real-world urban development context, the research provides insights into how regulatory frameworks can be operationalized and evaluated on the ground. It contributes to the ongoing refinement of sustainability reporting by identifying where current standards succeed or fall short in capturing complex, place-based social realities.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Sustainable Development and Social Sustainability

In April 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development report 'Our Common Future' introduced the term *sustainable development* as a major theme in development policy literature. This report emphasized the need of ensuring that current actions do not harm future generations (WCED, 1987). The study led to the formulation of the 'classic triangle of sustainable development', which defines sustainability as the intersection of three key dimensions: environmental, economics, and society (Elkington, 1994; Campbell, 1996; Sachs, 1999). Development is not considered sustainable if any one of the three dimensions, economic, environmental, or social, is not adequately maintained (Debrunner, 2021). While the environmental and economic pillars of sustainability have been thoroughly integrated into urban planning discourse and practice, the social dimension remains comparatively underdeveloped and less operationalized (Littig and Griessler, 2005; Dempsey et al., 2009; Buskens & Heurkens, 2016; Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017).

Social sustainability is however receiving greater attention by both scholars and policy makers within the sustainable development debate (Akcali & Cahantimur, 2023). Neighbourhoods are seen as the practical scale in urban environments in which social sustainability can be implemented. By implementing social interventions, social problems such as poverty, social exclusion and gentrification can be impacted (Pagano, 2015; Durose and Lowndes, 2010; Lowndes and Sullivan, 2008; Lawless, 2006; Kearns and Parkinson, 2001)

Social sustainability encompasses the networks, institutions, relationships, and cultural dynamics that support well-being, social equity, and democratic participation (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018). Dempsey et al. (2009) identify two critical elements of urban social sustainability: the equity of access to key resources (such as housing, education, healthcare, and employment), and the sustainability of communities themselves, reflected in the strength of social networks, identity, and the ability to maintain social capital.

However, conceptualizing and measuring social sustainability in urban development is complex. Social processes are highly contextual and qualitative in nature (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018; Janssen & Basta, 2022), making them more difficult to capture with standardized metrics.

2.1.1 Traditional vs. Emerging Themes in Social Sustainability

When analysing the different forms and definitions of the social sustainability concept it becomes clear that the more traditional themes, such as equity, inclusion, justice and poverty are supported by more intangible concepts in the later years such as social cohesion, sense of belonging, social interaction and community feeling. Colantonio (2009) highlights this movement from more tangible (hard) concepts to intangible (soft) themes as outlined in table 1, and indicates the importance of achieving 'soft' objectives in the urban environment to positively impact society. This classification provides a useful lens for identifying what social sustainability entails in urban contexts.

Table 1 Traditional and emerging themes of social sustainability (adapted from Colantonio & Dixon, 2009)

Traditional themes (tangible and hard)	Emerging themes (intangible and soft)
Basic needs (housing, health)	Social capital
Education and skills	Sense of place and belonging
Employment and income	Empowerment and participation
Equity and access	Identity, culture and social cohesion
Human rights and justice	Well-being, quality of life and happiness

This distinction is particularly useful for translating abstract principles of social sustainability into actionable strategies and indicators. Traditional themes often align with infrastructure and service provision, while emerging themes focus on social dynamics and quality of life.

2.1.2 Social Sustainability Definitions

Numerous scholars have contributed to defining the concept, often from different disciplinary and cultural perspectives. Table 2 presents a selection of influential definitions that inform this thesis.

Table 2 Selected definitions of social sustainability with most important take aways (collected by author, 2025)

Author(s), year	Definition
Sachs, 1999	A strong definition of social sustainability must rest on the basic values of equity and democracy, and include all human rights such as political, civil, economic, social, and cultural for all people.
Stren & Polese, 2000	Social sustainability for a city is defined as development (and/or growth) that is compatible with the harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration, with improvements in the quality of life for all segments of the population.
Chiu, 2003	Social sustainability strives to improve the life conditions for people who live now and who will live in the future
Dempsey et al., 2009	The concept of social sustainability addresses both *social equity* (access to services, facilities, and opportunities) and the *sustainability of community* itself (the ability of society to sustain and reproduce itself at an acceptable level of functioning).
Janssen & Basta, 2022	urban social sustainability was therefore articulated as the set of context specific conditions that enable relations between citizens and their living environment conducive to individual and collective well-being.

Social sustainability of affected communities in this research refers to the ability of urban redevelopment processes to support equitable and inclusive communities which takes into account the quality of neighbourhoods for affected communities, the practices of social interaction and participation and the diversity and well-being of neighbours. This definition has derives its core principles from Shirazi & Keivani (2018) but includes the multi-dimensional concept of social sustainability of communities. Parallel to this, this research integrates the ESRS S3 standard, which defines affected communities as individuals or groups whose interests are impacted by a company's operation, thus social sustainability in this study focuses on the impact that urban redevelopment projects, carried out by private developers, has on local communities.

2.1.3 Contemporary approaches and operationalization challenges

The literature on social sustainability acknowledges that while normative definitions of social sustainability are essential, they must be translated into operational frameworks to inform policy and development practice. Shirazi and Keivani (2018) critique existing models for their lack of spatial specificity and propose a human-centred approach that integrates neighbourhood-level indicators such as physical infrastructure, social practices, and community demographics.

Similarly, Janssen et al. (2024) argue that most urban development projects fall short in evaluating social sustainability due to vague definitions and a lack of concrete implementation tools. They advocate for a capability-based approach that examines how planning and design contribute to individual freedoms and community agency. This aligns with Atanda's (2020) assessment framework, which includes indicators like participation, equity, cultural identity, and safety.

Missimer (2017) contributes a systemic view by embedding social sustainability within a broader strategic framework for sustainable development. She emphasizes the structural conditions that erode social systems, such as institutional neglect, exploitation, and barriers to participation, which can guide policy responses.

Murphy (2012) adds a policy analysis lens, reviewing how the social pillar is often the most underrepresented in sustainable development strategies. His framework encourages the integration of social values in policy cycles, including agenda setting, implementation, and evaluation.

These frameworks share a recognition that social sustainability must be sensitive to local socio-spatial dynamics and be assessable through practical tools. Table 3 below presents a comparative summary of some of these widely cited frameworks, showing how each contributes to different dimensions of urban social sustainability.

Table 3 Key frameworks for assessing urban social sustainability (author, 2025)

Author(s)	Focus Areas	Strengths	Limitations
Colantonio & Dixon (2009)	Traditional vs. Emerging Themes	Clear thematic categorization	Limited to descriptive indicators
Dixon & Woodcraft (2013)	Community participation, neighbourhood	Practical and place-based	Designed for new developments
Janssen et al. (2024)	Capabilities, agency, empowerment	Emphasis on agency and justice	Difficult to quantify or benchmark
Atanda (2020)	Participation, cultural identity, equity	Structured indicators and scoring	Requires adaptation for EU urban contexts
Missimer (2017)	Systems resilience, inclusivity	Systems thinking approach	Abstract, not specific to the built environment

While each of these frameworks contributes critical insight, few fully capture the spatial and relational dynamics of urban neighbourhoods undergoing redevelopment. In response to this gap, Shirazi and Keivani (2018) introduce a threefold model that provides both conceptual clarity and practical adaptability for neighbourhood-scale assessments.

2.2 Academic perspective – Triad of Social Sustainability framework by Shirazi & Keivani

The framework developed by Shirazi and Keivani (2018) addresses a long-standing challenge in social sustainability research: the lack of a coherent, operationalizable model that captures the multidimensional nature of urban life. Their work introduces a threefold structure, Neighbourhood, Neighbouring, and Neighbours, which together provide a comprehensive and scalable framework for understanding and measuring social sustainability at the neighbourhood level.

- Neighbourhood refers to the physical and infrastructural characteristics of the built environment. This includes aspects such as housing quality, access to public services, transportation infrastructure, green spaces, and the spatial layout of the urban environment. These elements influence the everyday experiences and well-being of residents and are foundational to shaping social interactions.

- Neighbouring captures the social processes and practices that take place within the neighbourhood. It concerns how residents interact, form relationships, engage in collective activities, and build trust. This dimension emphasizes the importance of social cohesion, community participation, and informal networks in creating a sense of belonging and identity.

- Neighbours addresses the demographic and socio-economic composition of the community. It includes factors such as age, ethnicity, income distribution, education, and household structure. This component highlights how social diversity, inclusion, and equity affect the resilience and sustainability of neighbourhoods.

The framework is designed to be both conceptually and practically adaptable. Shirazi and Keivani argue that social sustainability must be understood as a dynamic interplay between the material conditions of urban space (Neighbourhood), the quality of social interactions (Neighbouring), and the composition of the population (Neighbours). These domains are interdependent and collectively constitute a framework that accounts for the complexity of urban contexts.

This approach also addresses the scalar nature of social sustainability. The authors caution against one-size-fits-all indicators and advocate for context-sensitive frameworks that are rooted in the socio-spatial characteristics of

each place. They propose that any effort to assess social sustainability must consider the specifics of the urban context and be grounded in the experiences of residents.

By offering clear conceptual categories and accompanying indicators, the Shirazi and Keivani (2018) framework provides a practical basis for both academic analysis and policy-making in urban redevelopment. It enables practitioners and researchers to move beyond abstract principles and engage with the tangible and relational dimensions of social sustainability in urban neighbourhoods.

In this thesis, the triad will serve as a theoretical lens for understanding how social sustainability can be interpreted and assessed in urban redevelopment projects. It will help uncover how spatial, social, and demographic dimensions are represented in practice and how they contribute to sustainable community development.

2.3 Affected communities in urban redevelopment

2.3.1 Affected Communities in Urban Redevelopment

Urban redevelopment projects are often positioned as key instruments to revitalize cities, improve housing stock, and stimulate local economies (Kahn, 2000; Debrunner, 2021). However, these large-scale interventions frequently produce unintended consequences for existing residents, particularly in marginalized or vulnerable communities (Steen-Johnsen, 2004; Murie & Musterd, 2004). The academic discourse on affected communities highlights how processes such as densification and urban redevelopment can lead to displacement and social exclusion of community (Lees et al., 2015; Debrunner., 2021).

Affected communities include local residents, community organizations, and groups whose lives are directly impacted by development interventions. Glasson and Wood (2009) emphasize that redevelopment can change access to services, reshape demographics, and alter the character of neighbourhoods, thereby producing social impacts that are difficult to capture through traditional planning assessments. In this context, social sustainability cannot be approached as a purely technical or design-oriented goal, but must also consider political processes, governance structures, and community agency (Debrunner, 2021).

Debrunner (2021) highlight exclusionary mechanisms in densification projects, revealing how urban planning decisions often serve institutional interests while ignoring the displacement risks for low-income households. Institutional biases often embedded in redevelopment plans fail to accommodate the rights and needs of the most affected (Debrunner, 2021). Justice claims during regeneration projects, such as compensation, preservation of cultural identity and equitable development, are oftend poorly negotioated due to a lack of inclusive dialogue and participatory processes with the local community.

Urban redevelopment often suffers from a temporal and spatial disconnect between long-term community needs and short-term project goals (Carmon, 1999). As Woodcraft (2012) and Glasson and Wood (2009) have argued, successful redevelopment must support place attachment, collective identity, and long-term social cohesion. Evaluating community well-being requires frameworks that move beyond economic indicators to capture these qualitative dimensions.

Recent studies have stressed the importance of recognizing neighbourhoods as not only the spatial unit of development but also the social unit of everyday life (Bradley, 2017; Pagano, 2015). Redevelopment without the integration of local social dynamics risks undermining the very goals it is supposed to serve. Community resilience, cultural preservation, and meaningful participation are critical for assessing the sustainability of urban redevelopment interventions (Missimer, 2015; Atanda, 2020).

Yet, as figure 8 from CitiesDOA (2024) illustrates, EU-level frameworks like CSRD and ESRS tend to focus on systemic reporting, often overlooking localized social impacts and the specificities of neighbourhood-level dynamics. This thesis therefore explores how affected communities can be more effectively integrated into the assessment and reporting practices of urban developers.
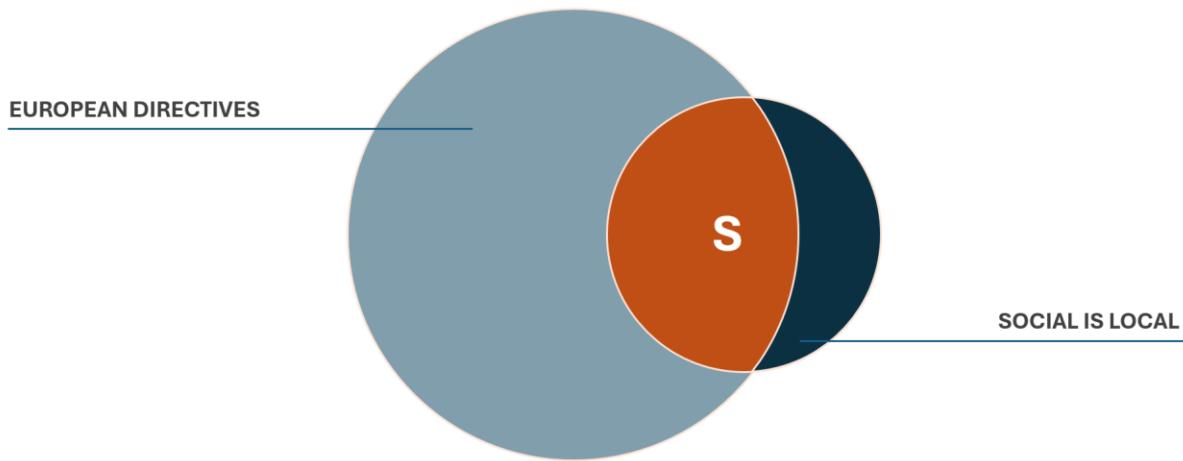
Figure 8 EU directives in contrast with local context, underscoring the overlap of Social in ESG by Vith, Wupperfeld & Nevejan (adapted from citiesDAO, 2024)

2.4 CSRD on affected communities

The growing complexity of sustainability challenges has pushed regulatory institutions to formalize how companies report on their social and environmental impacts. In the European Union, this shift is embodied in the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), which came into effect in 2024 and represents a landmark effort to mainstream Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosures. Replacing the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD), the CSRD significantly broadens the scope of mandatory sustainability reporting, now covering approximately 50,000 companies across sectors (European Commission, 2023a).

2.4.1 Double materiality

A central conceptual principle introduced with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) is the principle of double materiality (RVO, 2025). This principle acknowledges two dimensions of corporate impact:

1. *Financial materiality* – how sustainability issues affect the company's value and performance (outside-in perspective), and

2. *Impact materiality* – how the company's operations affect people, communities, and the environment (inside-out perspective) (EFRAG, 2023; RVO, 2025).

This dual lens broadens the scope of reporting beyond traditional risk management, compelling companies to reflect both internal risks and their external societal footprint. For companies in the built environment, such as real estate developers, this means not only tracking how social or environmental risks (e.g., housing shortages, climate adaptation) impact their operations, but also how their developments affect communities, urban ecosystems, and spatial justice for example.

Double materiality is particularly relevant when discussing social sustainability in urban development, where the consequences of decision-making unfold in deeply local contexts, through it be negative displacement, gentrification, or the lack of accessible services.

2.4.2 ESRS S3 on affected communities

To guide reporting, the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG) developed the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS), a structured set of standards to ensure consistency, comparability, and transparency across disclosures. Within the social domain, ESRS contains four specific standards: S1 (Own Workforce), S2 (Workers in the Value Chain), S3 (Affected Communities), and S4 (Consumers and End-users). Among these, **ESRS S3 – Affected Communities** is particularly relevant to urban redevelopment, as it focuses on

how a company's operations impact existing local communities. ESRS S3 requires companies to disclose how their operations influence local communities, including aspects such as land use, access to essential services, cultural heritage, economic inclusion, and the well-being of vulnerable populations (EFRAG, 2023).

ESRS S3 requires disclosures on:

- Stakeholders
- IRO, strategy and business model
- Policies
- Engagement
- Remediation
- Actions
- Targets

Companies are expected to identify material topics using a double materiality assessment and to develop indicators, policies, and performance metrics that address community-related impacts. They must also describe their stakeholder engagement processes and how community feedback informs decision-making (Charluet, 2025).

2.4.3 Challenges in operationalization

ESRS S3 is intentionally principle-based and sector-wide, which creates a critical implementation gap for industries like real estate and urban development. Developers are expected to assess their community impacts, but lack concrete tools to translate these obligations into local, actionable strategies. As shown in Figure X (from CitiesDAO, 2023), there is often a disconnect between high-level ESG directives and the context- and place-based realities of local communities.

This gap is particularly relevant in urban redevelopment projects where impacts on local communities are immediate, tangible, and complex. Developers often do not fall directly under the CSRD's scope (especially if privately owned or below the threshold of 250 employees or €40 million turnover), but their funders and institutional investors typically do (KPMG, 2024). As these financial actors are required to demonstrate ESG performance, developers face growing pressure to adopt sustainability metrics to attract investment and align with regulatory expectations (BPD, 2024; KPMG, 2024). Consequently, the CSRD and ESRS frameworks increasingly shape how urban redevelopment projects are conceptualized, funded, and communicated, even when reporting is not legally mandated.

From a sustainable development perspective, this regulatory evolution represents a profound opportunity to integrate social value into the urban planning and development process. The emphasis on transparency, comparability, and stakeholder engagement resonates strongly with the goals of equitable and inclusive urban regeneration (Dempsey et al., 2009; Colantonio & Dixon, 2011). Yet, the challenge remains in bridging the abstract principles of ESRS S3 with effective strategies of developers redeveloping urban space in which communities are affected.

2.5 Bridging frameworks

While ESRS S3 provides high-level expectations for corporate disclosures on how companies affect local communities, it lacks operational specificity and sectoral depth, particularly for urban redevelopment. The academic literature offers complementary insights that can ground these principles in community-level realities. The threefold framework proposed by Shirazi and Keivani (2018) conceptualizes social sustainability through three interrelated domains. This model emphasizes a place-based, relational understanding of social sustainability, providing conceptual clarity often lacking in principle-based ESG guidelines.

Thus, the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework is not proposed as a replacement but as a conceptual tool to enrich the understanding of "affected communities" as defined in ESRS S3. It supports more grounded and

operational interpretations of social sustainability, bridging the gap between abstract regulatory expectations and the experiences of communities in urban redevelopment contexts. This theoretical alignment sets the stage for developing an adapted framework that integrates both regulatory and academic perspectives, enhancing the ability of developers and stakeholders to assess and report on social sustainability in a way that is both compliant and contextually relevant.

2.6 Conceptual lens: System- and lifeworld

Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action (1987) offers a useful lens for understanding the tension between institutional systems and the local context of communities in urban development. He distinguishes between the system world, which includes formal structures such as government bodies, corporate practices, and regulations driven by instrumental rationality (efficiency, control, compliance), and the lifeworld, which encompasses informal social relations, values, culture, and everyday experiences guided by communicative rationality (mutual understanding and trust).

This distinction is particularly relevant in neighbourhood development, where developers and policymakers often operate within the logic of the system, while residents experience changes through the lifeworld (Tonkens & De Wilde, 2014). Regulatory frameworks like ESRS S3 reflect system logic, standardizing social impact reporting, whereas community values and experiences are more nuanced, emotional, and context-dependent. The system world logics may neglect local realities, especially in vulnerable neighbourhoods, which should however be addressed (Habermas, 1987; Van der Pennen & Van Bortel, 2015).

For this thesis, the system world is represented by developers' institutional strategies and regulatory frameworks such as ESRS S3, which embody formal, top-down approaches to social sustainability. The lifeworld is explored through academic literature and expert interviews, which provide insight into more grounded, human-centered understandings of how social sustainability is interpreted in practice and in the local context. While this theoretical lens supports the analysis, it will be used flexibly, recognizing that stakeholders may express similar values using different language or logics.

Use of words

In this thesis, concepts such as *language barrier*, *translation*, *meaningful*, and *symbolic* are used as analytical terms rather than literal linguistic descriptions. They refer to differences in rationalities, frames of reference and ways of articulating social value between system actors and affected communities. Where system-world actors tend to express social sustainability through formal strategies, policies, indicators and reporting requirements, lifeworld actors articulate social sustainability through lived experience, everyday practices, identity and social relations. The notion of a *language barrier* is therefore used to describe the difficulty of aligning these different ways of understanding and expressing social sustainability. This conceptual lens informs the analysis and is further operationalised in later chapters.

3 METHODOLOGY

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

This research holds a qualitative, exploratory approach, well-suited for investigating complex, context-specific questions surrounding social sustainability in urban redevelopment The objective is to understand how Dutch developers interpret and implement strategies related to affected communities and how these align with regulatory frameworks, specifically the ESRS S3 standard, and a grounded academic model.

While the research is initially structured in a way, the empirical process evolves dynamically using an *iterative* process. Insights from early interviews and document reviews inform adjustments in subsequent stages, allowing the methodology to respond to the complexity of operationalizing social sustainability in practice. This iterative character is important given the novelty of the ESRS S3 standard and the lack of established tools on social sustainability strategies in the Dutch built environment.

This study proceeds in multiple stages as illustrated in figure 9, following the logical structure of the SQs. The first stage starts with a comparative analysis of the ESRS S3 reporting standard and the academic framework by Shirazi & Keivani (2018) through a theoretical analysis. The analysis is then discussed with experts from the field of social sustainability, ESG strategies and urban development. In this analysis the frameworks are compared and contrasted, which results in an integrated adapted framework. This stage reflects **SQ1**, discussed in **chapter 4**.

After this two cases are introduced to carry out the empirical embedding of the adapted framework in chapter 5. First a context analysis is done for both cases through desk research. After this introduction to both cases, **SQ2** is addressed in **section 5.4**. For this SQ semi-structured interviews are held with the developers of these cases, which give insight into their strategies, perceptions and motivations related to social sustainability and affected communities.

The interviews are also used to map the strategic narratives and objectives mentioned by the developers, together with strategies mentioned in documentation from the context analysis, against the adapted framework. This answers **SQ3** in **section 5.5**, where it becomes clear where the strategies align, extend or diverge from the framework.

In **section 5.6** the last SQ is addressed, local representatives from both cases are interviewed to reflect on the analysis of SQ2 and SQ3 with the practical implications for affected communities. Community stakeholders, the municipality and a participation specialist is interviewed about the case and the neighbourhood, in order to deepen or broaden the understanding for developers on the affected communities. The interviews are open-ended, which allows the representatives to raise issues, concerns or experiences that are most relevant to them. Through the analysis of the insights, these interviews offer potential improvements for implementing the adapted framework as a tool. This last step is reflective and answers **SQ4**.
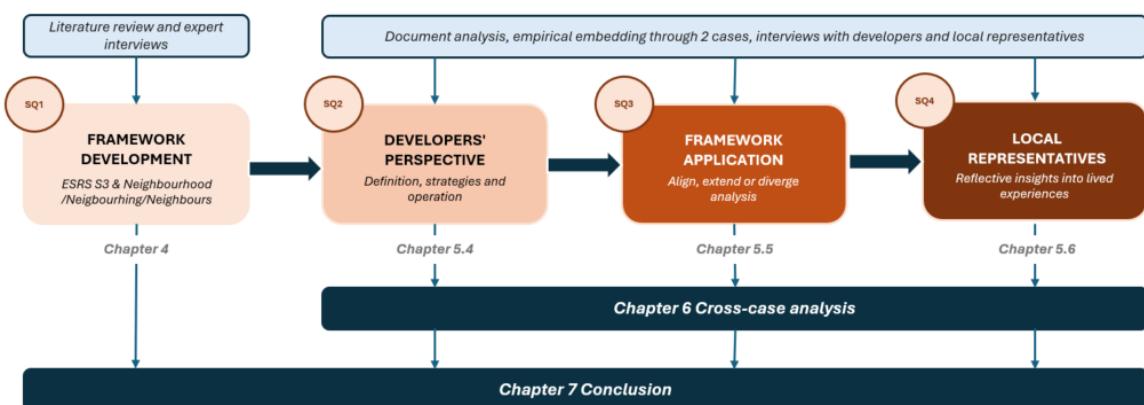
Figure 9 The structure of the thesis following the structure of SQs, in order to answer the main RQ in the conclusion (author, 2025)

Framing this study is Habermas's (1987) distinction between the system world; the domain of formal procedures, governance, and reporting, and the lifeworld; the domain of lived experience, values, and community-based narratives. This lens supports the investigation of whether and how the strategies and actions of developers bridge or reproduce the gap between institutional logic and community context as illustrated in figure 10.

SYSTEM WORLD   **LIFEWORLD**

Institutional   *gap*   **Community**

reported   *affected*

Figure 10 Gap between institutional logic and the local context of those affected (author, 2025)

3.2 Methods and techniques

To answer the main research question and its sub-questions (SQs), this study applies a qualitative, exploratory methodology combining literature review, document analysis through desk-research, expert validation, case study research, and semi-structured interviews with both developers and local representatives. Each SQ corresponds with a methodological component, allowing the research to move from theoretical development (SQ1), to developers' perspectives (SQ2), to framework application (SQ3) and finally to community reflection (SQ4). Table 4 summarizes the methodological alignment between the SQs, the methods used and the purpose of each SQ.

Table 4 Summary of SQs with their methods and purpose

Sub Question	Methodology	Methods	Purpose
SQ1 How do the ESRS S3 standard and the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework compare and contrast in their treatment of social sustainability in urban redevelopment, and how can their integration inform an adapted, more operational framework?	Compare and contrast framework analysis, qualitative interpretive approach	Literature review, ESRS S3 document analysis, semi-structured expert interviews, qualitative coding of transcripts	To develop an adapted framework for social sustainability in urban redevelopment for Dutch developers
SQ2 How do Dutch developers define and strategize around social sustainability and affected communities in urban redevelopment projects?	Case study research, qualitative interpretive approach	Desk research, semi-structured developer interviews, project documentation analysis, qualitative coding of transcripts	To understand developers' definitions, strategies, motivations, and interpretations in real project contexts
SQ3 Where do the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in the urban redevelopment cases align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework?	Framework application and comparative pattern analysis	Semi-structured developer interviews, document analysis, mapping strategies onto adapted framework	To empirically evaluate the applicability, completeness, and relevance of the adapted framework
SQ4 How can representatives of the local community and the municipality broaden or deepen the understanding of strategies on affected communities in urban redevelopment projects for developers?	Reflective analysis, qualitative interpretive approach	Semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders and municipality, qualitative interpretation of findings and thematic comparison	To assess the developers' perspective with lived experience and identify gaps between system world and lifeworld

SQ1 – Framework development

The first SQ focuses on developing an adapted framework by comparing and contrasting the ESRS S3 standard with the Triad of Social Sustainability by Shirazi & Keivani (2018). The framework integrates academic and regulatory perspectives on social sustainability.

Through comparative analysis both theoretically and through expert interviews, the research establishes a foundation for evaluating developer strategies and their social perspective in urban redevelopment projects. The table outlines how literature review, document analysis, and expert interviews collectively support the development of this framework.

Table 5 Description of SQ1: framework development

SQ1	Description
Objective	Develop an adapted framework combining ESRS S3 and academic theory
Methodology	Comparative framework analysis
Methods	Literature review, ESRS S3 content analysis, expert interviews
Participants	Field experts in ESG, sustainability reporting, community impact and urban redevelopment
Output	Adapted framework for assessing social sustainability in urban redevelopment

Expert interviews (n = 4)

To operationalize the concept of social sustainability and bridge the gap between regulatory frameworks and lived realities, this study includes a series of interviews with experts. These interviews serve a dual purpose. First, they provide interpretative insight into the ESRS S3 standard, helping clarify how it is understood and applied in the context of urban redevelopment. Second, they allow for critical validation and refinement of the adapted framework developed by comparing ESRS S3 with academic theories, particularly the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework. The experts selected represent a mix of professionals across academia, social value consultancy, ESG reporting, and urban development. Interviews will be semi-structured, allowing for in-depth discussion while maintaining consistency across key themes.

The data transcripts collected in the interviews are analysed in a qualitative way through coding, identifying patterns, themes and insights per interview. After which a cross-analysis across the interviews is carried out in order to create the adapted framework that involves the most important take-aways from the interviews. Table 6 gives a list of interviewees for this stage, with their expertise.

Table 6 List of interviewed experts for developing the adapted framework

Expert #	Expertise	Company	Job title
1	Impact strategies, capability approach in social sustainability, governance structures	TU Delft – Stichting Kennis Gebiedsontwikkeling	Post doctoral researcher - Researcher
2	Social impact assessment, heritage renewal projects	TU Delft- BOEi	PhD on societal impact of heritage renewal projects- Ontwikkelingsmanager
3	Community and individuals, bridging market parties to community	Social Value Foundation	Founder and Co-creator
4	Municipal strategies	Gemeente Leeuwarden	Strategic advisor 'wonen'

Empirical embedding through case-study

For the following SQs two cases are chosen for the empirical embedding. The redevelopment projects in the Netherlands are selected through purposeful sampling. The chosen cases involve private developers and reflect clear relevance to social sustainability and affected communities as outlined in the ESRS standard. In table 7 the short-list of potential urban redevelopment case-studies that are investigated for this research are outlined. The

two chosen cases are highlighted. The long-list of case-studies can be found in appendix B. The case selection is guided by the following criteria:

Relevance to social sustainability: Projects must explicitly aim to promote social sustainability, focusing on goals such as inclusion, equity, participation, or community well-being. Evidence of these ambitions should be visible in planning documents, public communications, or developer narratives.

Urban redevelopment context and an affected community: Selected projects must involve the transformation or renewal of existing urban areas, rather than entirely new greenfield developments. The project should demonstrate community impact, for example through changes to public space, social housing, or service access.

Developer involvement: Each project must be led or co-led by a private or semi-private developer responsible for formulating and implementing social strategies.

Case studies shortlist – urban redevelopment areas (n = 2)

Table 7 List of potential urban redevelopment cases for this research, two chosen cases highlighted

	Urban development (area)	Developers involved	Main theme & relevance to SS	Context and affected communities	Relevancy to thesis
2	Hart van Zuid (Rotterdam)	PPS with City of Rotterdam; Heijmans & Ballast Nedam	Area redevelopment around Zuidplein & Ahoy. Hart van Zuid has a particular focus on social impact; talent development, entrepreneurship and work possibilities for residents is important. Project involves a social program.	Targets residents of Rotterdam-Zuid with improved facilities, mobility and jobs; major public realm renewal around shopping centre and transport hub.	Strong 'affected communities' focus (service access, culture, mobility); rich interview terrain on PPP motivations and outcomes.
3	Katendrecht (Rotterdam)	Heijmans, Woonstad, BPD, Van Wijnen projectontwikkeling	Waterfront renewal with culture-led regeneration (Fenix warehouses, Deliplein) and mixed housing; narrative of image repair and inclusion versus gentrification risks.	Historic working-class/port district transitioning to mixed-income area; effects on existing residents, affordability and identity.	Good case to test 'social value vs. displacement' narratives and participation approaches
13	Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (The Hague South-West	Heijmans, Staedion housing association, Municipality of The Hagu	Large-scale urban renewal: replace/renovate social stock, add new homes across tenures, improve facilities; keep residents in the area where possible	Existing low-income neighbourhoods; phasing aims to minimise displacement and increase local opportunities	Directly addresses 'affected communities', rehousing and participation at scale
14	Wielewaal (Rotterdam	BPD (area developer) & Woonstad Rotterdam (housing association	Neighbourhood renewal balancing preservation of community identity with new mixed-income housing; resident association involved	Post-war garden suburb; strong resident identity and concerns over affordability and continuity	Rich governance/participation and affordability case in a sensitive existing community
17	Lodewijk van De Wielewaal (Rotterdamys selbuurt (Amsterdam Nieuw-West	Rochdale & Heijmans	Large-scale demolition, sustainable renovation, building of new homes; goal is mixed housing types, improved liveability, new amenities, better quality of built and public environment; explicit participatory process	Neighborhood built in the 1950s; mostly social housing (≈90%) owned by Rochdale; many homes outdated; demographic mix with many residents with migration backgrounds; issues of livability and public space; strong participation in planning	Very relevant: strong alignment with themes of affected communities, participation, inclusion, tenure mix; also useful for testing ESRS S3 "access to housing / tenure mix", "participation / local voice", "well-being of residents

SQ2 – Developers' perspective

To address the second SQ, semi-structured interviews are carried out with the developers of the cases. The purpose is to investigate how developers define and implement strategies in the cases related to affected communities. In order to understand the context of the case and prepare for the interview, first a context analysis for both cases is done in chapter 5.2 and 5.3.

Semi-structured interviews with developers (n = 3)

The semi-structured interviews with developers reveal practices, assumptions and narratives on social sustainability strategies embedded in the projects. The interviews explore several key themes relevant to understanding developers' approaches to social sustainability. First, respondents will be asked to describe how they define and interpret the concept of social sustainability within the context of urban redevelopment. This will provide insight into the language, values, and assumptions that inform their strategic choices. Second, the interviews will ask about the strategic motivations behind developers' actions, examining whether their social sustainability efforts are primarily driven by regulatory compliance, reputational concerns, or financial incentives. Lastly, the developers are asked to reflect on their interventions, to help understand their awareness on affected communities and compare them to local representatives in SQ4.

Table 8 details the methodological approach and the type of data collected in this empirical phase.

Table 8 Description of SQ2: developers' perspective

SQ2	Description
Objective	Analyze how developers define and implement social sustainability strategies
Methodology	Case study research
Methods	Semi-structured interviews, project documentation analysis (desk-research)
Participants	Dutch urban developers involved in selected redevelopment projects
Output	Empirical insights into strategy definitions, applications, and outcomes

SQ3 – Framework application

In this stage, the adapted framework is applied to two selected case studies of urban redevelopment in the Netherlands. The strategic objectives and narratives found through desk-research in the context analysis, are complemented with strategic objectives and narratives from the same developer interviews from SQ2.

The strategic narratives and developer strategies mapped to the adapted framework in the following way:

- Aligns = fits directly within one ore more stages as expected
- Extends = goes beyond what the framework explicitly includes, adds practices that are not captured or expands the scope of the framework
- Diverges = contradicts, bypasses or leaves gaps relative to what the framework prescribes

This SQ tests the practical relevance, clarity and comprehensiveness of the adapted framework through mapping. In table 9 the description of the objective, methods and output is given.

Table 9 Description of SQ3: framework application

SQ3	Description
Objective	Apply the adapted framework to analyse developers' strategies and evaluate alignment, extension, or divergence
Methodology	Case study research and mapping exercise
Methods	Semi-structured interviews, project documentation analysis (desk-research)

Participants	Dutch urban developers involved in selected redevelopment projects
Output	Analytical comparison between developer practice and the adapted framework

SQ4 – Local representatives

Finally, SQ4 addresses the lived experiences of the local community by interviewing local representatives and the municipality. This SQ emphasizes the lifeworld dimension of the framework by engaging with representatives from the municipality and community, like community builders or local interest groups.

The representatives are invited to reflect on how well the framework captures the social sustainability issues experienced in daily life, and whether the strategies of developers align with the needs, values, and lived realities of affected communities. The interviews are open-ended and explorative, creating space for local representatives to express their perspectives without limiting them to the adapted framework. Their perspectives provide an essential counterbalance to the system-world logics of reporting and developer strategies, allowing for a more grounded assessment of gaps and overlaps. In table 10 the description of the methods of SQ4 is given.

Table 10 Description of SQ4: Local representatives

SQ4	Description
Objective	Reflect on and assess the alignment between developer strategies, the framework and the community perspective
Methodology	Broadening and deepening understanding
Methods	Open-ended interviews with local representatives
Participants	Local representatives including municipality, community groups, community builder and participation specialist
Output	Refinement and reflection on relevance and completeness of adapted framework and developers strategies in the project

This reflective step evaluates the extent to which the framework bridges the institutional- community gap (Habermas, 1987), ensuring that the adapted framework is grounded in both formal reporting structures and the everyday dynamics of neighbourhood life.

3.3 Data analysis

The collected data for this study, including the expert interviews, developer interviews and interviews with local representatives, will be analysed through a qualitative thematic analysis, supported by the software atlas.ti. The coding process will adopt both deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive codes will be based on the adapted framework, which integrates academic insights and the ESRS S3 categories, while inductive codes will emerge from the data itself to capture unforeseen themes, language, or key indicators.

The coding structure will facilitate a structured comparison of developers' interpretations and strategies across spatial, social, and demographic dimensions of social sustainability. A comparative matrix will be developed to systematically analyse how developers' strategies align or diverge from the adapted framework. This matrix will also reflect the feedback gathered from experts in earlier interviews, thereby enabling iterative refinement of findings. The data analysis and coding for each type of interview has a different objective, which requires different codes and themes focused on, explained in table 11.

Table 11 Data analysis per interview type

SQ	Interview type	Data analysis
1	Expert interviews	Codes identifying insights, refinements, integration challenges of frameworks
2 + 3	Developer interviews	Codes about definition, strategies, interpretation, examples and operationalization of social sustainability
4	Local representatives interviews	Codes understanding experiences, values and concerns on strategies, affected communities and redevelopment project

3.4 Conceptualisation of terms for analysis

In addition to procedural data analysis methods, this research relies on a set of interpretive concepts to analyze differences between system world strategies and lifeworld experiences. Terms such as *language*, *translation*, *meaningful* and *symbolic* are used throughout the thesis as analytical constructs rather than in their literal sense.

- When *language* (barrier) is mentioned, it does not refer to spoken language, such as Dutch versus English, but to *differences in logics of reasoning* through which social sustainability is articulated.
- When *translation (gap)* is mentioned, it does not refer to missing vocabulary, but to *differences in frames of reference* between system-world strategies and lifeworld experiences.
- When *symbolic* is mentioned, it does not describe abstract or universally applicable effects, but *non-material forms of social value* such as identity, recognition and belonging which are experienced differently.
- When *meaningful* is mentioned, it refers to social sustainability that holds *value for diverse groups* by taking into account lived experiences and forms of participation that matter in practice, rather than being purely procedural.

3.4 Ethical considerations and data management

The study will adhere to ethical standards for qualitative research. All participants have received information about the study's purpose, their role, and their rights before giving informed consent. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed with participants' permission, and all data will be analysed without using the names of the interviewees to protect confidentiality. Ethical approval is obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) prior to data analysis on date 24-Nov-2025 under the application number 6051. Within this application the data management plan (DMP) for this research is formulated and approved by the HREC department and the Data Steward. Participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage without consequence, and data will be securely stored and used solely for the purpose of this research. The informed consent form can be found in appendix A.

All data will remain confidential, and only the names of the organization and job title are mentioned in the findings of this report. Following TU Delft's Research Data Framework Policy, processed data will be stored in the institutional repository for 10 years and made available under the FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable), supporting responsible data reuse in future research.

4 FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

4 FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 marks the first stage in the research where theory and empirical research cross into the development of an adapted framework. This chapter integrates the academic framework by Shirazi & Keivani (2018) introduced in section 2.2 and the regulatory lens of European guidelines for reporting, the ESRS S3, introduced in section 2.4. Through a comparative analysis and expert validation, this chapter answers **SQ1:** *How do the ESRS S3 standard and the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework compare and contrast in their treatment of social sustainability in urban redevelopment, and how can their integration inform an adapted, more operational framework?*

The objective of this chapter is twofold. Firstly it aims to compare and contrast both frameworks through literature and own conceptual interpretation. The insights from this initial framework is then presented to four experts in the field of social sustainability, urban development, housing strategies and social value in the built environment in order to critic and adjust the framework into a more operational framework for practice. The interviews with the experts are qualitatively analysed by coding, which leads to alternative frameworks presented in this chapter. The key suggestions are reflected in an adapted framework which reflects the scope of affected communities in urban redevelopment projects. The adapted framework is circled back to literature in order to support the changes by added research.

This stage aims to challenge the frameworks by experts critic and experience in order to develop a more operational framework for developers. In chapter 5 the adapted framework is used on practical cases in order to understand the practicability of the tool. The steps of this chapter are visualized in figure 11.
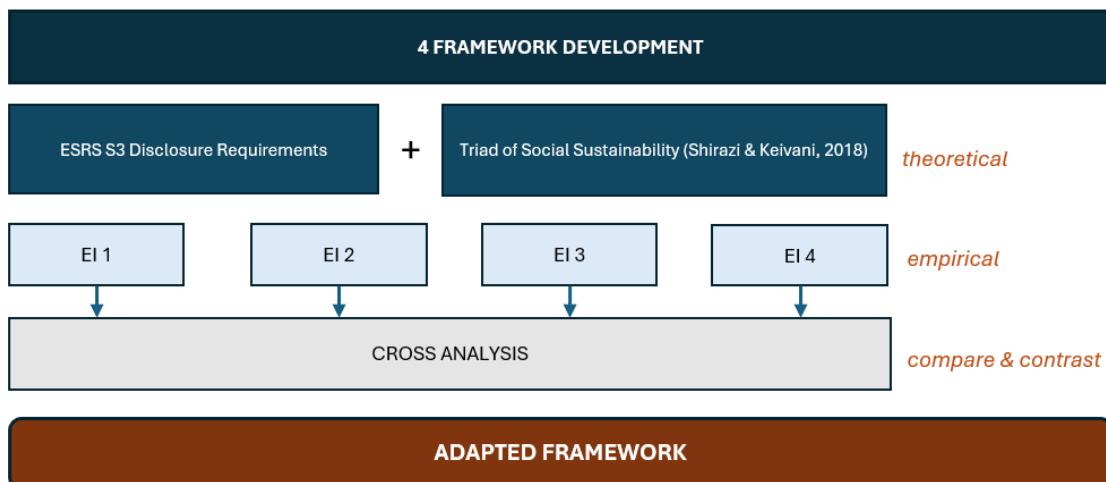
Figure 11 Structure of chapter 4 Framework Development, leading to the adapted framework (author, 2025)

4.2 Framework development from theory

This section integrates the ESRS S3 disclosure requirements on affected communities with the Triad of Social Sustainability framework (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018) to produce a theoretically grounded, operational baseline for an adapted framework. It compares conceptual aims and scopes, maps disclosure requirements to spatial-relational domains and identifies theoretical gaps that the adapted framework must address.

4.2.1 ESRS S3 – Affected Communities

The ESRS S3 on Affected Communities is one of the social-pillar standard adopted under the EU CSRD to ensure transparent disclosure of the effects and impact of a company's operation and strategy around people living and working in affected areas. It requires firms to identify every community that could be impacted; local residents, workers, indigenous groups and any other affected persons, after which the company needs to assess both the socio-environmental effects as well as the financial implications (Charluet, 2025). The purpose of ESRS S3 is to outline disclosure requirements for both actual positive and negative impacts, as well as potential impacts, risks and opportunities. Companies are required to describe how these effects on affected communities are managed, also outlining a project's short-, medium- and long-term financial impacts (Fuhrmann & Binder, 2024).

Double materiality

As explained in section 2.4 of the theoretical background, the concept of double materiality is an important cornerstone for the ESRS guidelines. Double materiality has a twofold perspective on reporting (Baumüller, 2022); (1) the financial materiality, which is typically of most interest for investors, (2) impact on the company's activities, which also indicates social materiality, which is typically of most interest to citizens, consumers, employees, communities or civil society organizations (EU Commission, 2019, p. 4). In figure 12, the concept of double materiality is visualized, where it is important to note that most companies focus on financial materiality rather than impact materiality (Charluet, 2025).
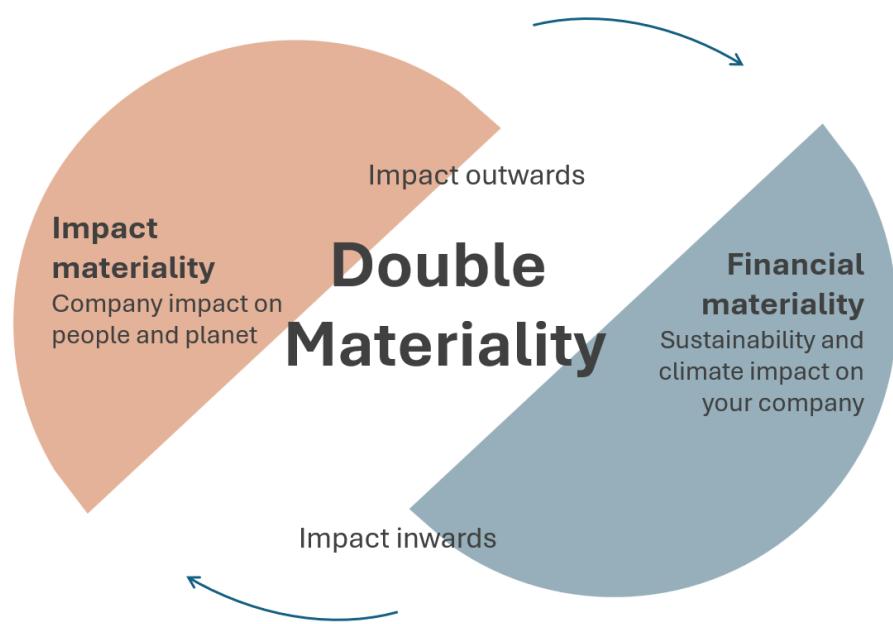
Figure 12 Double materiality, combining both financial and impact materiality (adapted from ESGTOOL.EU, n.d.)

ESRS S3 holds 2 general disclosure requirements and 5 specific disclosure requirements on affected communities, which are all visible in the table below (table 12).

Table 12 Disclosure requirements on affected communities and their descriptions

Disclosure requirement	No.	Key focus	Description
General disclosure	SBM-2	Stakeholders	Interests and views of stakeholders
General disclosure	SBM-3	IRO, strategy and business model	Material impacts, risks and opportunities and their interaction with strategy and business model(s)
IRO*	S3-1	Policies	Policies related to affected communities
IRO*	S3-2	Engagement	Processes for engaging with affected communities about impacts
IRO*	S3-3	Remediation	Processes to remediate negative impacts and channels for affected communities to raise concerns
IRO*	S3-4	Actions	Taking action on material impacts on affected communities, and approaches to mitigating material risks and pursuing material opportunities related to affected communities, and effectiveness of those actions
Metrics and targets	S3-5	Targets	Targets related to managing material negative impacts, advancing positive impacts, and managing material risks and opportunities

*IRO = Impact, risk and opportunity management

4.2.2 Triad of Social Sustainability – by Shirazi and Keivani (2018)

The Triad of Social Sustainability, developed by Shirazi and Keivani (2018) provides a place-based and multi-dimensional understanding of social sustainability in the built environment. The framework distinguishes three main domains with its indictors, that are interrelated and capture the spatial, social and human dimension of an urban context. In table 13, the three domains with its indicators are explained, which gives a strong understanding of context related elements in urban environments that affect social sustainability.

Table 13 Layers of the Triad of Social Sustainability by Shirazi & Keivani (2018) with their indicators and explenation

Layer	Indicator	Explanation
Neighbourhood	Density	Quantitative indicator, referring to concentration of individuals or physical structures within a specific territorial area (Grosvenor and O'Neill 2014)
	Mixed land use	Combination of different socio-economic functions in the same area (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)
	Urban pattern	Spatial arrangement and configuration of different urban elements including streets, block and buildings (Dempsey et al., 2010)
	Building typology	An abstract characterization of a set of buildings that have common formal characteristics (Scheer, 2010)
	Quality of centre	Explores open and public spaces of neighbourhoods which serve as socio-spatial 'centre' for the community (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)
	Access to facilities	(1) Availability of key amenities needed at the neighbourhood level (2) Physical accessibility of them for all members of the community (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)
Neighbouring	Social interaction and measures	Social interaction refers to the social activities that neighbours engage in, and social networks which residents develop in their neighbourhood (Unger and Wandersman 1985)
	Safety and security	Feeling of safety due to external and internal sources (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)
	Sense of attachment and security	(1) Attachment to the physical aspects of the built environment (2) Attachment to the people and community members (Rogers and Sukolratanametee, 2009; Mannarini et al., 2006)

	Participation	How the residents feel themselves responsible for their neighbourhood and to what extent they are interested in getting involved in dealing with problems and future plans (Michels and De Graaf, 2010)
	Quality of neighbourhood	The degree of satisfaction of the residents with their immediate environment, depending on an assessment of various attribtes of the environment that meet one's needs or goals (Walton et al., 2008; Parkes et al., 2002)
	Quality of home	Degree of residents' satisfaction with physical and non-physical characteristics of their home (Dekker et al., 2011)
Neigbours	Social mix	Map of population profile of the neighbourhood inhabitants, both as individual and family. Indicates the state of socio-economic diversity, wealth, ethnicity, race, age, gender, education, profession etc. (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)

The value of this framework lies in the clarity of themes and indicators spanned across the neighbourhood scale and urban context. The indicators combine theoretical grounding from literature, as shown in the explanation, with the capacity to translate the indicators into measurable characteristics showcasing social value. At the same time, the framework raises challenges in comparability due to the context sensitivity of the measured indicators.

However by introducing the Triad of Social Sustainability into the ESRS S3 disclosure requirements in this research, the abstract corporate reporting obligation (system world) becomes more grounded in the lived experience of the community (life-world).

4.2.3 Compare and contrast

When comparing and contrasting both frameworks, there are certain perspectives and patterns that can be covered. Firstly when looking at the aim and objective of both frameworks, they differ.

Contrasting aims, complementary values

The aim of ESRS S3 is mainly regulatory and functional, where reporting on sustainability becomes uniform and transparent, which ensures comparability between and accountability of organizations and institutions. It prescribes a procedural reporting logic with an added value of the double materiality matrix. The disclosure requirements are organized in five specific requirements on affected communities, which include reporting on policies, engagement tools, remediation, quantifiable actions and targets. However it lacks spatial or experience based indicators that reflect the communities' lived reality.

By contrast, the Triad of Social Sustainability operates at the neighbourhood scale, seeking an understanding of how social sustainability is implemented and reflected in society and practice. The Triad focusses on the interplay between the physical infrastructure, the community behaviour and experience and the demographic mix. The framework gives practical examples and measurement indicators that affect social wellbeing of individuals and a community.

Despite the differences in the aim, the content of the Triad of Social Sustainability can be seen as the substantive content and implication of the ESRS S3 because of the complimentary values both hold. Both frameworks hold a common thematic core, they both intent to identify, evaluate and communicate the ways in which human systems (affected communities) interact with environmental systems (urban redevelopment). ESRS S3 introduces a practical structure for reporting for compliance and governance, while the Triad of Social Sustainability supplies the disclosure requirements with context-specific indicators that make the framework meaningful for practice. In combination both frameworks enable a dual perspective on social sustainability in redevelopment projects, linking the system world of corporate reporting to the life-world of community experience.

Overlapping themes

Despite the different aims, there are several overlapping themes that emerge between both frameworks. Both frameworks acknowledge and emphasize the importance of participation and engagement with the community. The Triad translates the requirement of stakeholder dialogue and participation (SBM-2 & S3-2) into practice

under the layer of **neighbouring**; where *social interaction, sense of attachment and security and participation* are measurable indicators.

Another overlapping theme that occurs is that both frameworks acknowledge that social value is not static, it is dynamic and changes over time as a result of adaptation and involvement of the community. DR **S3-5** on monitoring targets reflect indicators on both **neighbourhood** and **neigbouring** level, that can be measured over time.

The mutual concern on inclusion and equity is another thematic overlap between both frameworks. Where the ESRS S3 has a *core focus on marginalized communities* and the impact on them, as well as how a companies' operation affects vulnerable groups and how they are involved, the Triad of Social Sustainability address diversity, accessibility and equal opportunity within the interrelation of the layer **neighbours** (social mix) in **neighbouring** activities and accessibility of the **neighbourhood**.

4.2.4 Mapping Triad into ESRS S3 – own conceptual interpretation

By comparing and contrasting the frameworks, it becomes interesting to integrate both in order to translate corporate disclosure requirements into place-based indicators. Each ESRS S3 disclosure requirement can be linked to the domains of the Triad of Social Sustainability. This leads to the matrix shown in figure 14, with examples of indicators.

Table 14 Matrix that combines ESRS S3 with the Triad of Social Sustainability

DR	Triad of SS layer	Operational interpretation	Example indicators, data sources
S3-1 Policies	Neighbourhood, neighbours	Define spatial footprint and objectives for affected communities	% social rent kept, SWOT analysis of neighbourhood
S3-2 Engagement	Neighbouring, neighbours	Representative engagement/participation, accessible documents/gatherings, show how input has changes decisions	Frequency of meetings, representation of different community groups/vulnerable groups, list of decisions influenced/changed by participation
S3-3 Remediation	Neighbouring	Local grievance channels, accessible offline and online platforms for raising concerns	# of complaints, # of grievance solved
S3-4 Actions	Neighbourhood, neighbouring	Clear link between physical interventions and the local need for changes	# of new facilities, community events, community programming, local hiring
S3-5 Targets	Neighbourhood, neighbours	Timebound targets, mixed-method monitoring on targets, pre- and post-delivery	Equity and wellbeing targets, # of satisfied residents
S3-6 Evaluation	Neighbourhood, neighbouring, neighbours	Governance instruments to insure post-delivery commitments, reflection report, evaluation and lessons learned	Monitoring statistics over the years

Gaps

The ESRS S3 structure is standardized, to enable comparability across companies and organizations, however this reveals a gap between the place-specific content of the Triad of Social Sustainability framework. There are no units of analysis or metrics to measure social value, which could be integrated into the S3-1 policies in the adapted framework. Another critical difference between both frameworks is the quantitative bias of the ESRS S3 due to the high-level reporting standard, and the qualitative meaning of experienced social values by the community, sought to captured by the Triad. A meaningful adaptation is to add and use the data collection sources and methods from the Triad model, as well as qualitative stories, cases or testimonies from residents. A essential gap in both frameworks seen is the lack of evaluation and reporting lessons to use in other project or to improve strategies subject to social sustainability or affected communities. This could be seen as the sixth DR.

4.3 Expert opinion

4.3 Empirical embedding through expert interviews

This section dives deeper into the challenges and opportunities of the adapted framework. The framework is presented to four experts, listed in table 15, with whom the adapted framework is discussed and critiqued in an interview. During the interviews first a concise pitch is presented to each expert to introduce the research background, the objective and to explain both frameworks, which can be found in appendix C. The adapted framework is then visually shared as a discussion tool, allowing the interviewees to respond to its structure, logic, indicators and applicability within the Dutch urban redevelopment context.

The interviews have semi-structured questions to guide the discussion, but always open-ended to encourage exploration and critical reflection. While the same themes are covered in each interview, such as the relevance of the indicators, measurement concerns and gaps in accountability, the discussions are flexible, allowing for new insights to emerge from the background of the experts and their experiences. This approach results in diverse but complementary perspectives discussed in section 4.4 Cross-analysis interviews.

Table 15 Interviewees SQ1: experts based alignment

Interviewee	*Job title*	*Company*
E1	Developer and PhD researcher	BOEi / TU Delft
E2	Post doctorial researcher	TU Delft / SKG
E3	Co-founder	Social Value Foundation
E4	Strategic advisor 'wonen'	Municipality of Leeuwarden

The analysis of the interviews are done manually by coding. Each interview is first transcribes and then coded by a set of broad termed codes; (1) general remark, (2) added value in framework, (3) + in framework, (4) needs work, (5) indicators. The key findings per code, per interview can be found in appendix D1-D4. The analysis of each interview are mentioned in the sections below, where each analysis leads to an alternative framework, based on the implied changes from the expert. Following the analysis of the individual interviews, a cross-analysis is done which highlights the elements of the framework that were consistently mentioned by the experts.

Interview E1

The first interview was conducted with redeveloper and advisor of real estate with particular focus on heritage, additionally a PhD-researcher with a focus on the social potential of heritage buildings. The expert emphasized the structural imbalance between the actions of short-term developers and what they write down as impact versus the actual long-term social outcomes experienced by communities. Accountability and judgement based on actual outcomes and impact emerged as a crucial missing link in the framework. Currently developers are not held accountable on their promises because they are not most often not responsible for the area after delivery. This results in no verification of if the social ambitions are actually realized and achieved after delivery. The expert also stressed that the ESRS S3 is too policy based, with no concrete statements on what to report regarding redevelopment projects and outcomes. The expert stressed that there is a need for concrete goals and quantifiable results in order to reflect on the outcomes as well adding the dimensions of the project cycle timeline to divide the different impacts that can be made (initiation, construction and post-delivery). Another note by the expert was the relationship between environmental and social impact, emphasizing the need to relate indicators like energy efficiency, green infrastructure and mobility (environmental domain) to affordability, quality of life and accessibility (social domain). The key findings with its categories can be found in appendix D1.

Supporting materials

An additional framework visualizing social impact of organizations mentioned by the expert was the *Maex Social Handprint.* This tool is developed by using the 17 SDGs as practical guidance to connect social value creation to organization impact. A takeaway from this supporting material is the visualization and easy to read impact from one chart. However the SGDs as a measurement framework does not suit this research due to its broad interpretation.

Alternative adapted framework 1

The analysis of the first interview led to the development of the first alternative framework. Practical suggestions from this interview include introducing an evaluation dimension in the framework, the emphasis on vulnerable groups in the neighbours dimension, integrating the project life cycle in every reporting guideline paragraph and defining concrete goals and minimum criteria as outcomes as presented in figure 13.

ESRS S3	Minimum requirement	Phase	Neighbourhood	Neighbouring	Vulnerable groups	Effect on environmental sustainability
S1 Policy	Concrete goal	*Preperation*				
		Construction				
		Management/ operations				
S2 Engagement	Same as above	*Same as above*				
S3 Remedy	Same as above	*Same as above*				
S4 Actions	Same as above	*Same as above*				
S5 Targets	Same as above	*Same as above*				
S6 Accountability	Same as above	*Same as above*				

Figure 13 Alternative adapted framework 1 (author, 2025)

Interview E2

The second interview conducted with an expert was with a postdoctoral researcher focused on urban social sustainability, planning and governance and community engagement. When presented the adapted framework, the initial remark was that the framework can be a good and practical guide for developers to think about their social impact with the interventions they do in existing neighbourhoods. The adapted framework needs to however not be a criteria that should be met or only a reporting guideline, but it should help developers think consciously about which indicators matter in their project and what motivates them to make a change. An important takeaway from this interview was that developers can make up their actions and targets, also referred to as the plan they make, but if they want to impact affected communities positively, they need to first understand the neighbourhood with its people and their actions first. Engagement with communities and the municipality (S2) should shape the decisions made in the plan, ensuring that actions and targets (S4 – S5) evolve from a co-created understanding of local needs. The expert highlighted that the adapted framework should serve as a thinking tool that helps developers articulate and motivate where they stand and what impact they intend to make, with additionally also a reflecting disclosure requirement. The key findings of expert 2 with its categories can be found in appendix D2.

Alternative adapted framework 2

The analysis of the second interview built upon the first interview and led to a second alternative framework. Practical insights for the adjustment of the framework include again the addition of an accountability requirement, but most importantly the distinguishing between 4 different steps, in which each step needs to be carefully done in order to move to the next. Policies should be shaped by the municipality which holds the knowledge about the physical infrastructure, the activities and the people. The developer should then focus first on the status-quo of the place, learning about the people and their background before moving to the plan. This information should lead to the developer focusing on the actions and targets, which after delivery should be reported through reflection (S6). The framework becomes a supportive tool for strategic decision-making, helping developers reason through trade-offs and contextual priorities rather than seeking quantitative goals, as shown in figure 14.
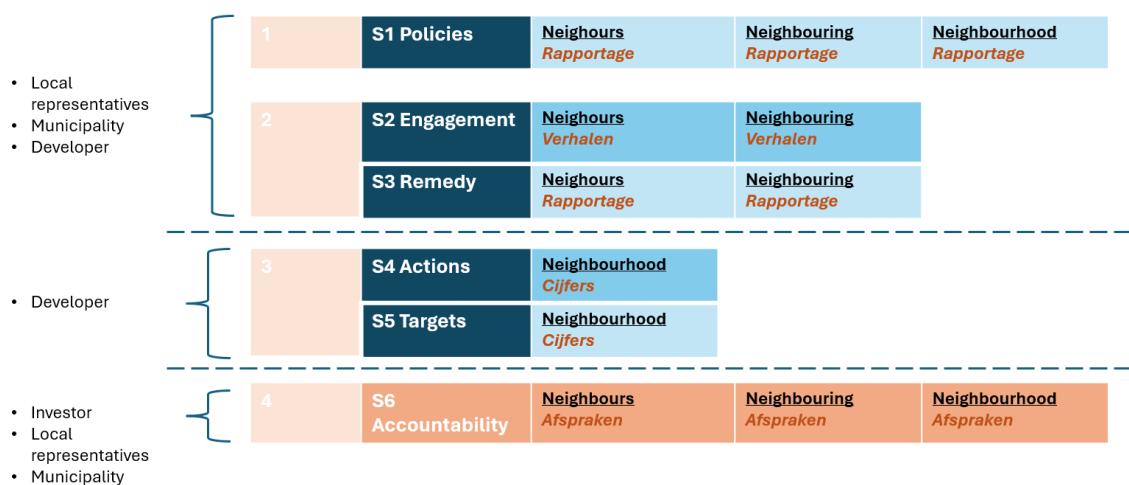

Figure 14 Alternative adapted framework 2 (author, 2025)

Interview E3

The third expert, co-founder of the Social Value Foundation and former CEO of the Dutch Green Building Council (DGBC), started the interview with explaining what their organization is focusing on. An relevant note underlined by the expert was the social and relational dimension of neighbourhood transformation. They argued that real impact arises from the quality and depth of relationships built between actors; residents, municipalities, community organizations, developers and investors. Rather than from isolated project outputs. Measuring success or positive impact therefore requires indicators that capture the mutual benefit, the understanding of a neighbourhood or for example the trust. The expert encouraged integrating qualitative, narrative-based assessment methods, for example local identity and shared use of space, to the ESRS S3. Another important note from the expert was the need to be more critical towards developers and the promises they make, emphasizing the need for financial investments to reach social impact by developers. A big problem stated by the expert is the nice words developers use without being held accountable or responsible for the area and the effects after delivery. The expert stressed the need for dialogue and research of the area before starting a project, and the importance of involvement of the municipality in these stages.

Supporting materials

The Social Value Formule, developed by the Social Value Foundation is a tool that the expert mentioned that can help structuring the adapted framework in a logical sense for developers or investors. The instrument encourages to first identify the context of where you want to make impact. This leads to an understanding of what possible solutions there are and what impact they can make. To make this concrete the following steps are creating the specifications of the program, organizing the partnerships and carrying out the project. The last phase is measurement, evaluation and improving.
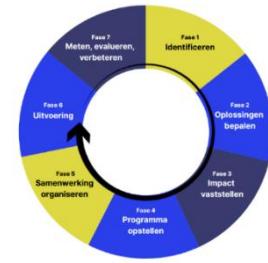
Figure 15 Social Value Formule (Social Value Foundation, 2025)

Alternative adapted framework 3

The third alternative framework (shown in figure 16), as a result of the findings from expert interview 3 focusses on the importance of different stakeholders in different stages of the project life cycle. It stresses that in order to move to the work of the developer, the status-quo, or also referred to as the context of the area needs to be measured. This information should feed the reporting of the developer who then can create his or her understanding based on the local context instead of the business case that now most often drives their decisions. This alternative framework also presents the translating steps between the actors through dialogue and good partnership.

Figure 16 Alternative adapted framework 3 (author, 2025)

Interview E4

Expert 4 gave great insights for the framework from the perspective of a municipality. The insights had a policy- and place-based viewpoint highlighting that experiences of individuals about their home are inseparable from spatial experience. The expert stressed that poorly designed or under-maintained places lead to poorly used spaces that can reveal underlying social issues of a city or neighbourhood. The expert put lots of emphasis on the role of the municipality to create clear guidelines and frameworks with rules for developers to follow. They argued that real sustainability is a place that functions well and where people are happy to be. This is a shared responsibility where each stakeholder should be held responsible for the impacts they create. The expert observed that developers are often good at the design and execution phase, the so called hard stones (S4 – S5), but less focused and specialized on the community engagement, also long term. A structured reflection loop, that connects the lessons learned from a project could help close this loop.

Supporting materials

The expert referred to two main supporting materials that can help shape and inform the adapted framework. The book Soft City highlights the importance of human-scale design, everyday social interaction and spatial quality as foundations for socially and livable environments. These principles reinforce the framework's emphasis on the indicators of the neighbourhood and neighbouring dimension. Leon Bobbe's framework for housing associations provides a structure that connects individual wellbeing with community dynamics and the spatial or dwelling related interventions. Translating the logic of this framework to a developers perspective, the ESRS S3 can use a better alignment between embedding social value within the hard infrastructure and the effects of it on society.
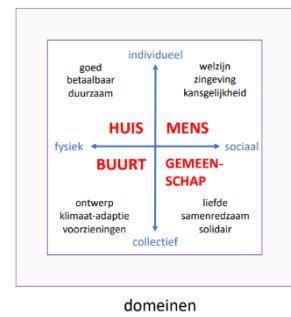
Figure 17 Drijfverenmodel (Bobbe, 2024)

Alternative adapted framework 4

The fourth alternative framework, as shown in figure 18, visualises how the ESRS S3 disclosure requirements can be integrated into a project life cycle of an urban redevelopment process. This model illustrates the importance of community in each step, where every step builds upon the previous one, which allows the process to be a iterative one instead of isolating reporting steps. The municipality, developers and the community should all be active participants throughout the timeline, with responsibilities shifting but the actors never disappearing. Early stages such as *Policies* and *Engagement* require joint vision-setting and contextual understanding, while *Targets & Actions* and *Impact Measurement* focus on the co-production and monitoring of social outcomes. The inclusion of the *Evaluation* phase underscores that project closure is not the endpoint; instead, it serves as a learning moment in which insights and outcomes are fed back into future developments. In doing so, the framework positions ESRS S3 as a cyclical learning and accountability mechanism, where the lessons derived from evaluation actively inform more socially responsive and sustainable projects over time.
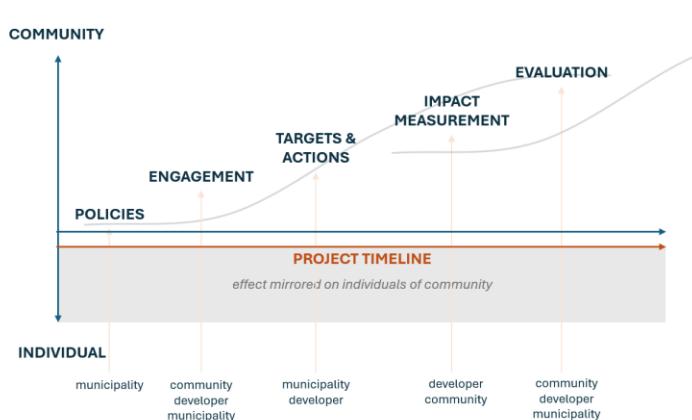
Figure 18 Alternative adapted framework 4 (author, 2025)

4.4 Cross-analysis interviews

Across the four expert interviews, several reoccurring patterns and complementary insights emerged that collectively informed the refinement of the adapted framework. Despite differences in disciplinary backgrounds, ranging from academic and policy-oriented to practitioner and social value perspectives, all experts highlighted the need for a clearer operationalization of social sustainability within the ESRS S3 standard. In particular, the lack of an explicit *evaluation or accountability* mechanism was consistently identified as a critical gap. While ESRS S3 effectively structures disclosure requirements (Policies, Engagement, Remedy, Actions, and Targets), it does not verify whether reported ambitions are realized in practice. This insight led to the recommendation to include a (1) sixth and seventh dimension (S3-6 Measurement & S3-7 Reflection) in the adapted framework, ensuring that monitoring, reflection and feedback loops are integral to the reporting cycle rather than post delivery.

A second shared observation is the (2) imbalance between the procedural aspects and experienced stories of social sustainability. Experts agreed that developers tend to focus on the tangible and design-oriented stages (S3-4 Actions and S3-5 Targets), whereas earlier and more relational phases, such as understanding local policies (S3-1 Policies) and encouraging meaningful dialogue (S3-2 Engagement), often receive less attention. The adapted framework therefore repositioned *dialogue* not as a single activity, but as the connective action linking certain dimensions. This reflects a shift from compliance-driven reporting towards a more iterative and participatory understanding of social impact.

Third, there was broad consensus that (3) contextual flexibility is essential. All interviewees emphasized that social sustainability cannot be defined by fixed indicators alone. Instead, frameworks must balance *minimum social criteria* with contextual adaptability to different urban and demographic settings. Rather than prescribing universal KPIs, the experts proposed a *modular system* where indicators can be selected or weighted according to project typology, location, and community needs. This reinforces the notion that social sustainability is not static but negotiated, co-created and contextual.

Another strong theme was the (4) relational dimension of social value. The experts collectively argued that meaningful impact stems from long-term relationships between developers, residents, and municipalities. This insight directly informed the "Neighbouring" component of the adapted framework, which now functions as a mediating layer between physical space and human experience. The interviews affirmed that qualitative and narrative measures, capturing perceptions of safety, inclusion, and attachment, are as important as quantitative performance metrics.

Finally, the (5) role of shared responsibility emerged prominently. The municipal perspective in particular underscored that social sustainability requires collaborative accountability across governance levels. Developers, municipalities, and community actors must co-own both the process and the outcomes of urban redevelopment. As a result, the adapted framework integrates *co-governance* as a cross-cutting principle, aligning with ESRS S3's emphasis on affected communities while grounding it in the Dutch planning culture of participatory area development.

Taken together, these converging insights transformed the initial adapted framework into a *more cyclical, relational, and context-sensitive framework.* It now bridges the procedural logic of ESRS S3 with the lived, spatial, and relational dimensions highlighted by Shirazi & Keivani (2018). The cross-analysis thus provides the conceptual foundation for the adapted framework presented in the following section, which operationalizes social sustainability as an iterative process of understanding, engaging, acting, and evaluating within urban redevelopment practice.

4.5 Adapted framework – SQ1

Building on the cross-analysis of the four expert interviews, this section presents the adapted framework in figure 19. The empirical findings demonstrated that while the ESRS S3 standard provides a valuable regulatory structure, its current formulation lacks the spatial, relational, and evaluative depth necessary for application in urban redevelopment practice. The integration of insights from the experts results in a more cyclical and process-oriented framework that connects the systematic nature of ESRS S3 with the lived, context-specific dimensions of social sustainability captured in the work of Shirazi and Keivani (2018).
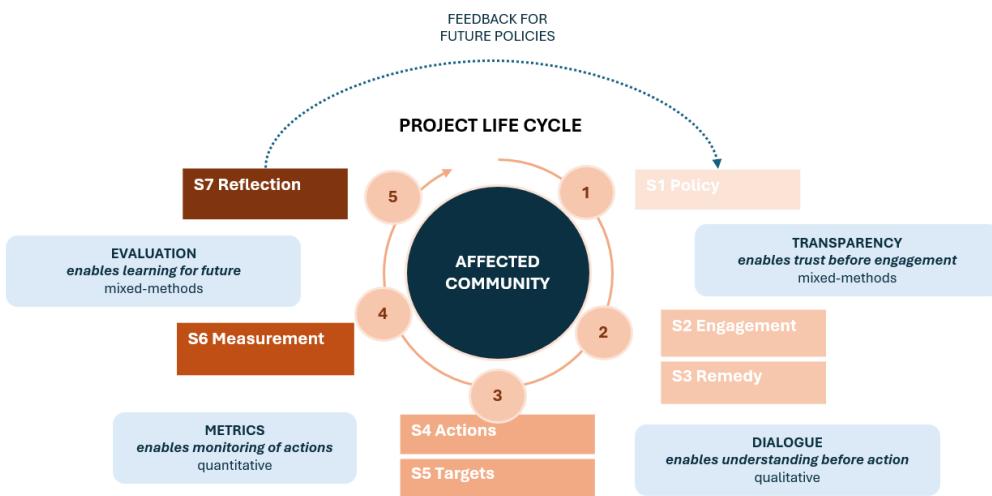

Figure 19 Adapted framework (author, 2025)

The adapted framework first highlights the addition of a sixth and a seventh dimension; (6) *Measurement,* (7) *Accountability and Reflection.* These have been included to ensure monitoring, accountability and learning for future projects. The adapted framework places affected communities at the centre of the project lifecycle, reflecting ESRS S3's emphasis on material impacts and lived experience of this group. The framework includes four enabling conditions between the 5 different phases; transparency, dialogue, metrics and evaluation.

To support clarity and operationalization of the adapted framework, table 16 presents the interpretation of each dimension. It links the S1-S7 dimensions to the layers of the Triad of Social Sustainability as explained in section 4.2.4. This table serves as an explanation between the visualization of the adapted framework and its use. The adapted framework functions as an analytic and practical tool for developers, mirrored onto the cases in the following chapter.

Table 16 Operational interpretation of adapted framework per dimension

DR	Focus layer	Operational interpretation
S3-1 Policies	Neighbourhood, neighbours	Define spatial scope, identify affected communities, and communicate social objectives transparently.
S3-2 Engagement	Neighbouring, neighbours	Build trust-based relationships, enable representative participation, and collect stories and concerns.
S3-3 Remediation	Neighbouring	Establish clear grievance mechanisms and mitigation procedures to address negative impacts.
S3-4 Actions	Neighbourhood, neighbouring	Implement spatial and social interventions that respond to community needs and project objectives.
S3-5 Targets	Neighbourhood, neighbours	Set measurable, time-bound social goals and articulate how progress will be assessed.
S3-6 Measurement	Cross-cutting	Monitor social outcomes using mixed methods and track whether actions are producing the intended effects.
S3-7 Reflection	Cross-cutting	Evaluate lessons learned, document accountability, and provide feedback for future policy and engagement cycles.

5 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

5 CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

Building on the adapted framework developed in chapter 4, this stage of the research consists of a case analysis which empirically applies the adapted framework in urban redevelopment projects. The purpose of this stage is to explore and collect data for SQ 2, 3 and 4 and ultimately answer these SQs. All three SQs are answered through a case study analysis, collecting data through desk-research and qualitative interviews. The case study analysis consists of two cases: (1) Katendrecht – Rotterdam and (2) Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten – Den Haag. Both cases are chosen through a structured selection process, as explained in chapter 2. This chapter is roughly divided into two key perspectives:

1. The perspective of the developer on the redevelopment project, the stated objectives and strategies regarding social sustainability and the framework refinement through the findings
2. The perspective of local representatives to compare the findings from the developers against the experiences from the community in the neighbourhood.

Structure

Both cases hold the same structure and sequence of answering the SQs.

First the cases are introduced by a context-analysis, consisting of desk-research. The desk-research is conducted prior to the interviews with developers in order to gain insight on the local context and background of the neighbourhood and projects, as well as understand the neighbourhood profile and statistics. The statistics are derived from Leefbarometer, this way the data collected for both cases comes from the same source. This step ensures that the interviews with developers and local representatives move beyond general information and lead to case-specific discussions and reflections regarding social sustainability, in relation to the affected communities.

The context-analysis is input for the next section, interviewing developers for both cases. Through semi-structured interview questions and an analysis through deductive (themes derived from research) and inductive (themes emerged from the interviews themselves) coding, SQ2 and SQ3 are aimed to be answered. First the developers perspective is used to gain insight into the definition, strategies and objectives of the developer for the case, which answers **SQ2:** *How do Dutch developers define and strategize around social sustainability and affected communities in urban redevelopment projects?*

The interview with the developer is also used to map strategies and objectives against the adapted framework, answering **SQ3:** *Where do the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in the urban redevelopment cases align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework?*

In the last section of this chapter, local representatives are interviewed to further reflect upon the adapted framework from the perspective of the lifeworld. Resident representatives, the municipality and interest groups are interviewed to broaden and deepen the understanding of the development impacts in the neighbourhood. This section grounds the framework in lived experiences of affected communities and provides answers to **SQ4:** *How can representatives of the local community and the municipality broaden or deepen the understanding of strategies on affected communities in urban redevelopment projects for developers?* This SQ helps improve the adapted framework for developers by better integrating local perspectives into social sustainability strategies.

Together the findings from this chapter are the input for chapter 6 Cross-case analysis, in which the findings for both cases will be examined and categorized into generalizable input for the adapted framework and give case-specific insights.

Katendrecht

5.2 Katendrecht – Rotterdam

5.2.1 Context analysis

Historical context

Katendrecht is a neighbourhood on the south bank of the Maas in Rotterdam, directly facing the city centre. Historically the peninsular area was characterized by its harbour related industries, migrant communities (particularly seamen and a prominent Chinese settlement) and the reputation as a red-light district (Baptist, 2024). For residents this neighbourhood is a real 'oerwijk', full of stories, a strong social network, residents that live in the neighbourhood their whole life and all the colours present (Veld Academie, 2022). However, by the early 2000s Katendrecht was considered as one of the city's least safe areas. Since then, the municipality of Rotterdam together with Heijmans and housing association Woonstad have invested long-term and large-scale in the redevelopment and reshaping of Katendrecht into a desirable urban district (Heijmans &CO, n.d.). The case is selected because it offers a rich context to study social sustainability, it combines strong community identity, major redevelopment pressures, and explicit developer strategies framed by Heijmans &CO concept as well as extensive community engagement processes.

Community, identity and sense of place

Katendrechts's community identity is rooted in its harbour heritage and village-like social networks. Residents have expressed their pride in the neighbourhood's atmosphere and peace as well as diversity, greenery and water (De Plekkenmakers, 2022). At the same time they raise concerns about the density, road safety and also the development of overpriced apartments that create a deeper segregation between the old and the new residents of Katendrecht (De Plekkenmakers, 2022; Veldacademie, 2022).

Participation and area research – document analysis? (open data research)

A central element in the redevelopment of Katendrecht has been the attempt to structure meaningful participation. The municipality has put in great effort to research the area through different reports and workgroups in collaboration with different organizations. For example *De Plekkenmakers* were involved as a consultant that specialize in participatory design and set up the Informatielab Katendrecht,as can be seen in figure 20. With nearly 200 on-site participants and 240 online survey responses, collecting 194 ideas and questions from residents (De Plekkenmakers, n.d.). The dialogues highlighted local priorities such as more green space, better accessibility and everyday services.
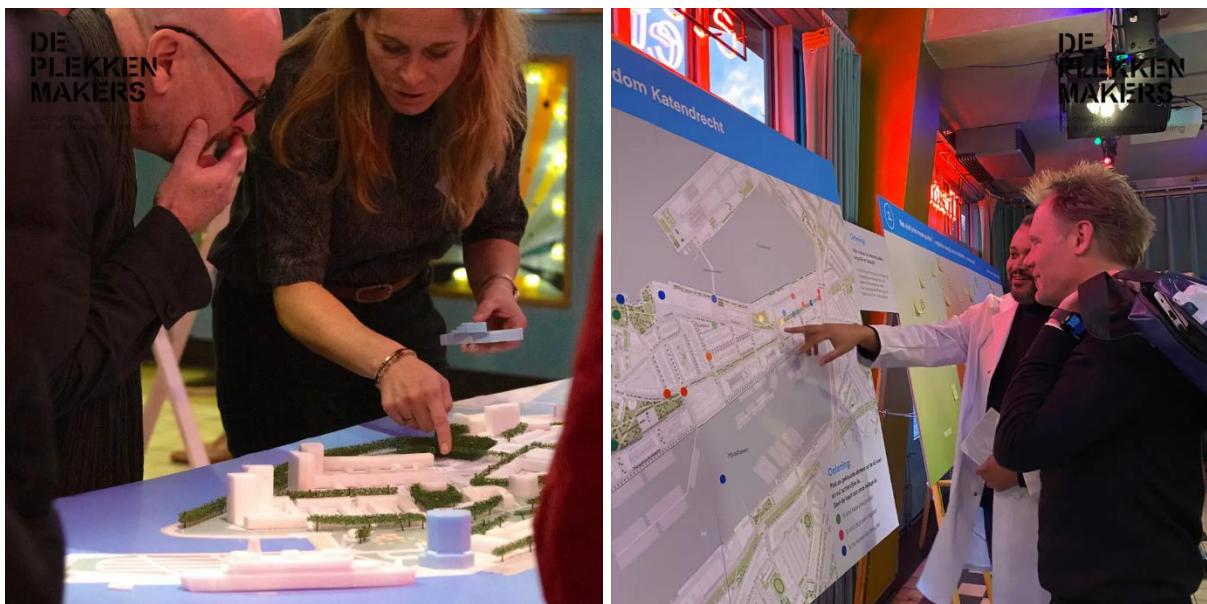
Figure 20 InformatieLab organized by the Municipality of Rotterdam and de Plekkenmakers at Katendrecht (De Plekkenmakers, 2022)

5.2.2 Leefbarometer Katendrecht

The livability in Katendrecht has shown consistent improvement over the past decade. Data from the Leefbarometer confirms through *afwijking totaalscore* (deviation on total) that the neighbourhood has transformed from a formerly disadvantaged area to an overall desirable urban district. The two bar charts, figure 21 and 22, indicate that in the past decade the neighbourhood has improved on almost all dimensions. In 2014, Katendrecht scored below national average on *overlast & veiligheid* (nuisance & safety), but also on *sociale samenhang* (social cohesion) and a milder deviation on *wonigvoorraad* (housing stock). By 2024 however, the overall score has moved closer to the national reference, with a substantial improvement in *voorzieningen* (amenities) and a decreased negative deviation on safety.
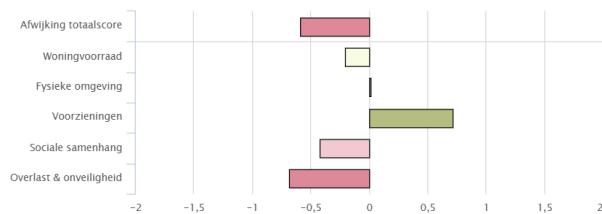
Figure 21 Barchart total score Katendrecht 2014 (Leefbarometer, 2025)
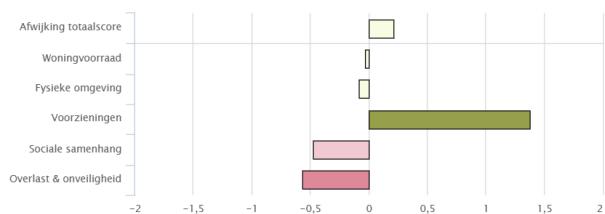
Figure 22 Barchart total score Katendrecht 2024 (Leefbarometer, 2025)

The livability map from the Leefbarometer for the area of Katendrecht, shown in figure x, shows this positive trend. Katendrecht is classified as a medium to high livable area, indicating better physical and social surroundings than a decade ago. This is consistent with the redevelopment plans and efforts from the developers and municipality.

Figure 23 Livability map Katendrecht (Leefbarometer, 2025)

The longitudinal livability scores from table 17, replicated from Leefbarometer, demonstrate a upward trend. Where Katendrecht scored 4 – zwak (weak) in 2002 and 2008, this score gradually went upwards, to a score of 7-goed (good) in 2024. This upward trend indicated that improvements are structurally rooter in the neighbourhood's growth.

Table 17 Livability situation in Katendrecht from 2002 till 2024 as adapted from (Leefbarometer, 2025)

	Leefbaarheidssituatie - Livability situation								
Buurt	2002	2008	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Katendrecht	4	4	6	6	6	6	7	7	7

4 = weak (zwak)

6 = more than sufficient (ruim voldoende)

7 = good (goed)

The combined indicators show that Katendrecht's redevelopment has resulted in consistent and measurable livability improvements, particularly in terms of amenities, perceived safety and the housing stock.

5.2.3 Strategic narratives and objectives

The main private-led developer for the area of Katendrecht is Heijmans. Together with the municipality of Rotterdam and housing association Woonstad, the reshaping and redevelopment of Katendrecht have had different objectives and goals to boost the area (Heijmans, n.d.). Below some of the main strategic narratives and objectives are mentioned, derived from the factsheet of Katendrecht by Heijmans&CO and the website of Heijmans.

1. Effort to lead with social infrastructure; education and cultural real estate (maatschappelijk vastgoed) as drivers for the revelopment
2. Placemaking with local cultural entrepreneurs
3. Active campaigns to boost the image of the neighbourhood together with the municipality
4. Organising events and activities with both 'old' residents as well as newcomers
5. Preserving heritage

The redevelopment strategy of Heijmans in Katendrecht illustrates how developer-led transformation can simultaneously target social sustainability targets and financial feasability. By combining high-quality sustainable housing with placemaking, heritage preservation, and collaboration with municipal and cultural partners, Heijmans positions Katendrecht as an attractive and resilient urban neighbourhood. These strategies align with key dimensions of social sustainability in the built environment like enhancing resident quality of life (neighbours), strengthening social ties (neighbouring), and upgrading the physical environment (neighbourhood). However, the rebranding and repositioning of the area, from "ruig" to "curious" and from unsafe to highly desirable, raises critical questions of equity and accountability: who ultimately benefits from this transformation, and how are social outcomes, particularly for existing or vulnerable residents, measured and reported? This tension underscores the relevance of ESRS S3, as it calls for transparent engagement, impact evaluation, and inclusion of affected communities in decision-making and post-development assessment.

To create a better understanding of the strategic objectives in this line of research, the objectives are mentioned with a concrete example in the table 18.

Table 18 Strategic objectives of Heijmans for Katendrecht with concrete examples

#	Strategic Objective	Concrete Example
1	Leading with social infrastructure	*School De Globetrotter*
2	Placemaking with cultural entrepreneurs	*Fenix Food Factory*
3	Image-building campaigns with municipality	*De Nacht van de Kaap, Ronde van Katendrecht*
4	Activities connecting existing and new residents	Dishcloth quote "Niet lullen maar poetsen"
5	Preserving industrial heritage	*Fenixloodsen / Fenix warehouses*

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

Stadsdeel Zuidwest

DEN HAAG

Zuiderpark

Zichten

Dreven

Gaarden

Erasmusweg

Stati...
Moe...

NRC 051021/P...

500m

mapcreator.io

5.3 Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten – Den Haag

5.3.1 Context analysis

Architectural history

Dreven, Gaarden and Zichten are neighbourhoods that lie in the southwest of The Hague (Den Haag Zuidwest), which is part of a larger structural renewal agenda under the Nationaal Programma Den Haag Zuidwest (2025). The neighbourhoods are characterized by their post-war housing architecture, many portiek flats and a 'stamp' like urban fabric designed under supervision of J.H. van den Broek (Crimson, 2021). The linear street layout, green strips (binnentuinen) between building blocks and limited mixed functions were initially meant for order and structure in the expansion plans for the area. However, over the decades the quality of the dwellings has significantly decreased, the lack of facilities in the area and the lack of good quality green spaces are now key reasons for the redevelopment of the area (Gemeente Den Haag, n.d.).

Socio-economic challenges

Den Haag Zuidwest has long struggled with severe and overlapping social and economic issues, including poverty, unemployment, educational disadvantages, polarization, feelings of insecurity, health issues and vulnerable youth. The area lacks diverse and adequate supporting facilities, for example; over the years there are no secondary schools left that offer HAVO/VWO levels. The poor quality of housing, as well as the overconcentration of social housing and the poor image of the area leads to residents that are doing better, leaving the neighbourhood. The one-sided resident composition and outdated housing stock calls for a large-sale renewal. The issues in the area are intertwined with larger goals such as densification, mobility, sustainability and social and economic improvement (Gemeente Den Haag, 2020).

Community dynamics

The community dynamics in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten are shaped by long standing socio-economic vulnerabilities. The predominantly low income population has disadvantages compared to the city statistics (wijkprofiel). Neighbourhood cohesion exists in some streets and networks, but segmentation between resident groups is also visible. There is a significant sentiment from residents to stay in their neighbourhood and homes, even though the current housing stock is of poor quality. This does not mean that the people do not desire positive change, they want to move forward but their current environment does not allow them to do so (ambitiedocument).

In the area there are however strong informal networks, community leaders like the 'buurtmoeders', but also religious organisations and local business owners provide social support and a network (heijmans). These actors play a critical role in the redevelopment, maintaining interaction with the residents that are often vulnerable or difficult to reach through formal channels. The pressures of relocation and uncertainty about the future does disrupt the everyday routine of residents, however the efforts to uplift the community grows stronger day by day. (DGZ website) Figure 24 gives two examples of how residents and local community leaders are involved in the redevelopment of the area.

Figure 24 Involvement of residents and local leaders in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (Mees, 2025; van den Dool, 2025) as adapted from drevengaardenzichten.nl

5.3.2 Leefbarometer Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

The Leefbarometer data for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten show that livability has remained consistently low over the past decade, indicating Den Haag Zuidwest's significant socio-economic and physical challenges. The bar charts for 2014 and 2024 (figure 25 and 26) indicate on almost all dimension a strong negative deviation from the national reference point, including on housing stock, social cohesion, nuisance & safety. The only category that has a positive deviation is the dimension of amenities, which has also shown an increased score over the decade. Important to note is the structural strong negative deviation, indicating that the challenges in these areas are still current and were a starting reference point in the large redevelopment.
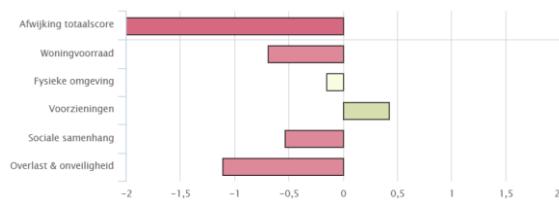
Figure 25 Barchart total score Dreven and Gaarden 2014 (Leefbarometer, 2025)
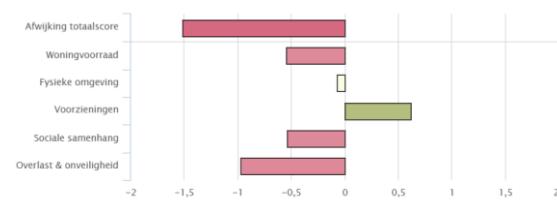
Figure 26 Barchart total score Dreven and Gaarden 2024 (Leefbarometer, 2025)

The livability map in figure 27, cleary shows this pattern. Much of the areas of Dreven, Gaarden and Zichten are classified in the orange to light red category, which indicates poor livability in comparison to other areas in Den Haag. These lower scores are consistent with the significant challenges in Zuidwest, including the post-war housing stock, safety concerns and concentrated socio-economic disadvantage.

Figure 27 Livability map Dreven, Gaarden and Zichten (Leefbarometer, 2025)

Table 19 shows the longitudinal overview, which demonstrates the low level stability in the areas. Between 2002 and 2024, Dreven, Gaarden and Zichten constantly score a 3 or 4 (insufficient to weak), with no significant progress. This lack of upward movement contrasts not only with Katendrecht, but also demonstrates the prioritization of the areas within the Nationaal Programma Den Haag Zuidwest.
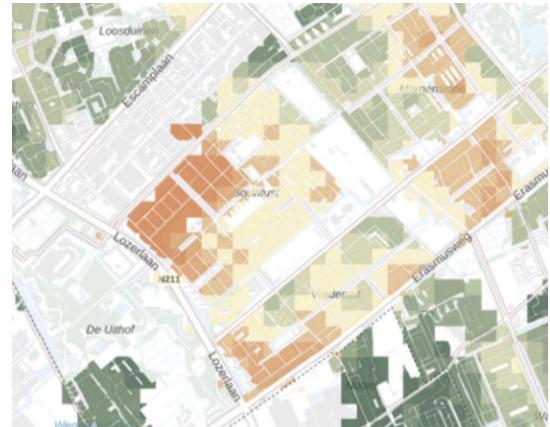
Table 19 Livability situation in Dreven, Gaarden and Zichten from 2002 till 2024 as adapted from (Leefbarometer, 2025)

	Leefbaarheidssituatie - Livability situation								
Buurt	2002	2008	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
Zichten	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Dreven and Gaarden	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4

3 = insufficient (onvoldoende)

4 = weak (zwak)

Taken together, the Leefbarometer data shows that Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten enters the redevelopment phase with a structurally vulnerable liveability baseline, emphasizing the importance of the ongoing large-scale renewal. The quantitative indicators give critical context for understanding the scale of redevelopment and necessary intervention and highlight the urgency of the development.

5.3.3 Strategic narratives and objectives

The redevelopment of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten extends beyond the replacement of post-war housing stock, according to Heijmans and Steadion (Factsheet Den Haag Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten by Heijmans). The program combines large-scale renewal, +- 1800 dwellings of 2000 will be replaced, as well as an addition of +3500 dwellings across sectors (from social rent to mid-market and sale). An addition of +-5750 m2 of social and commercial amenities and a right to return for existing tenants demonstrate a program that promotes the future livability, safety and social cohesion of the neighbourhoods. The fundament of the strategy for the urban redevelopment is a strong and long-term partnership between Heijmans (developer), Staedion (housing association) and the municipality of Den Haag. The plan has a phased delivery until 2040, integrating sustainability measures, design quality and community initiatives in order to improve daily life of all citizens. In the words of Heijamans in their factsheet (Heijmans, 2023)

1. Partnership and co-governance
2. Right to return, no net loss of social rent
3. Placemaking activities
4. Socio-economic uplift for all alongside spatial upgrade
5. Community programming and involvement of local partners

To create a better understanding of the strategic objectives in this line of research, the objectives are mentioned with a concrete example in the table 20.

Table 20 Strategic objectives of Heijmans for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten with concrete examples

#	Strategic Objective	Concrete Example
1	Partnership and co-governance	Collaboration between Heijmans, Staedion and municipality
2	Right to return, no net loss of social rent	Guarantee for existing tenants to gain priority for new housing
3	Placemaking activities	Initiatives for public space, current community is the ambassador of the neighbourhood
4	Socio-economic uplift for all alongside spatial upgrade	Focus in program on well-being, job creation, education; measuring this uplift against 'Betere Buurt kernwaardenmeetlat', to fit current and future residents
5	Community programming and involvement of local partners	Project office in the neighbourhood, keeping entrepreneurs in the plinth

5.4 Developers' perspectives

5.4 Developers' perspectives – SQ2

This section analyses the perspective of the developers for both cases; Katendrecht and Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and aims to answer **SQ2: How do Dutch developers define and strategize around social sustainability and affected communities in urban redevelopment projects?** Building on the context analysis in the previous sections, this chapter examines how the developers of these urban redevelopment projects operationalize around social sustainability in practice. It delves into how they interpret their role and responsibility towards affected communities and how these interpretations shape strategic decisions throughout the redevelopment process.

For this section the developers for the projects from Heijmans are interviewed. By analysing the transcripts through coding and searching for strategic approaches mentioned, this section moves from theoretical validation of the framework to the practical reality of implementation in the Dutch built environment. The interviews are analysed through deductive and inductive coding, from which the codes are mentioned in table 21.

Table 21 Deductive and inductive codes used for coding developers' interviews in atlas.ti

Deductive codes		Inductive codes
ESRS S3	S1 Policies	Context analysis
	S2 Engagement	Affected communities
	S3 Remedy	Environmental sustainability
	S4 Actions	Essential remark
	S5 Targets	Question
	S6 Measurement	Example
	S7 Reflection	Nulmeting
Neighbourhood		S0 History & context
Neighbouring		Taalbarriere
Neighbours		Wijkidentiteit
CSRD/reporting		Transparancy
System/life world		(added) theories
Adapted framework	Needed in UD	Stakeholders
	Gap in framework	Collaboration
	+ in framework	Project cycle
	Overlap	
Strategy	Strategy Heijmans	
	Strategy KD	
	Strategy DGZ	

The deductive codes are derived mainly from the theoretical background and chapter 4 with the adapted framework. The code strategy is added from the start to gain insight into how developers strategize around social sustainability, which is directly linked to SQ2. The inductive codes, emerged from the interview themselves, highlight that developers mentioned a lot around the context of the neighbourhoods, the statistics, gave examples and talked about the history.

The analysis highlights how, in both Katendrecht as well as Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, developers combine spatial, social and procedural strategies. However these approaches can differ in strategic motivation, context, framing or scale. Katendrecht represents a long-term strategy focused on place identity in connection to the history of the area, mixed use programming and image-building of the area. Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten demonstrates a systematic renewal program which focuses on partnership and socio-economic uplift for a larger area. With the insights from the developers' perspective on their strategy, definition and approach to the affected communities, in section 5.5 SQ3 aims to reconnect the insights to the adapted framework.

The sections below give an overview of the different themes emerged from the interviews for each case. The themes can be directly linked to the dimensions of the adapted framework. An added dimension that emerged from the interviews through inductive coding is S0 – History & context, which is explained through the Katendrecht case.

5.4.1 Katendrecht

For the Katendrecht case, a developer is interviewed that has been involved in the area for the past 21 years, which marks the first phase of Heijmans involvement in the neighbourhood. As explained in section 5.2 Context analysis of Katendrecht, this neighbourhood has a long history that has characterized the neighbourhood deeply. The interview reveals an embedded and historically informed approach to the urban redevelopment of the area. However the concept of social sustainability and social value has changed over the years. The analysis below breaks down the core strategic themes revealed by the developer of Heijmans for the Katendrecht case.

Through coding with the code '**Strategy KD**', the Katendrecht case revolves around 4 main themes underscored by the developer; (1) Definitions, motivation and current practice, (2) Strategies, actions and targets, (3) Neighbourhood identity, history and context sensitivity and (4) Stakeholder collaboration, challenges and critical notes. In the table below (22), the themes are linked to the dimensions of the adapted framework.

Table 22 Themes from the interview connected to the dimensions of the adapted framework

Theme emerged from interview	Dimension adapted framework
Definitions, motivation and current practice	S1 – Policy
Strategies, actions and targets	S4 – Actions; S5- Targets
Neighbourhood identity, history and context sensitivity	S0 – History and context
Stakeholder collaboration, challenges and critical notes	Cross-cutting

Definitions, motivation and current practice

An important remark made in the interview is that social sustainability was not a stand-alone theme in urban redevelopment when Heijmans started in this neighbourhood in 2004. However, there is a recognition in the organization to prioritize social sustainability in their projects, due to intrinsic motivation to do good for the neighbourhood on the one hand, but also because they have a reporting responsibility. A tool Heijmans has introduced organization wide is the **Social Impact Scan (SIS)** which can also be reflected back on projects, for cases like Katendrecht.

> *"So we have a social impact scan (SIS) that starts from scratch. And you can also look back at the effects of your interventions."*

The developer explains that such tools are already embedded in practice, measuring and reporting on mobility and ecology, but also now on social aspects. Besides the increasing interest in social aspects, Heijmans is one of the few companies that are already required to **report according to the CSRD**, which means that in the company strategy the focus on social sustainability has to increase:

> *"So not only do we think it's important, it's also imposed on us and we follow it."*

Strategies, actions and targets

For Katendrecht the developer mentioned some interesting actions, targets and strategies in the context of social sustainability. For example a target set by the municipality in 2004 was to **add 5 dwellings above 300.000 euros**. This in order to counter the amount of social dwellings the neighbourhood had and to create a more balanced neighbourhood, which would be a **success factor**. The municipality's goal was to **balance out the tenure mix** and add facilities such as a pharmacy, a daycare centre, more healthcare facilities and more.

A considerable positive effect mentioned by the developer for this specific case is that no homes have been demolished in the process of the redevelopment and densification of this area. This approach can be linked to the aim of **avoiding displacement**, even before such concerns were formalized under the ESRS S3. Another action taken by the developer has been the **project office embedded in the area**. This functions as a long-term presence and contact point for residents and business owners in the area.

The developer provides with another concrete example on how interaction and cohesion are fostered in Katendrecht using the theory of the 'third places' (Oldenburg), which describes the first place as home, the second place as work and the third place as community, which is neither at home nor at work but is a vital space in people's lives (Er, 2023).

The poor image of Katendrecht and the history of the area are key factors that have shaped the way Heijmans has intervened in this area. An important remark made by the developer is that knowledge about the **history of the area** is the only way you can make good decisions for the future. In their words:

> *''The genius loci, the sphere of the neighbourhood, or the history of the neighbourhood.''*

He underpins that the **context** of Rotterdam Zuid is important to understand, but also how it came to be. An example he gave was the metro line:

> *"The metro will be underground on the north side, while it is not even past the river or it will be above ground and visible in south (Rotterdam-Zuid). There are dozens of other examples of why Zuid is the way it is. If you do not know that, you cannot really say anything meaningful about the future.''*

Another remark that shapes the strategy of Heijmans in Katendrecht mentioned by the developer is to realize **what lives in a neighbourhood, who lives there and how that has become**. The developer seeks for more sensitivity regarding the context one is developing in but also mentions that not every developer has to deal with that. When developing in green fields the context and community is not part of the strategy.

Through coding this interview, an added dimension for the adapted framework has emerged; S0 – History and context, which relates to this section of the analysis. S0 – History and context, describes the underlying factors that influence how social value is interpreted, developed and challenged within a neighbourhood. The dimension recognized that places contain historical developments, socio-spatial patterns, cultural identities and path dependencies rather than being a neutral setting for a developer to intervene in. Understanding these contextual layers are essential for developers who want to make informed decisions, anticipate on community sensitivity and create comfortable spaces for current residents. For the adapted framework this means that S0 serves as a grounding dimension, before policy or engagement, ensuring that the following dimensions are relevant to the area's history, context, identity and socio-spatial characteristics.

Stakeholder collaboration, challenges and critical notes

A **good understanding and collaboration between the developer and the municipality** is emphasized in the interview. The developer describes that the municipality holds a crucial role in translating ambitions into concrete actions, especially in the formulation of project requirements. However the collaboration is not without its challenges. The developer highlights how different municipal departments hold **different priorities**, which often conflict and put pressure on budgets, timelines and feasibility. This leads to a structural dilemma described by the developer, highlighting that **choosing is losing**.

> *''So choosing is losing. If you choose commercial real estate you lose housing. If you choose social housing you lose financial return. If you choose timer construction you lose something else, and that is how it is.''*

An important note by the developer is that it is the task of both the developer and municipality to balance the **constant negotiation and prioritization** between the municipal ambitions, financial constraints and community needs. The interview reveals that for Katendrecht to succeed socially, collaboration can not only be with the spatial planning departments of the municipality, but the **social department** should be included from the start.

Finally, the developer points out one of the biggest challenges in Katendrecht, but also in other neighbourhoods. Shaping **shared spaces** where different resident groups actually **meet and interact**:

> *"But the effect, namely that we live a bit apart, is essentially the same. Because in Krooswijk, and here too, people go to different schools. They use the outdoor space differently. They shop in different places. And where do they actually meet each other? That's a really important question."*

5.4.2 Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten reflects a long-term urban redevelopment process, built around a strong partnership between Heijmans (developer), Staedion (housing association) and the municipality of Den Haag. For the case of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten two developers at Heijmans are interviewed. Both their perspectives on the restructuring and redevelopment of the area are taken into consideration in the analysis below.

Across the interviews, the strategy revealed by the developers are strongly influenced by the vulnerable socio-economic context of Den Haag Zuidwest. Using the code 'Strategy DGZ', the interviews reveal six strategic themes: (1) Context, (2) Large-scale physical renewal, (3) Maintaining existing community, (4) Partnership and governance, (5) Social programming, socio-economic uplift and participation and (6) Monitoring, phasing and long-term successes. In table 23 the themes emerged from the interview are linked to the dimensions of the adapted framework.

Table 23 Themes from the interview connected to the dimensions of the adapted framework

Theme emerged from interview	Dimension adapted framework
Context	S0 – History and context
Large-scale physical renewal	S1 Policy
Maintaining existing community	S3 – Remedy
Partnership and governance	Cross-cutting
Social programming, socio-economic uplift and participation	S2 – Engagement; S3 – Remedy; S4 – Actions
Monitoring, phasing and long-term successes	S6 – Measurement; S7 – Reflection

Context

The developers describe the neighbourhoods Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten and the area they lie in, Den Haag Zuidwest, as a **classic disadvantaged urban area**. There are certain **indicators** that show this, for example the high unemployment rates, low levels of education:

> *''Well, just the classic indicators of disadvantaged neighborhoods. People die an average of seven years earlier than the rest of The Hague. Education levels are exceptionally low. Unemployment rates are quite high, and the long-term unemployment figures, in particular, are quite appalling. ''*

There are also **health and safety concerns**, people in these neighbourhoods have a shorter lifespan and stay sick longer if you compare it to the city statistics:

> *''Health in general. People are sick for quite a long time. They live shorter lives, but during that shorter period, they are also sick for longer. Safety indexes are also a very important indicator.''*

The developers link the redevelopment to a broader '**maatschappelijke opgave**' (social program), where one of the main objectives is to **recede selective migration**; where strong shoulders leave the neighbourhood because there are no supporting facilities or long-term prospects for them which results in only the weaker shoulders left behind in the neighbourhood. This shows that Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten is not solely a physical redevelopment process but a response to systematic socio-spatial inequality.

Large-scale physical renewal

The developers position Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten not solely as a real estate task or physical project. The case documentation (section 5.2) as well as the interviews describe the project as a structural renewal of the three districts, where rebuilding and adding dwellings across sectors leads to not only a physical improvement of the area but also to a **shift in the social statistics**. The developers treat improving the physical environment as the basis of **improving residents' health, safety and long-term prospects**. These statements combine the three layers of the Triad of Social Sustainability; the physical infrastructure, the soft infrastructure entailing the social structure and relations and the demographic mix. The developers describe the development as a physical intervention in order to implement a socio-economic agenda:

> *"To be able to make this happen, we intervene physically. So that you can implement a socio-economic agenda."*

Currently the housing stock in the area consists of almost entirely **social housing**, at the lower end of the market. The housing stock is all owned by housing association Staedion. The developers describe the project as a **large-scale restructuring** in the inner-city.

Maintaining existing community

A central element in the strategy for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten is the **right to return** for tenants and the commitment to **no net loss of social housing**. All tenants can apply for a dwelling to stay or return to the neighbourhood. As the developers describe the process, current tenants are asked three times throughout the process whether they want to return to the neighbourhood. This is possible because the total dwellings in the social housing stock that will be demolished, will be replaced by an even increased number of social housing units.

> *"But those people will also be asked three times throughout the entire process whether they want to return. Or rather, the question is, do you want to return to your neighbourhood?"*

The **expansion of the social housing stock** from 2000 to 3000 (of the 6000) dwellings is seen as a key element to achieve this right to return policy. As the developer describes, this allows for the possibility to give everyone a place back in the neighbourhood:

> *"We have one huge advantage. There are currently 2,000 homes. Soon there will be almost 6,000. And 3,000 of those will be social housing again and in Staedion's portfolio...It means you can actually say to all those 2,000 households who are currently there: We have new homes for all of you... So we actually have a place back in the neighborhood for everyone."*

A reflection from the developers is however that the temporary relocation of residents, the stress and cost of moving for residents settling elsewhere will result in **a expectation that only 20-30% of the current residents will reposition themselves** in Dreven, Gaarden or Zichten.

By adding diversity in the housing stock and changing the physical layout of the neighbourhood as well as keeping certain business owners in the neighbourhood and creating space for all current residents, one of the intentions is however to **change some of the social structures**. For example for the youth, for them to meet peers from different socio-economic backgrounds to **improve their social circles** and prospect in their own neighbourhood. The developers describe this in a reflective and nuanced way:

> *"And that sounds very romantic. Then everyone can return and everyone can remain in their social structure. They can keep seeing their neighbors, whom they know and trust. But that is not entirely true. Because that neighborhood is going to change enormously, of course. In fact, you are also trying to remove those people from those social structures. So you really want to maintain certain social structures. But not others. You want the youth growing up in that neighborhood not just to end up with other vulnerable children from vulnerable households, but also new children with parents from a different socioeconomic class. So you are also changing those social structures. You are adapting them."*

This means that maintaining the community does not mean keeping all existing structures, but trying to let the current residents **'grow'** with the changed socio-economic composition in the neighbourhood.

Partnership and governance

Another central element in the strategy for this case is the long-term partnership and **shared responsibility** between Heijmans, Staedion and the municipality. The partnership is formalized under a **collaboration contract** for the upcoming 15-20 years to ensure governance in this large-scale redevelopment. The developers emphasize that the **partnership is essential** in a project where the underlying factor for the physical redevelopment is the weak socio-economic position of the area.

However the developers do also explain that in some aspects of the project there is a **clear division of roles**. Heijmans organizes the overall area development and the system for the complex temporary relocation of residents. Staedion focuses on the contacts in the neighbourhood and the contact with residents in for example the 'keukentafelgesprekken' (kitchen table dialogue where tenants are informed and asked about their needs)

when the tentants need to move out of their home. The developers describe their own strength and explain that the housing association has a more prominent role in the personal side of the story.

''I think we are very good at organizing this entire area development and also at thinking about the system for such a relocation process... And ultimately, they (Staedion) is the real point of contact in the neighborhood. During those participatory moments, they are the ones who discuss the story, what the relocation will look like, and are much more on the personal side.''

A reflection on this three-actor partnership is that the **community is the fourth actor**, which is the actor that is affected by the transition in the neighbourhood. In conversation with the developers, they agree that it is the affected community and they describe it as follows:

*''...Those are the classic three parties. But actually, the residents' community itself is the fourth party. That's the party with which you are trying to make the transition. It is something that happens to them. You just mentioned something very well. That is the **affected community**.''*

Social programming, socio-economic uplift and participation

In order to actively involve residents and take their views on the neighbourhood into account in the plan, the developers emphasized involving important **local representatives and initiatives**. For example, the 'Buurtmoeders' is an important voluntary organization that helps translate the plan to the neighbourhood. They are committed to the neighbourhoods' developments and their input is very valuable for the projectteam. But they are also commited to the rest of the neighbourhood, which makes them an ideal group for conveying the plan.

"They (Buurtmoeders) are really pushing hard for the neighborhood development and we are seeing how much that input is valuable. They are also pushing hard for the community and working towards the rest of the neighbourhood. They are essentially a conduit for this information."

The developers emphasize that involving these important representatives helps the project enormously and that it is not something that comes out of a social impact scan or context analysis done from the office. **Being in the neighbourhood,** laying out connections and having a projectoffice embedded in the area is of importance they explain. Other local stakeholders, such as entrepreneurs and local businesses are also involved in the project plan as well as participation events, to show the neighbourhood that there is respect for their place and for them. Keeping the entrepreneurs involved and giving them a space in the new physical urban structure also shows that the **current community is welcome in the new development**.

''They (local businesses) are invited to provide food, set everything up (at participation events). So that is really cool. Because by definition, you are already making it more their place instead of your own...We are helping entrepreneurs stay in the neighbourhood. This helps create a future instead of a redevelopment with an exit-strategy.''

The interview shows that **participation** in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten is approached not only in the classic, formal way, but is embedded **in everyday engagement practices**. The developers acknowledge that traditional participation methods have limited value. Because of the limited input by residents on these participation evenings, the project team holds a more pro-active role in approaching the residents in their own **daily environment**. For example in **busy streets, at intersections or next to the mosque.** The developers describe what happens then as follows:

"We went out on the street with our story. And we basically drew everyone who passed by to us, saying, 'Come and see, come and respond.' You see some really wonderful processes unfolding."

The developers emphasize the **constant feedback loop** they have in the process with the residents, representatives and local business owners. The constant feedback loop is actual participation describes one developer. Being in constant conversation about what the neighbourhood needs, what it is experiencing and how asking about the wellbeing of the residents.

A critical reflection by the developers on the **affected community** is that the developers really try to create an environment for the community to **take control and responsibility**. To not only let them experience the effects of the redevelopment but giving them a voice to influence the redevelopment. This proactive stance that the developers try to create with the residents ultimately should help the residents themselves according to the developers.

>*''And you really want to move from the community that is only experiencing the redevelopment and is affected by it to a community that takes control… That is what you ultimately want to achieve.''*

Monitoring, phasing and long-term successes

The approach for this case includes a wide range of socio-economic objectives alongside the improvement of the physical environment. The developers state that one of the success factors is if the **neighbourhood statistics reflect the city average**, but they note that this should not be done by adding new groups only, but by improving the life of existing residents. The developers reflect that if they only compensate the average with new groups that have a better statistic, and the affected community stays poor conditions, they have not done well. This recognition also shapes the strategy of a phased redevelopment. Instead of renewing one neighbourhood at a time fully, the **phasing structure** allows the current community to adapt to the changes:

>*'' So we could have said we will do one neighborhood completely first and then the other neighborhood. But that would mean you are turning it into a war zone. And then, when you are done, everything that was there is gone or has not been able to adapt to that change. That is why we do a third of the neighborhood in transition at a time. And two/thirds not. That way the new and old can get used to each other, and the neighbourhood can grow together.''*

A critical question the developers stress however is; **do you help the current community**? Where the developers also reflect that the uplift of the community and the **long-term success** of the project lies in the youth and the **generational uplift**.

>*''The success really lies in those generations that come after us. So we really try to reach out to those young people and engage them… those who are active in the neighborhood… We want to help them on the upward trajectory… We will be in this neighbourhood for close to twenty years, we will see three entire generations in primary school. What I find really interesting is what happens to those generations. Is their starting qualification different, do they graduate, is there change there? That is much more interesting than measuring just the flat statistics.''*

Synthesis and link to adapted framework and literature

The developers' perspectives in both cases demonstrate how the dimensions of the adapted framework emerge in practice and add tangible examples and more depth to it. The addition of S0 – History and context relate to the strategies that are grounded with context sensitivity. This finding is consistent with the notion that social processes are highly contextual and qualitative in nature (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018; Janssen & Basta, 2022). In Katendrecht this is reflected in the historically informed decision making, consciously choosing to keep the historical buildings. In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the contextual approach translates into a socio-economic uplift strategy, based on long-term partnership and governance. The findings together show that developers implement dimensions of the adapted framework in their strategies and definitions around social sustainability, but the interviews also show where local context demands for different approaches. In section 5.5 the strategic objectives and narratives are mapped onto the adapted framework, to understand where the adapted framework aligns or diverges from the strategies, or where the strategies enhance the adapted framework.

5.5 Framework application

5.5 Framework application – SQ3

This subchapter applies the adapted framework to both cases and aims to answer **SQ3: What are the key gaps and overlaps between the adapted framework and the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in urban redevelopment?** The analysis connects the adapted framework developed in chapter 4 with the empirical findings from the interviews with the developers introduced in the previous section.

To answer the sub-question, the adapted framework is applied as a benchmark against the strategic narratives and objectives by the developers of Katendrecht and Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten. By comparing the narratives against the adapted framework, this section identifies where the strategies align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework. The analysis draws from two main data sources, the strategic narratives and objectives mentioned in subchapter 5.2.3 and 5.3.3 (desk-research) and the strategies mentioned in the interviews with developers.

The results of the analysis is presented in a table, which maps the developers' strategic actions and narratives against the seven stages of the adapted framework, which ranges from understanding the local context to create policies (S1) to reflection on the case in the long-run (S7). The structured mapping highlights where the objectives align, extend or diverge from the layers of the framework. After this a critical note on the divergence is mentioned, which makes it highly informative to include local representatives in this research, which is discussed in chapter 5.6.

SQ3: Where do the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in the urban redevelopment cases align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework?

5.5.1 Katendrecht

For Katendrecht the following strategic narratives and objectives from the factsheet as mentioned in chapter 5.2.3 are complemented by strategic narratives mentioned by the developer in the interview (see section 5.4), from which the key themes are derived.

Strategic narratives and objectives from factsheet:

1. Effort to lead with social infrastructure; education and cultural real estate (maatschappelijk vastgoed) as drivers for the revelopment
2. Placemaking with local cultural entrepreneurs
3. Active campaigns to boost the image of the neighbourhood together with the municipality
4. Organising events and activities with both 'old' residents as well as newcomers
5. Preserving heritage

Added narratives and objectives introduced by the interview:

6. Transforming former industrial/harbour area to a vibrant urban neighbourhood
7. Re-imaging and changing area identity
8. Not demolishing any dwellings in the redevelopment of the area
9. Creating a mix of housing stock in different segments
10. Collaboration and shared responsibility in partnerships

In order to analyse how the strategies for Katendrecht by the developer align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework, the identified 10 objectives are systematically mapped into the seven stages (S1-S7) and three layers of the framework (Neighbourhood, Neighbouring, Neighbours) in table 24. By positioning each objective within the framework layers, the operationalization of developers regarding SS strategies become tracable, it becomes easier to tell where they prioritize contextual understanding and policy choices, or where engagement and targets are interrelated in the redevelopment processes and where measurable targets, long-term monitoring and reflective processes are emphasized or perhaps not present. The rationale section in table 24 is added to understand what the logic is behind the objective and corresponding layer.

Aligns = fits directly within one or more stages as expected

Extends = goes beyond what the framework explicitly includes, adds practices that are not captured or expands the scope of the framework

Diverges = contradicts, bypasses or leaves gaps relative to what the framework prescribes

Mapping objectives to framework

Table 24 Strategic objectives of Heijmans for Katendrecht mapped against the adapted framework

#	Strategic Objective	Concrete Example	Stage (S1–S7)	Layer	Rationale	Gaps / Overlap
1	Leading with social infrastructure	*School De Globetrotter*	S1 Policies / S2 Engagement	Neighbouring	Early strategic choice that enables daily-use community facilities	**Aligns**
2	Placemaking with cultural entrepreneurs	*Fenix Food Factory*	S2 Engagement / S4 Actions	Neighbouring	Activates space + supports local identity and informal networks	**Aligns**
3	Image-building campaigns with municipality	*De Nacht van de Kaap, Ronde van Katendrecht*	S2 Engagement / S3 Remedy	Neighbours & Neighbouring	Collective storytelling to restore reputation & attract new groups	**Extends;** pro-active branding to symbolically repair image of the area
4	Activities connecting existing and new residents	Dishcloth quote "Niet lullen maar poetsen"	S2 Engagement / S4 Actions	Neighbours	Strengthens cohesion and social bridging between populations	**Aligns**
5	Preserving industrial heritage	*Fenixloodsen / Fenix warehouses*	S0 History and context / S1 Policies / S4 Actions	Neighbourhood & Neighbouring	Protects place identity + connects past and present community	**Extends;** heritage is not structurally embedded in framework
6	Redeveloping into vibrant mixed-use neighbourhood	Diverse housing typologies (ground-bound, apartments)	S4 Actions / S5 Targets	Neighbourhood	Spatial transformation + residential diversity is delivered here	**Aligns**
7	Re-imaging neighbourhood identity	From "ruig" → "curious/safe"	S3 Remedy / S7 Reflection	Neighbours & Neighbouring	Addresses stigma, safety perception, and symbolic repair of the neighbourhoods 'bad' image	**Extends;** framework focuses on remediation, rebranding is more ambitious
8	No demolition of existing dwellings	Existing social housing preserved	S0 History and context / S3 Remedy / S7 Reflection	Neighbours	Prevents displacement; aligns with "affected community" duty	**Aligns**
9	Mix of housing segments and price levels	Social, mid-rent, and market units	S1 Policies / S5 Targets / S6 Measurement	Neighbourhood & Neighbours	One of few *quantifiable* social targets → measurable in % / ratio	**Aligns**
10	Collaboration + shared responsibility through partnerships	Municipality, Woonstad Rotterdam, cultural actors	Cross-cutting (S1–S7)	All layers	Enables co-governance, continuous dialogue, shared accountability	**Extends;** partnerships support the framework, but it goes beyond one stage and covers the whole project cycle

5.5.2 Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

For Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the following strategic narratives and objectives from the factsheet as mentioned in chapter 5.3.3 are complemented by strategic narratives mentioned by the developer in the interview (see section 5.4), from which the key themes are derived.

1. Partnership and co-governance
2. Right to return, no net loss of social rent
3. Placemaking activities
4. Socio-economic uplift for all alongside spatial upgrade
5. Community programming and involvement of local partners

Added narratives and objectives introduced by the interview:

6. Area renewal, tackling more than housing crisis
7. Large-scale housing transformation (quality of housing stock)
8. Mixed housing across segments
9. Design quality and sustainability

The analysis of the strategies by the developers for the Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten case is done in the same way as the Katendrecht case, and is mapped in table 25.

Mapping objectives to framework

Table 25 Strategic objectives of Heijmans for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten mapped against the adapted framework

#	Strategic Objective	Concrete Example	Stage (S1–S7)	Layer	Rationale	Gaps/overlaps
1	Parntership and co-governance	Collaboration between Heijmans, Staedion and municipality	Cross-cutting	All layers	Governance structure enables a shared responsibility and long-term engagement	**Extends;** exceeds framework by establishing collaboration across all stages
2	Right to return, no net loss of social rent	Guarantee for existing tenants to gain priority for new housing	S3 Remedy / S7 Reflection	Neighbours	Attempts to prevent displacement and maintain affordability	**Aligns**
3	Placemaking activities	Initiatives for public space, current community is the ambassador of the neighbourhood	S2 Engagement / S3 Remedy	Neighbouring, Neighbours	Strengthens identity and supports current residents during transition	**Aligns**
4	Socio-economic uplift for all alongside spatial upgrade	Focus in program on well-being, job creation, education; measuring this uplift against 'Betere Buurt kernwaardenmeetlat', to fit current and future residents	S2 Engagement / S3 Remedy	Neighbouring, Neighbours	Integrates social programming into redevelopment process	**Extends;** measurable socio-economic uplift goes beyond what is operationalized in framework
5	Community programming and involvement of local partners	Project office in the neighbourhood, keeping entrepreneurs in the plinth	S2 Engagement / S4 Actions	Neighbouring	Aims to keep strong social structures through local networks	**Aligns**
6	Area renewal, tackling more than housing crisis	Inclusion of new social and commercial amenities	S1 Policies / S2 Engagement	Neighbouring	Purpose beyond physical improvement, boosting socio-economic position of the neighbourhood	**Extends;** Strategy is built on systematic policies for whole area DH Zuidwest, goes beyond frameworks starting point
7	Large-scale housing transformation (quality of housing stock)	Replacing old housing stock (+-1800 dwellings) and renovate +-290 dwellings	S4 Actions / S5 Targets	Neighbourhood	Physical restructuring including improving housing quality	**Diverges;** scale of demolition challenges S3 Remedy, which emphasizes mitigating displacement
8	Mixed housing across segments	Mix of social, mid-rent, sale units	S1 Policies / S5 Targets /	Neighbourhood, Neighbours	Densification and diversification of housing stock	**Aligns**

9	Design quality and sustainability	Future-proof homes, sustainable building techniques, for example HAC concept for modular building systems	S6 Measurement			
			S5 Targets / S7 Reflection	Neighbourhood	Long-term quality and environmental sustainability integrated into design	**Extends**; environmental sustainability is taken into account, as well as mobility, which exceeds what framework currently captures

Notes on divergence

The mapping demonstrates that most of the developers' strategies in both cases either align or extend the adapted framework by incorporating tangible examples. Regarding Katendrecht, the developers strategic narratives show no clear divergences. This shows that the projects gradual process, the preservation of heritage and the focus on placemaking are reflected in the adapted framework. However, the lack of divergences in the Katendrecht narratives should not be interpreted as the absence of any tensions regarding social sustainability in practice, rather it indicates that there could be limitations in entirely focusing on the perspective of developers when assessing social sustainability outcomes. Developers primarily describe strategic intentions and objectives, while the potential impact related to the community and the unintended consequences of the interventions of the developers may remain less visible from their perspective. Therefore rather than assuming that the alignment across all strategies inherently reflects positive impact on affected communities, it becomes valuable to introduce the perspectives of other stakeholders and the affected themselves.

The case for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten presents one divergence in the strategic objectives; the large-scale demolition and replacement of the housing stock (#7). Although the right-to-return policy introduced by the coalition helps to reduce the risks of displacement, the scale and extent of the physical transformation compromises the principle of S3 Remedy, which emphasizes on minimizing disruption for the affected communities.

When combined, the two cases and particularly the absence of divergence in strategic goals versus the adapted framework, suggests the significance of involving the perspectives of the local community. In section 5.6 the involvement of local representatives in this study aim to understand how the lived experiences of residents and the actual effects of the redevelopment may deviate from the strategic aims, exposing gaps that are not apparent through the developers perspectives.

5.6 Local representatives

5.6 Local representatives – SQ4

After examining the definition, strategies and narratives of developers for the two cases in relation to the adapted framework, this section addresses local representatives. This subchapter aims to answer **SQ4: How can representatives of the local community and the municipality broaden or deepen the understanding of strategies on affected communities in urban redevelopment projects for developers?**

Local representatives under this section are municipal representatives, representatives of community initiatives and community builders. These representatives are asked how they interpret and respond to the redevelopment processes in Katendrecht and Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten through their experiences. This chapter shifts the attention from developers, which intervene in the built environment by their actions, to those who interact more closely with the affected communities. Their perspectives provide crucial insight into how the strategies and narratives discussed in chapter 5.4 and 5.5 translate to the real life experiences of the community and the social processes that unfold within the community.

Through open-ended explorative interviews, local representatives are asked how the redevelopment influences the social environment, lived experiences of residents and the relationship dynamic between the different members of the community. The interview transcripts are analysed through inductive coding, which allows to derive themes matching the narratives of the representatives. Their reflections on inclusion, participation, cohesion and identity of the neighbourhood provide tangible examples on the topic of social sustainability in urban redevelopment.

The themes identified in this section do not correspond directly to one of the dimensions of the adapted framework, they rather relate to the broader foundations of this thesis and the topic of social sustainability. This allows for a interpretive method, where the insights of representatives organically reflect the the concepts and theories of this thesis. These insights are used to broaden or deepen the understanding for developers on this topic where developers may have overlooked or underestimated their effects, both positively and negatively.

5.6.1 Katendrecht

For the Katendrecht case three representatives from the case are interviewed and mentioned in table 26. In this table the main reasoning and directions for questions are mentioned, which derive from the interviews with the developers.

Table 26 Local representatives interviewed for Katendrecht

#	interviewee	Reasoning and direction	Main themes
A	Project manager urban development – Municipality of Rotterdam	Understanding their role in bridging system-life world. Understanding their role in policy making for Katendrecht. Understanding their role in involving old residents (Kapenezen).	Policy and governance role
B	Urban planner and participation specialist – De Plekkenmakers	Understanding how participation was structured. Understanding the main conflicts and challenges from old and new residents. Understanding the lived experiences of the affected community and their concerns regarding the redevelopment.	Participation and interaction between residents
C	Member of board – Kaapse Kringen	Understanding how the community experiences the changes in daily life. Understanding experience of residents regarding objectives and narratives of developers.	Feeling and experience regarding redevelopment

A. Project manager urban development – Municipality of Rotterdam

The representative from the municipality of Rotterdam, that is involved in the redevelopment of Katendrecht, describes the neighbourhood as an area where the redevelopment has radically affected both the physical and

the social environment. The tension between the old residents and the new groups coming to the neighbourhood, to live or to recreate is felt and acknowledged by the municipality. By highlighting three key themes; identity and cohesion, information asymmetry and participation, the viewpoint of the municipality broadens the developers' understanding.

Identity and cohesion

Social sustainability literature highlights identity, belonging and cohesion as core components of community wellbeing (Colantonio & Dixon, 2009; Glasson & Wood, 2009; Woodcraft, 2012), which makes the tensions describes by the municipality essential for understanding the lived effects of the redevelopment in Katendrecht.

Although the project manager acknowledges that the physical redevelopment and densification of the area has been a success, they point out that the perception of success by residents differ strongly. The older residents, some of which have lived in Katendrecht for generations, also known and referred to as 'de Kapenezen', believe that a part of their social and cultural identity has been compromised by the addition of a 'richer' community, referring to the mix of segments by densification:

> *''The 'Katendrechters' are the new residents, and then there are the old ones, the 'Kapenezen', who have been here since the very beginning. They have experiences the whole transition and they are the ones that have a mixed feeling about the development. There is a lot of worry and anxiety, but at the same time there is also joy in what is happening.''*

Meanwhile the new residents and groups that come into the neighbourhood do not naturally integrate into the existing networks of the old residents. The project manager highlights that both groups have different places and spaces they use and go to, to connect with other people:

> *''The community centre is really outdated and is located deep in Katendrecht, in the old part of the area. It serves an important function there. However the question is, will the new residents come here? The new residents know their way around Fenix, you will not get them to the community centre.''*

However the project manager does emphasize the need for the redevelopment of the area because of the bad image and safety issues in the neighbourhood:

> *''Before Heijmans started developing the first projects here, more than 25 years ago this area was simply a very bad neighbourhood, with a lot of crime. You did not want to be here. It was dangerous.''*

Information asymmetry and participation

Information asymmetry in the Katendrecht case links directly to the lack of participation early on in the process with the affected community. As different scholars emphasize (Dixon & Woodcraft, 2013; Shirazi & Keivani, 2018; Atanda, 2020), participation is an important cornerstone for democratic urban development, and the unequal access to information undermines the dimension of participating.

The project manager emphasized in the interview that early engagement with local residents failed because the residents lacked information and knowledge about the plans. This resulted in strong resistance to initial ideas, including resistance against development plans that would ultimately benefit the local community, such as a school expansion:

> *''We thought, well, people would be all excited, you know? And that was not the case, and I was quite shocked. Then we said, okay, so there is such an information gap. We have to do something about this. So inform people, but also, of course, give them a voice, and be transparent. Why do we do what we do and what are the thoughts behind it?''*

The project manager also highlighted the importance of respect and making people feel heard. Not only the affected community (the old Kapenezen), but also the newcomers (Katendrechters) and the developer:

> *''Do you feel heard? Are you treated with respect? It is so important, is it not? That applies to a former Kapenees, but it also applies to a Katendrechter. It also applies to the developer.''*

The project manager explicitly states that participation is a relational practice in redevelopment plans this long, rather than a procedural requirement:

> *"Actually, since that moment, we have invested heavily in communication for five years in a row... listening... taking concerns seriously."*

Additionally they mention that effective oversight by a 'omgevingsmanager' (area manager) is essential for success.

Positive and negative impacts

The positive and negative impacts described by the municipal representative resonates with the debates on how social interventions can impact social problems (Kearns and Parkinson, 2001; Pagano, 2015).

By clearly recognizing both positive and negative outcomes of the redevelopment in Katendrecht, the municipality reflects and broadens the lens for the developer by giving these insights.

Positive

The area, statistically, has undergone a drastic positive change. Crime has decreased, the area is more pleasant for both newcomers and old residents. It creates more opportunities for children, creates the need for more facilities which is good for the economy and ultimately generates money for the municipality.

> *''If the neighborhood's profile improves and crime disappears, it will be a more pleasant living environment for the people who live there. So, overall, my assessment is that it will also be a much safer, more pleasant and more opportunity-rich area for existing residents. It will offer more opportunities for their children. Due to densification and the addition of housing, there is a need for more amenities, which is also good for the economy, and these developments also generate funding for the municipality."*

Negative

What has proven most difficult is the cohesion and interaction between old and new, between the residents.

> *''I think that in the end it did not quite work out to get that social cohesion between old and new, to make it all work, to make it merge into one another."*

The contradiction in experiences highlight the need for both qualitative monitoring by learning from stories as well as quantitative monitoring through statistical improvements.

B. Stedenbouwkundige en participatiespecialist – De Plekkenmakers

The Plekkenmakers was involved in the neighbourhood Katendrecht in 2022 on behalf of the municipality, to guide the participation with old and new residents. The interviewee mentions that the municipality had a vision for the area since 2006, years before they asked the Plekkenmakers to guide the participation procedure. This is important to note, because they mention that in the time between the vision and first changes to the neighbourhood (2006) and the participation procedure (2022) there was radio silence about the interventions in the neighbourhood for the local residents. The municipality realized that there was a misfit between the older residents and the newcomers (as mentioned by the municipality in section A). De participation specialist from the Plekkenmakers stresses that COVID, which was used as an excuse for not communicating by the municipality, was not a valid excuse to not involve local residents. In the section below, the interview with the Plekkenmakers is broken down in three main steps; participation, everyday use and responsibility.

Participation

Participation described by the Plekkenmakers dives deeper into empowerment and trust based engagement rather than just following a policy, which relates to the emerging theme of empowerment & participation described by Colantonio & Dixon (2009).

The Plekkenmakers, as mentioned, stressed that the participation was too late. Thus it was important to realize who they are doing this for, also for the municipality to realize how the community is impacted. Their work began by re-establishing basic relational contact:

"You have to know your residents. Who are you doing it for? Who are they? What are their perspectives?"

The neutral stance, facilitating a safe environment for residents and structuring open dialogue helped:

"We [de Plekkenmakers] do not belong to the municipality… We are here to help you, to give you a voice."

Another important note was that the participation was not formal or of high-level, it was accessible for all, informal and invited residents by curiosity:

"Presenting it in a fun way. An event you just show up to. Everyone can participate. Everyone is welcome. And they [residents] really feel that."

Social divide

The theoretical background presents the two dimensions of social sustainability described by Dempsey et al. (2009), of which one is the sustainability of communities themselves. This reflects social interaction, community stability and networks in the community.

The Plekkenmakers noticed the divide between the old and the newer residents, they acknowledged the gap between them:

"It became clear that there are Kapenezen… and there are Katendrechters. There was a gap between those two groups."

The specialist hightlighted that participation is not only to gather input, it is about giving residents ownership over their own environment, to make them feel attached to it:

"When residents feel that they have been able to take ownership of something… then you also feel more involved."

Overall the Plekkenmakers highlight the importance of meaningful engagement and participation, built on trust, transparenct and neutrality. Open and accessible for all, in a language (figuratively) that the residents speak, with colour and images. These are elements that developers can improve in, which helps them understand social sustainability from the lifeworld perspective.

C. Member of board – Kaapse Kringen

Kaapse Kringen is a community initiative and movement for and by residents of Katendrecht and the Wilhelmina Pier. For the interview, a member of the board was asked how the community experiences the new developments and changes in the neighbourhood.

Relation between citizens

The social divide between the residents is highlighted by the Kaapse Kringen as well and also relates to the definition of social sustainability by Janssen & Basta (2022), in which they emphasize how context conditions should enable relations between citizens and their living environment.

The representative of Kaapse Kringen reflects on the divide between the old residents of Katendrecht and the newcomers as well, and highlight the parallel life-world they live in, even when so close together:

"I do think that we [old and new residents] really are in two separate lifeworlds… even though we live on top of each other here."

They confirm that participation came too late for the affected community and that the experience of waiting so long to be heard was not positive:

"It was actually too late... you give the feeling that everything is done without them [Kapenezen] having an opinion about it."

The delay contributed to a feeling of lost ownership and the neighbourhood losing its identity for Kapenezen.

Socio-economic difference, cultural divide

The difference in socio-economic status of the residents can be linked to the statement of Turk (2021) on how affected communities can be left with an increased inequality in their own neighbourhood.

An important note by the representative was the difference in socio-economic background between the old residents and the new residents. The representative mentioned tutoring classes in the school of the neighbourhood and noted that in those classes you do not see any children that are newer to the neighbourhood, assuming they get their tutoring at home. However children of the community that already lived there are present in these free classes:

"Where are they? All those kids. You do not get them in your tutor class... those are the kids who already get it [tutoring] at home."

This is one of the examples that shows the socio-economic difference, leading to segregation, which impact daily routines and informal networks.

While the representatives acknowledges the challenges, especially in creating meaningful connection and informal interaction between both groups, they point out that certain interventions like new facilities (e.g. Fenix museum) and community programming adds value to the neighbourhood.

Kaapse Kringen emphasize the importance of early involvement, transparent and ongoing communication and more intentional strategies that support cohesion between residents to create a strong community.

Insights from Katendrecht's representatives

Across the three representatives interviewed, the insights both broaden and deepen the understanding on strategies regarding social objectives for developers, which can be summarized as follows:

1. **Social cohesion** is fragile and requires spatial and relational interventions, thought of in the beginning of a redevelopment process.
2. **Information asymmetry and mistrust** are significant barriers in participation and engagement of the local community that is affected by the actions and interventions of developers.
3. **Identity and belonging** are crucial for affected communities and can not be read or reported from only indicators, listening to stories and experiences, needs and wants are essential.
4. **Everyday places and informal encounters** matter. Participation is not the only way to make old and new residents interact.
5. **Community groups** and initiatives hold more knowledge and information than thought, they can give fundamental insight on how daily life is experienced by the community, both old and new residents. They play an essential role in shaping social outcomes if involved in the process and given resources to make a change.
6. **Acknowledging affected communities** and negative impacts on the community by redevelopment processes is essential in making the affected community felt seen. Listening, acknowledging and respecting the affected community is perhaps even more important than trying to frame everything positively.

5.6.2 Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

For the Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten case three representatives from the case are interviewed and mentioned in table 27. In this table the main reasoning and directions for questions are mentioned, which derive from the interviews with the developers.

Table 27 Local representatives interviewed for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten

#	interviewee	Reasoning and direction	Main themes
A	Project manager urban development – Municipality of the Hague	Understanding their role in the coalition. Understanding the timeline for improvement of the area.	Policy and governance role
B	Project manager – Staedion	Understanding how participation is structured from the housing association side.	Participation and interaction between residents
C	Community builder – Bouwlust and Vrederust	Understanding how the community experiences the changes in daily life. Understanding experience of residents regarding objectives and narratives of developers.	Feeling and experience regarding redevelopment

A. Project manager urban development – Municipality of the Hague

The project manager from the municipality forms a key stakeholder in the coalition between the project team for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten. They provide a governance focused perspective that relates strategic city-wide goals to neighbourhood reality. The municipality highlights the structural obstacles that underlie the redevelopment while working towards the long-term vision for Den Haag Zuidwest. The obstacles include division in municipal objectives, deeply rooted socio-economic disadvantage and safety concerns. The need for governmental investment, co-governance and safeguarding residents helps contextualize the redevelopment from their perspective.

City-wide socio-economic goals

The city-wide socio-economic goals described by the municipality fit the notion that neighbourhoods are seen as the practical scale in which social sustainability goals like these can be implemented (Akcali & Cahantimur, 2023).

The municipality positions Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten within a larger agenda and policy ambition, the uplift of whole Den Haag Zuidwest:

> "The population of Zuidwest needs to reach the average level of The Hague… crime, quality of life, job opportunities."

This underscores that the redevelopment plan is not only a spatial uplift but also a social uplift, as developers have mentioned in their interviews as well. The multi-domain targets for the whole area signify the importance of collaborative governance and the deep involvement of the municipality during this redevelopment.

A remark made by the representative on the importance of the densification and a clarification on this choice is that Den Haag has spatial and structural limits. There is no area in the city that can be used as an expansion, so densification is the only options to create more homes.

> "The Hague has no greenfield development areas… they cannot expand."

This helps understand why densification and phasing strategies are used in this area and are unavoidable.

Scale of displacement

Issues like displacement of low income groups due to urban redevelopment or renewal are described by Lees et al. (2015) and are reflected in the case of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten.

The municipality is aware of the disruptive nature of demolishing on such large scale. The representative stresses the importance of managing the transition and temporary relocation of residents.

> "That is quite stressful… especially for the residents themselves."

The representative draws on lived experiences of the community.

Vulnerable households

Turk (2021) describes that vulnerable groups are often at increased risk of inequality and inclusion in their own neighbourhood, this concept is a challenge in this case and acknowledged by the project manager of the municipality.

Although the municipal representative acknowledges the high vulnerability of the residents in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, they do not structurally monitor the social impact the redevelopment has. The municipality is mainly focused on the physical output and quantifiable goals:

"We really focus on the physical aspect, in terms of things that are truly measurable. The number of homes in the program, that is what we guard."

When asked about the social indicators (e.g. safety, wellbeing, social cohesion) that indicate the area is disadvantaged, and if they are actively tracked, the representative admits that they are not concerned with that on a daily:

"As far as I know, we do not really use indicators for that... Quality of life depends on many aspects... it is not something we deal with on a daily basis."

The representative reflects on why the neighbourhoods have been neglected for decades, leading to the current 'achterstandswijk' conditions. Although it is clear that the redevelopment is addressing the socio-economic disadvantage and the vulnerability of the community, it does not become clear why the neighbourhoods were not seen as places to take action in before.

B. Project manager – Staedion

The representative of Staedion reflects the position of main contact point for residents and tenants, which are affected by the renewal of the dwellings. Their approach is based on the practical realities of temporary relocation, tentant communication and the social vulnerability of the community. Their main aim is to ensure stability during the large-scale demolition and reconstruction. The observations from the representative highlights the conflict and challenges between policy goals (e.g. right-to-return, no net loss of social rent) and administrative, logistic and emotional constraints of tenants. The perspective of Staedion gives insight into household resilience and the redevelopment plan.

Long-term structural disadvantage

The residents of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten have structurally been disadvantaged, which brings challenges for redevelopment. As Murie & Musterd (2004) describe, large-scale interventions can produce unintended consequences for residents, especially for vulnerable communities.

Staedion emphasizes that Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten have faced decades of stagnation due to lack of tenure diversity, which led to a vulnerable community left behind.

"The moment things got better for you in that neighborhood, there was no place for you anymore... the strong shoulders disappeared."

This relates to the remarks the developers have made about the neighbourhoods. The historical context also highlights why social sustainability cannot just be added to a project. Developers must recognize structural and generational disadvantage embedded in the social and physical environment.

Right-to-return policy

The framework of Missimer (2017), discussed in the theoretical framework, describes a system thinking approach that suits the right-to-return policy for this case. It encourages system resilience and inclusivity.

A policy mentioned frequently in this case is the right-to-return. All tenants get the opportunity to return to the neighbourhood. Staedion frames this as critical to ensure socially legitimate redevelopment:

"We are not going to drive social housing tenants out of here. The municipality stipulated at some point that people would receive a return guarantee. There is a place back here for everyone."

However an important reflection made by the representative on this policy is the fact that not everyone will want to come back to the neighbourhood, this could be due to the other different changes the area is going through such as the mobility transition, or the higher service costs of the dwelling or because the moving costs are too high.

''But if they [current residents] want to return, they will not get another fund for moving back. Service charges are a bit higher because of the building's layout. Parking also costs money now. So those are things they are not used to yet."

This nuance helps developers understand that the policy does not guarantee the displacement risk because of for example the economic barriers.

Co-governance

Governance structures are important to consider when approaching social sustainability (Debrunner, 2021), which is emphasized on in this case.

Staedion, as well as the developer and the municipality, highlights the importance of the project team and co-governance strategy for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten:

"It has been forged into a very good collaboration... everyone stays close to their strength."

They mention that in this structure it is important to keep doing what is at the core of your organization. They highlight that co-governance in this case is a structural requirement.

C.   Community builder – Bouwlust and Vrederust

The community builder in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten provides an embedded perspective on the daily live of the local community. The community builder stands at the centre of the residents, offering insights into how the redevelopment impacts every day routines, social networks and mental wellbeing. They engage with residents on the street, in community centers and at other gathering spots. Their observations highlight concerns about mistrust, displacement and calls for culturally appropriate interactions.

Cultural practices

Cultural diversity is a social criteria mentioned by several scholars, cultural values promote a socially sustainable society (Atanda & Ozturk, 2020; Woodcraft et al., 2011; Polèse and Stren, 2000).

The community builder reveals that typical design choices frequently overlook cultural forms of life. Residents from various groups (e.g. Turkish, Moroccan, and Somali households) have varied spatial and social requirements that do not suit the 'modelwoning' logic of developers. New dwellings that developers believe are of high quality are sometimes seen as inadequate or culturally incompatible. The community mentions concerns of residents as follows:

"Why is the kitchen in the living room? This should be separate, when we are cooking and guests are here, we should be able to close off the kitchen."

This perspective deepens the understanding that social sustainability is not only about quality but also about cultural alignment.

Temporary relocation, deep social loss

The temporary relocation of residents in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten reflects the challenge of displacement in urban redevelopment (Lees et al., 2015).

The community builder stresses the emotional and social consequences of the relocation during the transition and redevelopment:

> *''You have been in a temporary house for three years... Well, they do not come back to that hell of a neighborhood. But they do really miss the social cohesion... And then they basically lose their social network. Those people are now depressed... and that's about 50% of the residents that I am talking about.''*

Children settling into the new neighbourhoods they are placed in, going to new schools, losing networks and feeling disconnected, all affect the likelihood to return. The return rate to the neighbourhood does not depend solely on guarantees or policies, but is impacted by lived adaptation which is not visible in strategic documents or reports.

Community members

The community leaders of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten play a central role in the sense of attachment and security described as an indicator by Shirazi & Keivani (2018).

The community builder emphasizes the critical function of "buurtmoeders," informal leaders who serve as cultural brokers, translators, and trusted mediators:

> *"She is the face of the Dreven neighborhood mother group... everyone thinks she is from Staedion or Heijmans."*

However overburdening them creates risks:

> *''Yes, we end up putting a lot of stress and load on her. We should actually be relieving her. So she started to set boundaries.''*

Contextual understanding

The overarching principle in this case is that the developers recognize what is happening in the lives of the residents as described by the community builder, this reflects the notion of Shirazi & Keivani (2018) that contextual understanding is essential when conceptualizing social sustainability.

The community builder states that residents react to actors who "show up" and understand their realities:

> *"You have to recognize what is going on, before taking the next step."*

This broadens the developer's perspective, meaningful engagement requires integrity and cultural awareness, rather than just formats or events.

Insights from Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten's representatives

Across the three representatives, the understanding on strategies on affected communities are both deepened and broadened, and mentioned below:

1. **Cultural life-world** are sensitivities developers should be aware of.
2. **Displacement effects** come with emotional and social consequences.
3. **Informal community figures need to be protected** because they are essential for creating awareness and understanding of the redevelopment plan.
4. **Structural coordination** is felt by residents and thus marked even more important than thought.
5. **Monitoring wellbeing** should be long-term and reported.

6 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

6 CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

This chapter synthesizes the findings from both case studies from chapter 5: Katendrecht – Rotterdam and Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten – Den Haag. It answers SQ2, SQ3 and SQ4 in a cross-case analysis. The cases differ significantly in context, scale and redevelopment logic, yet they provide valuable insight into how Dutch developers understand social sustainability in the urban redevelopment context, how this reflects the adapted framework and how their strategies are interpreted by the affected community. The cross-case analysis helps understand the differences and shared themes across the cases, which helps answer the main research question in chapter 7 Conclusion.

6.1 Cross-case analysis SQ2 – developers' perspectives

SQ2: How do Dutch developers define and strategize around social sustainability and affected communities in urban redevelopment projects?

Differences

The analysis in section 5.4 reveals that the developers across both cases adopt a layered understanding of social sustainability, but their definitions, motivations and strategic practices differ on some points due to the character of the neighbourhood and the nature of the redevelopment task

Timeline and context

Both Katendrecht and Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten are large-scale urban redevelopment projects, but their timeline, starting conditions and context differ significantly. Where Katendrecht's development started in 2004, when objectives for the densification of the area were very different, a long-term redevelopment strategy shaped around the residents. The existing dwellings remained in place whule the area grew, and still grows over time.

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten follows a more recent redevelopment strategy, shaped by today's policy environment of the housing crisis, stricter participation requirements and more attention to social sustainability. Unlike the gradual and market driven transformation of Katendrecht, Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten involves large-scale demolition and replacement of old, outdated housing stock which directly affects resident's homes and requires intense engagement and phasing strategies. Table 28 highlights the contextual and time dependent differences between both cases.

Table 28 Differences in context of both cases

Dimension	Katendrecht	Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten
Start involvement developer	2006	2019
Policy context at start	Focus on cultural and heritage led renewal and image improvement	Focus on participation, housing renewal, inclusion
Type of intervention	Gradual transformation, densification	Demolition and renewal of housing stock
Impact on residents	Residents mostly remained, redevelopment around them	Residents directly affected, temporary housing and phasing required
Socio-spatial context	Emerging mixed income district	Post-war architecture and neighbourhood with structural socio-economic disadvantage

Definitions and motivations

In Katendrecht, social sustainability in practice has developed over the past two decades. The developer mentions that social sustainability was not an explicit theme in the strategy of the neighbourhood, rather it is a result of the approach. The historical knowledge of the area, the long-term involvement of Heijmans and the context sensitivity helped rebrand the neighbourhood. Social sustainability is not seen as a checklist or stand alone theme in this case, but as a responsibility of both the developer and municipality.

The developers of Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten on the other hand express that social sustainability and the 'maatschappelijke opgave' are structural to the redevelopment strategy of this case. The redevelopment strategy is a response to the systematic socio-economic disadvantage of these neighbourhoods. The high unemployment rates, low education levels and safety related issues result in selective migration of the stronger individuals. The poor housing quality leads to health issues. The socio-economic disadvantage is explicitly mentioned as a pillar for the redevelopment strategy, it drives the physical restructuring and the improvement of the socio-economic statistics serve as a precondition for long-term social and generational uplift.

How developers understand affected communities

Both cases recognize affected communities, but the nature of understanding diverges:

- Katendrecht: The affected communities are described in terms of identity and cohesion. It is mentioned that one of the challenges is that the affected communities and the new residents co-exist but do not interact. The challenge is symbolic and relational, the different social worlds of the affected and new community as well as the need to understand and create common places.
- Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten: The affected communities are described by their vulnerability to exposure and disruption and the need to safeguard stability during the process of redevelopment for them. The developers describe the community as the fourth actor, that should benefit from the socio-economic uplift of the area.

Strategic approaches and interventions

Both cases combine spatial, social and procedural strategies, however the emphasis differs. In table 29 the different strategic approaches are mentioned for both cases.

Table 29 Strategic differences in both cases

Katendrecht	Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten
Gradual densification	Large-scale demolition and rebuilding
Heritage and identity-led strategy	Socio-economic and generational uplift
Mixed-use cultural programming	Youth engagement, education and employment focus
Third places, everyday encounters	Community networks, local business owners
Negotiated partnerships	Contractual coalition between developer, housing association and municipality

The strategy for Katendrecht is place- and identity-based, whereas the strategy for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten is transformational and system-driven.

Participation practices

In Katendrecht, placemaking, cultural spaces and a continuous presence (project office) maintain the relationship with the community over time.

For Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, the participation practices are more visible. The embedded, street-level engagement, going into the neighbourhood, speaking to neighbourhoods in their safe spaces and being approachable are key to engage with the affected community. The conversations with residents is not only about design choices, but goes further into the expectations, concerns and future goals of residents and local business owners.

The contrast reflects a broader difference: Katendrecht emphasizes on symbolic integration by keeping the old physical structure of the building intact while in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the emphasis is on community resilience and systematic integration of the current and new community.

Long-term effects

In the approaches on the long-term effects of the redevelopment, a difference in both cases appears. In Katendrecht the strategy is primarily oriented towards continuity and identity of the area. The developer focuses

on preserving the social and spatial fabric as much as possible, reflected in the choice to not demolish any existing dwellings, the gradual densification at the edges of Katendrecht and their long-term presence even after delivery of certain buildings. This allows them to asses change informally through everyday use of the neighbourhood.

In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, the orientation for long-term effects is more structural, adopting a logic that the effects should be measured multi-generational, that tracks whether young residents gain improved life chances. The phased approach also aims to maintain some of the social fabric while enabling a large-scale physical transformation. The contrast shows that the systematic socio-economic change for Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten are different from the emphasis on identity preservation in Katendrecht.

Similarities

Although both cases differ significantly in scale, timeline and context, the cross-case analysis reveals certain shared patterns in how the developers conceptualize and operationalize social sustainability.

Social sustainability as integrated practice

In both cases the approach on social sustainability is integrated in the place identity, community involvement, social programming and physical transformation. Social sustainability, although not explicitly mentioned always, is included in decision making on housing mix, use of public space and local partnerships. Social sustainability, in both cases, is not a stand-alone policy.

Awareness of affected communities

Both cases acknowledge the affected communities and the fact that redevelopment in the area alters the life of current residents and business owners. This is evident in Katendrecht's emphasis on no demolition as well as in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten's right-to-return policy. Both address in their own way the effect of redevelopment on the affected community.

Collaboration and partnership

A key component in both cases is the collaboration and partnership between the developer and the municipality. Although Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten formalizes the cooperation between three main stakeholders, Katendrecht's collaboration and communication on the social objectives is significant for the redevelopment. Both cases acknowledge the importance of a involved municipality in decision making on for example; zoning, social infrastructure, programming and public space.

Continuous presence

Both cases researched are projects of Heijmans, in both cases there is a project office embedded in the neighbourhood to keep a continued presence and contact point for the neighbourhood. The project office is on street-level, allowing the community to walk in and interact with the project team, raise their concerns or come in with ideas for the neighbourhood. The informal connection is marked as essential and appraised by the developers.

Constraints

Both cases highlight the constant balance between social objectives, economic feasibility and operational reality. Whether addressing heritage, densification, land-use or budgets, the balance is important to take into account the vulnerable groups in the community, especially the affected community.

Cross-case insight for SQ2

Despite the different redevelopment logics of both cases, the similarities show that the approach by developers on social sustainability is context-sensitive, negotiated and integrated in the process and long-term. The strategy depends on cooperation between stakeholers, presence of developers in the neighbourhood and the recognition of the affected community.

6.2 Cross-case analysis SQ3 – framework application

SQ3: Where do the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in the urban redevelopment cases align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework?

Applying the adapted framework to both cases (section 5.5), reveals different patterns across the redevelopment projects; alignment, extension and divergence from the framework.

Alignment

Both cases align strongly with stage S1-S4, the first and middle stages. Developers for both projects demonstrate:

- **S1 Policy**: Systematic use of contextual information
- **S2 Engagement**: Early engagement through project offices, placemaking and local networks
- **S3 Remedy**: Commitment to prevent harm on the affected communities or to mitigate disruption and displacement
- **S4 Actions**: Clear spatial strategies, often combined with social goals

History preservation, cultural programming, placemaking, mixed housing and preserving existing buildings in Katendrecht is where alignment is clear.

Policies like right-to-return, social programming, local collaborations and community involvement is where Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten shows clear alignment with the adapted framework.

Extend

Both cases also present practices and strategies that go beyond the adapted framework:

Katendrecht: The incorporation of cultural identity-building and rebranding of the area as a symbolic repair of the area's image goes beyond the layers now mentioned in the adapted framework. It is an added dimension which can be seen as the socio-cultural meaning and identity.

Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten: One main strategy extending the adapted framework is the environmental sustainability measures that improve the life of residents. This is a dimension also briefly mentioned by expert E2 in chapter 4. Other narratives such as multi-generational monitoring/measuring and institutionalized co-governance pushes the framework into a more longitudinal dimension, beyond the typical project life cycle adapted by a developer.

These extension can lead to the following improvements for the adapted framework:
- Add a socio-cultural identity dimension across S1-S4 and as an indicator under Neighbourhood
    - o Accounting for historical narratives and symbolic meaning
    - o Including storytelling
    - o Adding image-repair, stigma reduction or socio-economic uplift as explanation to objectives
    - o Integrating third-place creation
- Add a longitudinal monitoring component, S6 and S7
    - o This dimension can be added next to the adapted framework as a cycle during the project life cycle and beyond
    - o Monitoring statistics before, during and after project delivery to make assumptions tangible and quantifiable
- Add collaborative governance as a main cross-cutting dimension
    - o Long-term partnership agreements
    - o Recognition of the community as the fourth actor
    - o Shared accountability mechanisms

- Integrate environmental quality
  - o S5 Targets and S7 Reflection may include environmental comfort, sustainable building quality, energy affordability and resilience of buildings

Divergence

The only divergence is in the Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten case where there the large-scale demolition of the dwellings lead to disruption for the affected communities.

Cross-case insight for SQ3

Across both cases, developer strategies and narratives largely align or even extend the adapted framework. The only divergence that appears is in the context of a physical restructuring where the frameworks fundamental social principle of protecting affected communities is partially compromised. However with strong policies and intentions to limit this harm, for example with the right-to-return, this divergence does not lead to changes in the adapted framework. This insight does highlight the need to integrate the lived experiences to fully understand the gaps between strategic intentions and narratives and actual social outcomes.

6.3 Cross-case analysis SQ4 – local representatives

SQ4: How can representatives of the local community and the municipality broaden or deepen the understanding of strategies on affected communities in urban redevelopment projects for developers?

Analysing the relation between the two cases for SQ4, it becomes evident that while both cases differ in context, scale and conditions as mentioned in the results of SQ2 and SQ3, local representatives from both cases reveal some shared themes and distinct dynamics. Community builders, municipal actors and resident representatives offer perspectives on the lived reality of the community, of which some are overlooked by developers. The observations of the representatives are divided and explained in the following four domains: (1) social cohesion and neighbourhood identity, (2) participation and communication, (3) vulnerability and displacement and (4) governance and responsibilities.

Social cohesion and neighbourhood identity

Local representatives highlight that physical improvement does not always translate to social cohesion. Representatives from Katendrecht even report on a social divide between the long-term residents, Kapenezen, and new groups of residents, Katendrechters. Placemaking and cultural programming does not fill the experience of a lost identity and belonging for the affected community. This shows developers that densification with mixed segments can potentially lead to cultural and social barriers, if the communication and interaction between communities is forgotten. In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the challenge in social cohesion lies in the displacement of tenants and stems from a more structural socio-economic vulnerability. Representatives emphasize community empowerment, long-term social support and cultural awareness as important cornerstones for the development if developers want to minimize negative effects on the affected community. In both cases the local representatives show that social cohesion depends on the lifeworld dynamics, the everyday practices, informal social structures and networks and a feeling of identity in the neighbourhood, which goes beyond strategies on only spatial design, housing strategies or mixed development.

Participation and communication

Both cases reveal that meaningful participation is not achieved with formal procedures alone. An important lesson from the Katendrecht case is information asymmetry and the lack of transparent communication, which leads to distrust and the feeling of being forgotten. In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the relational communication with residents and local businesses, informal encounters and showing up when concerns are raised, are essential in trust-building. Participation should be embedded in caring relationships, where there is room for local leadership through community initiatives and where continuity is conditioned.

Vulnerability and displacement

There is a key difference between both cases on the scale and form of disruption and displacement. Where in Katendrecht no demolition of existing dwellings occurs, and developers only densify the neighbourhood around the edges of the area, the disruption felt by residents is primarily social and symbolic. The affected community, of which some have lived in the area for decades, experience a demographic shift, pressure on affordability of housing and perceive a loss of local identity, even when physically staying in the same place. In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the displacement of tenants is physical due to the demolition and tenants are temporarily relocated. Temporarily can go up to 3 years according to the community builder, which has profound consequences. The social network is often lost in the relocation, families establish a new life in a different neighbourhood or area of Den Haag, not being able to travel easily to the neighbourhoods even causes depression for some tenants. The right-to-return policy does not guarantee a realized return, which can have several reasons; financial, emotional and cultural factors play a role in the residents ability or willingness to come back.

Together both cases highlight a broader understanding of disruption and displacement, it can be physical but also social, emotional or symbolic. Community insights are essential for developers to understand the impact they have on the affected communities regarding these themes.

Governance and responsibilities

In both cases the representatives confirm the importance of a well-established collaboration between multiple actors, mainly with the municipality. This collaboration helps developers operate within the

In Katendrecht the municipality holds a crucial role in translating social ambitions into workable policies, especially when developers are not actively intervening in the area. In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten the municipality is highlights the required long-term co-governance with the developer and housing association to reach the city-wide goals. Social sustainability is not only project based in this case, it depends on institutional alignment and willingness as well as monitoring and shared accountability.

6.4 Cross-case synthesis

By comparing developers' strategies and definitions, mapping them onto the adapted framework and including the perspectives of local representatives, this synthesis identifies dynamics that shape how social sustainability is interpreted, practiced and experiences in the two case studies. The following dynamics are explained:

1. **Revealing lifeworld dynamics** like identity, culture, daily routine and informal networks need to be understood by developers.
2. **Forms of disruption and displacement** can differ across cases, it is not only physical but can be symbolic or social as well.
3. **The relational nature of participation** is essential for building trust, being present and being aware of the community.
4. **Co-governance** clarifies responsibilities and strengthens the redevelopment for affected communities.
5. **Redevelopment and emotional and social** wellbeing are interconnected. The micro-level consequences in the lifeworld are linked to the large-scale decisions for the redevelopment plan on system-level.

The findings and results from the cross-case analysis for SQ2, SQ3 and SQ4 reflect that affected communities cannot be fully understood through system-world strategies. While developers recognize the importance of social sustainability conceptually, the cases show that the subtle cultural and emotional consequences shape the community experience. These elements nuance the positive effects illustrated by developers and become visible through long-term presence, trust-based engagement and sensitivity towards culture and context.

The empirical findings of this study suggest several dimensions that could improve the adapted framework of chapter 4, resulting in a refined adapted framework visualized in figure 28.
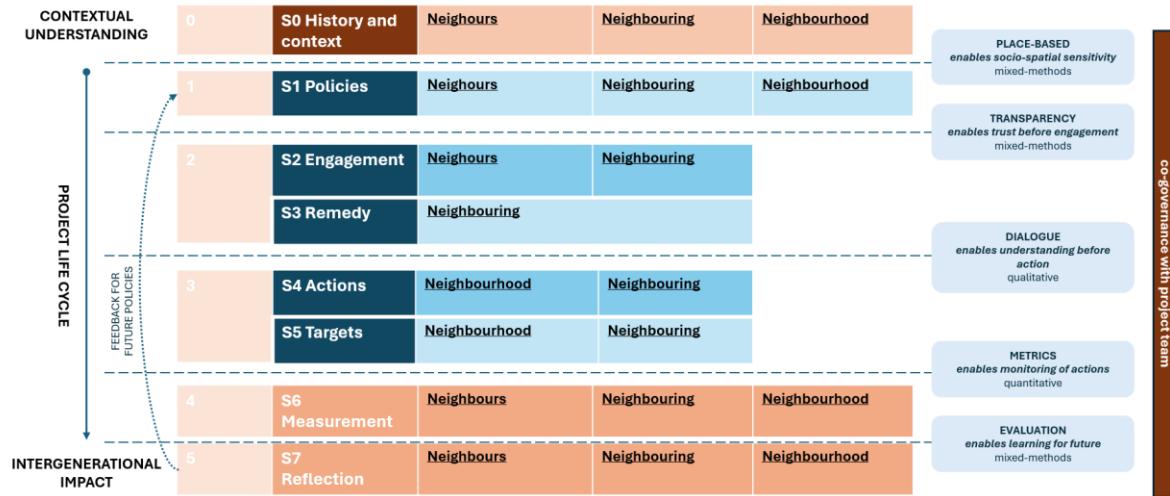
Figure 28 *Refined adapted framework (author, 2025)*

The improvements and additions are as follows:

1. Cultural and symbolic dimensions

First the cultural and symbolic aspects, including local identity, heritage and the need of symbolic repair and rebranding. This aspect resonates with interpretations of socio-cultural elements as a pre-condition for sustainable development by Chiu (2004). Next to the three interpretations of social sustainability, Chiu mentions two interpretations of cultural sustainability which are often mentioned together because they are shaped by community values and norms, yet focus on different indicators.

2. Contextual and historical grounding (S0)

Secondly a context-specific and place-based perspective is essential for developers to recognize socio-spatial histories and daily life activities of the community.

3. Intergenerational considerations

Thirdly this study marks the importance of intergenerational considerations, especially in vulnerable neighbourhoods where communities are marked by long-term disadvantage. This requires measurement and reflection beyond a single project cycle and raises an important question about governance and responsibilities.

4. Long-term co-governance

Finally the collaboration between essential stakeholders, such as developers, housing associations (or long-term investors), the municipality and local representatives are essential to govern long-term social objectives that contribute to a sustained wellbeing of the community.

An important note is that the layers of neighbourhood, neighbouring and neighbours are not uniformly mapped across all dimensions of the adapted framework. This is because each dimension operates differently relating to social sustainability. Engagement and remedy function at the relational scale of neighbouring and neighbours, while policy, measurement and reflection require all three layers. Actions and targets for developers relate more to the neighbourhood layer. The selective mapping of the layers ensures that the framework aligns with the focus of that specific dimension.

7 CONCLUSION

7 CONCLUSION

This study investigated the understanding, operationalization and implementation of social sustainability strategies by developers in Dutch urban redevelopment projects and the impact on affected communities. Through integration of academic frameworks and definitions, expert insights, two empirical redevelopment cases and a regulatory disclosure outline, ESRS S3, the study created and implemented an adapted framework to analyse developer strategies and their compliance to social sustainability principles regarding affected communities. First the conclusion of each sub question is given, after which the main research question is addressed.

SQ 1 – Framework development

SQ1: How do the ESRS S3 standard and the Shirazi & Keivani (2018) framework compare and contrast in their treatment of social sustainability in urban redevelopment, and how can their integration inform an adapted, more operational framework?

In the comparative analysis of SQ1, the Triad of Social Sustainability framework by Shirazi & Keivani (2018) and the ESRS S3 disclosure requirements showed distinct but complimentary dimensions around social sustainability and affected communities. The system-oriented viewpoint on due diligence, risk mitigation and reporting obligations of the ESRS S3 were taken as the main structure, which was complemented with life-world oriented indicators from the academic framework. After this theoretical compare and contrast analysis, the integration of these perspectives enabled the development of a first draft of an adapted framework. After seeking the insights from experts, the adapted framework includes seven stages (S1-S7) across three layers (Neighbourhood, Neighbouring, Neighbours) across the span of the project life cycle.

Experts confirmed in the interview that the regulatory requirements alone are unable to capture social identity or the lived experiences of the communities. The adapted framework, by integration of indicators and definitions, aspires to act as a tool that connects these regulatory compliance with the socio-spatial realities in neighbourhood redevelopment.

SQ 2 – Developers' perspectives

SQ2: How do Dutch developers define and strategize around social sustainability and affected communities in urban redevelopment projects?

The interviews with developers from two cases revealed that social sustainability is viewed as a multidimensional, context-dependant and collaborative practice. Although developers from both cases place a strong emphasis on social infrastructure (e.g.: community centres, public squares, third places), community wellbeing and partnerships, their strategic approaches vary depending on the neighbourhood context.

In Katendrecht, historical and cultural identity, continuity (in heritage preservation, no demolition, 20+ year presence of developer) and gradual densification are used to achieve social goals. The project emphasizes on placemaking, interaction between old and new residents, preserving history. To improve social cohesion, the developers rely on long-term presence, regular and street-level interactions and participation around decision-making.

In Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, social sustainability is framed as both the structural physical renewal of buildings as well as the socio-economic uplift of the neighbourhood. The policy right-to-return, socio-economic programs, long-term prospect improvement for the youth, phasing and the close co-governance with the housing association and municipality are highlighted as key strategies by developers. Participation and engagement with the affected community and local stakeholders is street-level, taking place public spaces and safe environments

for the community and concentrated on improving the life of residents as the redevelopment process takes place.

Across both cases, affected communities are seen and acknowledged. They are seen as the fourth actor and the only one directly impacted, and thus the needs and constraints of them must be taken into account. From the timelines of both cases, one can tell that developers are learning more about the importance of creating a social agenda and community engagement at the start of a project to minimize negative impacts and achieve socially sustainable outcomes.

SQ 3 – Framework application

SQ3: Where do the strategies of developers regarding social sustainability in the urban redevelopment cases align, extend or diverge from the adapted framework?

Mapping the strategies and narratives of developers to the adapted framework revealed significant consistency for both cases. Particularly in the early and middle stages; for contextual understanding and policymaking (S1 – Policies), engagement efforts (S2 – Engagement), mitigation management (S3 – Remedy) and execution of plans (S4 – Actions). Additionally, both cases also offer additions to the framework by extending with tangible examples:

5. **Katendrecht:** adds socio-cultural, identity building, symbolic repair.
6. **Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten:** adds environmental sustainability, long-term co-governance and multi-generational monitoring beyond typical project timelines.

The only and main divergence emerged from the Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten case due to the scale of demolition. This fundamentally challenges the principle of minimizing disruption and negative effects on affected communities and relates to S3 – Remedy. Katendrecht does not show any divergences at the level of strategic objectives and narratives, however this absence does not imply the absence of tensions in practice, unfolded in SQ4.

Together the cases demonstrate that the adapted framework has an effective structure to evaluate social sustainability strategies, but it benefits from tangible examples and real life cases which add dimensions such as socio-cultural meaning, long-term monitoring and co-governance.

SQ 4 – Local representatives

SQ4: How can representatives of the local community and the municipality broaden or deepen the understanding of strategies on affected communities in urban redevelopment projects for developers?

The perspectives of local representatives in both cases broaden and deepen developers' awareness of affected communities by emphasizing the lifeworld—the lived, social, and emotional realities that are sometimes overlooked in system-oriented efforts. Their findings demonstrate how redevelopment is considered in terms of belonging, cohesion, perceived safety, cultural identity, and everyday stress, indicating effects that cannot be captured solely through housing targets or participatory procedures.

Local representatives also highlight gaps in developer methods, such as identity loss and social divides in Katendrecht, as well as emotional stress, insecurity, and adaption challenges in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten. Their experiences demonstrate that meaningful participation is based on street-level presence, culturally sensitive engagement, and relational continuity, rather than formal procedures. Municipal and community stakeholders emphasize the importance of qualitative monitoring, stating that quantitative dashboards do not reflect wellbeing, stress, or resilience during long-term transitions.

Overall, the perspectives of the representatives show that combining developers' system-world objectives with people' lifeworld realities is necessary for socially sustainable redevelopment. Their contributions deepen our understanding of affected communities and indicate areas where tactics must become more responsive, inclusive, and attentive to the social processes taking place at local level.

Main research question

The main research question sought to be answered in this study is: *How do developers in the Netherlands interpret and integrate social sustainability in neighbourhood development, and how does this align with ESRS S3 reporting requirements on affected communities?*

The findings of this research show that while Dutch developers are increasingly seeing the social pillar in sustainability as a critical component of sustainable development, their implementation of it in their strategies remains fragmented and project-specific. Most strategies focus on design, planning and targets, which can help create inclusive and resilient neighbourhoods in some cases, but there are gaps. Developers underestimate the importance of field research, history and context sensitivity before development, and reporting and evaluation after delivery remains underdeveloped. Developers typically conceptualize social sustainability using spatial and economic factors, such as affordability, liveability and mixed development. However, ESRS S3 requires a process-oriented compliance, where the lived experiences of the affected community is taken into account, transparency about engagement is essential and where the dimension of addressing negative impact is as important as reporting on positive impacts. The language barrier, mentioned in the introduction, demonstrates the gap between the system- and lifeworld, where sometimes even the same topics emerge, but are expressed and experienced differently. Dimensions such as culture, vulnerability, socio-economic classes, sense of identity and belonging are often forgotten or not addressed sufficiently in developers strategies, while these are crucial dimensions for individuals in an affected community. In figure 29 the adapted framework developed through this research serves as a translation tool and bridges the two worlds closer together.

The adapted framework developed in this thesis brings the two worlds closer together, by matching the ESRS S3 disclosure requirements with the three domains of the Triad of Social Sustainability. The integration and further development, transforms the ESRS S3 from a procedural checklist and reporting guideline to a context-specific tool which considers more than only the institutional requirements around social sustainability. It gives tangible, measurable and most importantly human valued indicators, themes and dimensions to social sustainability. The addition of measurement and reflection addresses the critical gap in the ESRS S3 structure, which enables continuous learning and using outcomes of one project to inform policy for the next.

Finally, this research shows that translation is required for the alignment between the ESRS S3 and the Dutch development practice rather than replication. The ESRS S3 provides strong structural 'grammar' of accountability and reporting, while the lifeworld of affected communities provides the 'vocabulary' of what matters in the lived experience. The adapted framework proposed serves as a symbolic translation tool rather than a normative tool, bridging the gap between the system and lifeworld by operationalizing social sustainability as both measurable and meaningful.

Figure 29 Language barrier between system- and lifeworld closer together through this study and the developed adapted framework (author, 2025)
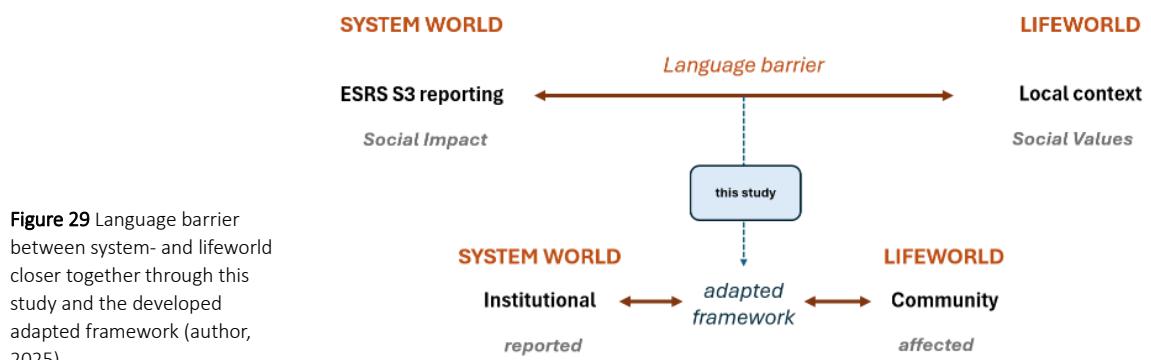
8 DISCUSSION

8 DISCUSSION

This discussion first reflects on the key findings of this study and then interprets the case-specific findings, as well as the overlapping themes and gaps. Then the implications for science, practice and society is given. Limitations of this study are discussed, as well as the recommendations for future research. Chapter 9 dives deeper into the recommendations specifically for the adapted framework and its further development.

8.1 Key findings

This research examined how social sustainability is understood, operationalized and experienced in two Dutch urban redevelopment cases, drawing on the perspectives of developers, local representatives and municipal actors. The conceptual and practical application of the adapted framework capturing social sustainability in urban redevelopment reveal context specific findings as well as overarching cross-case principles.

Context specific findings of this study are the different dimensions of social sustainability highlighted in each case. Katendrecht demonstrates the importance of cultural placemaking, symbolic repair and perceived loss of neighbourhood identity, while Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten highlight socio-economic vulnerability, intergenerational uplift and street-level engagement. The findings suggest that there is no standardised approach to social sustainability, but there are cross-cutting, overarching principles that can be derived which can help operationalize and interpret broader disclosure requirements such as ESRS S3 for urban redevelopment.

Despite the differences in the cases, four overarching principles explain how social sustainability is being shaped and constrained in both projects.

First, the study reveals an ongoing tension between the system- and the lifeworld. Where developers rely on formal procedures, measurable indicators and institutional logic, local representatives describe social sustainability through lived experience, community wellbeing, trust and neighbourhood identity.

Second, the findings show that continuous and trust based engagement is important. The most meaningful interactions occur when developers position themselves within the lives and routines of residents, through a local project office or informal encounters, visible in spaces where residents feel safe.

Thirdly the results illustrate that social sustainability strategies cannot be fully applied universally. Rather the expression of objectives depends on local identity, cultural norms, social networks, which are all part of the context. Contextual sensitivity is a fundamental requirement for meaningful social outcomes.

Lastly both cases show that collaboration and long-term governance is crucial in obtaining social outcomes. Coordination between developers, municipalities, housing associations and local representatives is essential for maintaining socially sustainable outcomes.

Together these four principles demonstrate that social sustainability is both contextual and system influenced, effective practice requires navigating the tension between local social dynamics and institutional requirements.

8.2 Interpretation of results

The findings suggest that social sustainability in urban redevelopment is not the product of a single intervention or metric but rather the outcome of negotiations between institutional systems, professional practice and daily community life. Each of the four overarching principles reveals a deeper dynamic.

1. The system- and lifeworld divide
The reoccurring gap between the system- and the lifeworld reflects a fundamental challenge in urban redevelopment. Developers operate within frameworks that prioritize measurability and procedural clarity.

These structures are reinforced by planning instruments, municipal agreements, and ESG reporting expectations. In contrast, residents relate social sustainability to emotional, cultural, and relational elements, qualities that are not easily standardized.

This mismatch is not simply a methodological problem; it is a structural tension. The adapted framework shows promise in translating lifeworld concerns of residents into more concrete indicators, yet the cases demonstrate that organizations still struggle to integrate these concerns into routine processes. The difficulty lies not in unwillingness of developers to integrate social sustainability but in the fact that organizational systems are not designed to social dynamics.

2. Engagement as a relational practice, not a procedural requirement

The study shows that meaningful participation depends less on the design of formal procedures and more on the relational and spatial qualities of engagement. Residents participate when they feel safe, recognized, and able to express themselves without pressure. This explains why engagement in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten benefited from everyday encounters in trusted community spaces, while Katendrecht experienced feelings of detachment when communication arrived late or only targeted specific groups.

These patterns indicate that engagement functions best when it becomes part of the social fabric of the neighbourhood, rather than an administrative requirement. It requires the developer to be present, visible, and responsive, not occasionally, but continuously and long-term.

3. Context shapes what social sustainability means

The significant differences between the cases underline that social sustainability has no universal content. Instead, its meaning emerges from local histories, vulnerabilities, and identity narratives. For Katendrecht, symbolic repair and cultural belonging are central. For Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten, the priorities lie in stability, socio-economic uplift, and long-term community resilience.

This confirms that social sustainability cannot be operationalized through a single checklist or uniform set of indicators. Instead, it must be interpreted through a local lens, with frameworks serving as guides rather than prescriptions.

4. Social sustainability requires shared responsibility and long-term commitment

The findings also highlight that no single actor can deliver socially sustainable neighbourhoods. Developers may initiate projects, but municipalities, housing associations, long-term investors, and community organizations all influence outcomes. In vulnerable neighbourhoods especially, social sustainability requires continuity beyond construction timelines and beyond project-based objectives.

This interdependence suggests that social sustainability is best understood not as a task or KPI, but as a long-term governance challenge that intersects with multiple institutions and community structures.

In short

Overall, the findings indicate that social sustainability in urban redevelopment is not achieved by a single intervention, but rather through the interaction of institutional regulation policies, developers practice and lived community experiences. The four principles identified in this study help explain why some strategies succeed while others fail to resonate locally.

The findings also provide clarity on the role of regulation. ESRS S3 is purposefully broad and non-sector-specific, allowing organizations to interpret affected communities in ways that fit their operational reality. However, this openness requires direction for developers in translating the standard into practical, project-level decisions. The adapted framework developed in this thesis contributes to this translation by situating ESRS S3 within the socio-spatial realities of neighbourhood redevelopment. As a result, it enables developers to transition from high-level concepts to context-sensitive measures that better represent the needs and experiences of those affected.

8.3 Implications

8.3.1 Scientific implications

For academic research, this study indicates how connecting abstract, regulatory requirements with contextual theories can help operationalize complicated concepts such as social sustainability in the built environment. The adapted framework demonstrates how the principles of ESRS S3 can be strengthened by socio-spatial indicators derived from literature and academic frameworks, like the Triad of Social Sustainability by Shirazi & Keivani (2018). This study adds to existing research on social sustainability in the built environment by demonstrating the interaction between strategies, physical urban fabric, social networks and community context and behaviour. The findings contribute to the theoretical discussion on how social sustainability frameworks can better represent lived experiences of the affected communities in urban redevelopment areas.

8.3.2 Practical implications

For developers, the findings highlight the importance of meaningful engagement with the affected community, included throughout the project lifecycle and targets and goals governed long after. Developers are encouraged to include themes such as belonging, cultural identity and social networks into their strategies and operations during an urban redevelopment project, making them more aware of the concerns and aspirations of the affected community. This thesis highlights how ESRS S3 can guide developers by requiring them to identify material impacts, manage stakeholders, report on risks and opportunities. The indicators and themes supplementing the ESRS S3 in the adapted framework make social sustainability more tangible for developers.

8.3.3 Societal implications

The findings highlight the importance of socially sustainable urban redevelopment for community wellbeing, neighbourhood resilience, and trust. For society this thesis reflects how urban redevelopment affects daily life and the implications of how a community can uplift from redevelopment if engagement with the affected community is done right. The adapted framework developed in this study strengthens the link between the system- and the lifeworld, emphasizing the importance of community wellbeing in urban redevelopment.

8.4 Limitations

The findings of this study provide valuable insight into the operationalization of social sustainability in Dutch urban redevelopment, however several limitations must be acknowledged.

First, for this research two purposefully selected cases are studied which explicitly state social sustainability ambitions and strategies. Through the selection criteria and process it can be noted that these cases have a more mature strategy regarding affected communities. This means that the findings do not cover the entire spectrum of the Dutch urban redevelopment practice, particularly in cases where social sustainability is not prioritized or addressed in the strategies. The increased awareness of the selected developers may thus overrepresent progressive practices for social sustainability and underrepresent the barriers faced in cases that are less socially oriented.

Secondly, this study relies heavily on the perspectives of local representatives, community leaders and municipal actors, rather than a large or statistically sample of residents from an affected community. While the representatives provide valuable insights and reflective notions on the neighbourhood dynamics, they may not fully capture the diversity and depth of experiences in the wider community. Their views may also be shaped by their own experiences, role or organizational obligations. As a result, the lived experiences of the more marginalized, less vocal or harder to reach individuals may still be overlooked.

Next, the ESRS S3 is in its early stages of implementation and still developing. The interpretation of developers on reporting requirements, stakeholder engagement and materiality assessments may evolve as sector specific guidelines improve and other practitioners in the field influence their understanding. The findings therefore reflect a transitional moment, exploring the strategies and motivations rather than a stable state of practice.

Finally, the adapted framework is applied qualitatively to both cases and is not tested as a systematic, comparable tool. While the qualitative mapping provides insights into the alignment and divergence of strategies, it does not yet evaluate the effectiveness of the adapted framework on increased awareness and reflection of social sustainability by developers.

8.5 Recommendations for future research

Drawing on the limitations of this research, several pathways for future research are recommended.

The first direction is the recommendation for longitudinal research that follows urban redevelopment processes throughout the project lifecycle. This would allow to observe how social sustainability outcomes evolve throughout the process and how residents' experiences shift before, during and after delivery. Such research gives insight into the long-term effects on the affected community and provides empirical evidence on the importance of different themes and indictors of social sustainability.

Second, future research should aim to conduct a resident centred approach with participatory research, such as participatory mapping, community led impact assessments or resident surveys. These strategies may capture aspects of the lived experience that are not fully captured through representative interviews. Research that highlights voices of vulnerable and marginalized groups is especially valuable for understanding the equity implications of urban redevelopment.

Thirdly, valuable further research would be quantitively operationalizing and testing the adapted framework. Future research could develop scoring mechanisms or mixed-methods dashboards that combine quantitative data, derived from for example the Leefbarometer as used in this research or databases as the Brede Welvaart Monitor, with context sensitive assessments derived from residents of the area. This will increase the usefulness of the framework for developers who want to incorporate ESRS S3 into neighbourhood level decision making and reporting.

The fourth recommendation involves doing comparative research across a broader range of cases, including projects that may not explicitly prioritize social sustainability. Comparing socially motivated developments to more commercially driven or environmental focused projects may illustrate how organizational structures, business models or governance culture affects developers abilities to engage with the lifeworld. Such comparisons can help identify structural barriers to social sustainability practice in the built environment.

Fifth, future research can explore governance and accountability mechanisms beyond project delivery. As this is one of the concerns raised by multiple interviewees, many social objectives mentioned in this study also involve continuity after developers leave the area. Intergenerational objectives on wellbeing, community cohesion and socio-economic uplift are objectives that need to be measured over time. Researchers can look into the approaches of developers, municipalities, housing associations or long-term investors on shared responsibility for maintaining social outcomes over time.

Finally, as the ESRS S3 evolves, further research should examine how regulatory interpretations change how developers apply concepts as social sustainability in practice. This can help provide sector specific recommendations to improve reporting systems to better reflect the diverse reality of affected communities.

These recommendations for future research would strengthen the empirical and conceptual foundations of social sustainability in the built environment and support a more equitable, grounded and long-term approach to urban redevelopment in existing neighbourhoods.

8.6 Positioning the adapted framework on the Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

To further reflect on the maturity and practical applicability of the adapted framework developed in this research, this section positions the framework within the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale. Although TRL was originally developed to assess technological innovations, it has increasingly been applied to social, policy, and governance instruments to describe their stage of development, validation and readiness for implementation. In this research, TRL is used as a reflective and communicative tool rather than a rigid evaluative metric.

TRL as a reflective lens for social and governance frameworks

The TRL scale ranges from early conceptual development (TRL 1–2), through validation and testing (TRL 3–6), to full operational deployment (TRL 7–9). When applied to governance instruments and social frameworks, TRL helps distinguish between conceptual robustness, empirical validation, and practical usability. This distinction is particularly relevant in the context of the framework developed in this thesis because it relates ESRS S3 to practical applicability for developers.

By positioning the adapted framework on the TRL scale, this thesis avoids presenting the framework as a finished instrument, while clearly articulating its current value and future development potential.

Current TRL positioning of the adapted framework

Based on the exploratory nature of this study, the research design, methods and findings, the adapted framework developed in this thesis can be positioned at between TRL 3 and TRL 4.

TRL 3 (experimental proof of concept)
At this level, the framework exists as a conceptually integrated model that combines established academic theory (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018) with the regulatory structure of ESRS S3. Through systematic comparison and synthesis, the research demonstrates that the two frameworks can be aligned. The adapted framework provides an initial proof of concept that regulatory disclosure requirements on affected communities can be translated into socio-spatial and relational dimensions at neighbourhood scale.

TRL 4 (validated in an analytical environment)
The framework's internal logic, conceptual coherence, and relevance were further examined and refined through expert interviews. These expert reflections served to critically test assumptions, identify gaps, and adjust the framework to better reflect the realities of urban redevelopment practice. While the framework was discussed in relation to real life redevelopment contexts, this validation remains analytical and interpretive rather than operational. As such, TRL 4 reflects validation through expert knowledge and structured reflection, rather than through implementation or pilot testing in practice.

Although the framework was applied to two urban redevelopment cases as an analytical lens, this application should be understood as illustrative and exploratory, rather than as validation in a fully relevant operational environment. The framework was used to interpret and map existing strategies, it has not yet guided decision-making or implementation during project development. For this reason, the framework does not yet reach TRL 5.

The adapted framework therefore remains closer to a conceptual and analytical instrument than to an operational tool that can be directly adopted by developers or reporting entities without further development.

Steps required to advance towards higher TRL levels

To move the framework beyond TRL 4 towards TRL 5- 6, several development steps are necessary:

1. *Standardization of indicators and data sources*
   While the framework identifies relevant domains and themes, further work is required to translate these into standardized indicators, data collection methods, and measurement frequencies. This step is

essential to enable comparability across projects and to strengthen alignment with ESRS reporting logics.

2. *Pilot application within live projects*
   Advancing to higher TRL levels would require the framework to be applied prospectively within ongoing redevelopment projects. This would allow testing not only interpretive value, but also usability, feasibility and influence on decision-making processes.

3. *Integration into organizational and governance processes*
   For practical uptake, the framework would need to be embedded within existing development workflows, such as early-stage project definition, stakeholder engagement strategies and post-delivery evaluation. This would require collaboration with developers, municipalities and ESG or reporting professionals.

4. *Linkage to accountability and learning mechanisms*
   Higher TRL levels require that the framework supports not only reflection but also accountability and organizational learning. This includes connecting social sustainability indicators to evaluation moments, feedback loops and long-term governance arrangements beyond project delivery. This would be the long-term implication of step 4 and 5 of the adapted framework.

Added value of the framework for practice

Positioned at TRL 3–4, the primary added value of the adapted framework lies in its role as a conceptual translation and sense-making instrument, rather than a ready to use implementation tool.

The framework supports system actors, such as developers and municipalities, in interpreting the abstract requirements of ESRS S3 in relation to neighbourhood-scale social realities. By structuring social sustainability along socio-spatial and relational dimensions, it enables more reflective and informed discussions about affected communities, even at early strategic stages.

By explicitly connecting regulatory disclosure categories to neighbourhood-level dynamics, the framework has the potential to influence practice in three ways:

1. *From compliance to interpretation*
   The framework helps move discussions beyond formal compliance by offering structured language to interpret what ESRS S3 may imply in concrete urban contexts.

2. *From abstract principles to situated understanding*
   It highlights social processes, lived experiences and relational dimensions that are often acknowledged implicitly but remain weakly articulated in formal strategies.

3. *From fragmented engagement to structured reflection*
   Although not yet operational, the framework provides a basis for more coherent reflection across project phases, supporting continuity in how affected communities are considered over time.

In this sense, the framework does not yet function as a ready-made reporting or assessment tool, but as a bridging and framing instrument that aligns regulatory expectations, academic insight, and lived community realities. Positioning the framework at TRL 3–4 provides transparency about its current contribution, while clearly outlining the pathway required for further development towards practical application.

9 PRACTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

9 PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents practical recommendations emerging from the empirical findings of this study, the cross-case analysis, conclusion and discussion. In this chapter operational tools are presented that have been collected throughout the process of this thesis. These tools extend the practicability of the adapted framework and guides developers to implement social sustainability strategies in urban redevelopment projects and make them aware of affected communities. This chapter first explains the tools in section 9.1 and then maps these operational tools to the refined adapted framework presented in section 9.2.

9.1 Operational tools

This section provides eight operational tools and approaches that can help developers, municipalities and housing associations to implement social sustainability strategies in urban redevelopment projects. These tools are discovered during the process of writing this thesis and currently used in Dutch practice. Each tool contributes to the practicability of the adapted framework, ranging from understanding the neighbourhood context to supporting engagement or measuring social impact. Together, these tools improve practitioners' ability to translate the adapted framework to concrete action plans.

Monitor Brede Welvaart

The Monitor Brede Welvaart provides a multidimensional measurement framework for wellbeing on national, regional and neighbourhood level. It includes many indicators such as housing quality, safety, social cohesion and subjective wellbeing. For redevelopment projects the tool offers a structured baseline and reference point for long-term monitoring, enabling developers and municipalities to evaluate their contributions to improved wellbeing and equitable outcomes after delivery of the project.

Supports: S0, S5, S6

ESRS S3 relevance: supports impact identification, baseline assessments and long-term monitoring of social outcomes required under the materiality and impact assessment process.

Leefbarometer

The Leefbarometer is a national tool to visualize and assess a neighbourhoods livability based on indicators such as housing stock, amenities and safety. It offers data at postcode level, enabling practitioners to identify local vulnerabilities and strengths at the start of a project. It supports monitoring in neighbourhood characteristics over time.

Supports: S0, S5, S6

ESRS S3 relevance: enables risk identification and provides objective data to support reporting on key impacts on affected communities.

Citizen Voice

Citizen Voice provides structured formats for capturing resident perspectives through a bottom-up approach. Through conversations and storytelling it helps identify concerns, aspirations and lived experiences that may not appear in formal participation procedures. This tool supports meaningful participation and gives residents the opportunity to express values that matter in their daily lives.

Supports: S2, S3, S7

ESRS S3 relevance: strengthens stakeholder engagement and documentation of community input.

Terug naar de Buurt

This method is a stepwise approach to engage with residents in their own environment. In five stages; identifying, approaching, analyzing, giving back and feeding forward, it emphasizes continuity, presence and community input.

Supports: S2, S3, S7

ESRS S3 relevance: strengthens disclosure around engagement quality and remediation of negative impacts.

Social Value Formule

The Social Value Formule is created by the Social Value Foundation and is meant for institutional investors that want to quantify social value generated by development projects. However the phases mentioned in this tool are highly interesting for other practitioners in the field of urban redevelopment. The tool supports strategic decision making and internal accountability by translating social outcomes into measurable indicators. The tool helps align long-term investment strategies with social sustainability objectives.

Supports: S1, S5, S6

ESRS S3 relevance: contributes to assessing material impacts and reporting on positive and negative outcomes.

Feed Forward Method

The Feed Forward method is the last step of the tool Terug naar de Buurt, which deserves a separate explanation. This method is an evaluative approach that shifts the focus of reflection and evaluation to future oriented learning. Rather than simply assessing what went well or what did not go as planned, this strategy allows the project team to reflect on their findings and apply them in following projects. It establishes a systematic relationship between measurement, reflection and strategic adjustment for what comes next.

Supports: S6, S7, S1 for future

ESRS S3 relevance:

Wijkwaardenkaart

The Wijkwaardenkaart visualises residents' values, concerns and satisfaction levels across different domains of daily life. It combines qualitative and quantitative elements and organises them spatially, enabling practitioners to understand how social sustainability is distributed within a neighbourhood. It is particularly useful for identifying place-based differences in experience, such as where cohesion or vulnerability is strongest.

Supports: S2, S3, S7

ESRS S3 relevance: supports continuous improvement and alignment with ESRS expectations for follow-up actions, remediation, and lessons learned.

BuurtSaam

BuurtSaam is a conversational tool designed to help residents articulate what they value in their neighbourhood and what they feel is changing or missing. Through guided prompts and value cards, it stimulates dialogue between residents and practitioners and exposes emotional, cultural and social dimensions that formal tools may overlook. It is highly suitable for early engagement and for validating project objectives.

Supports: S2, S3, S7

ESRS S3 relevance: supports impact assessment by linking resident perspectives to measurable indicators, enhancing the documentation of risks, impacts and opportunities.

9.2 Mapping operational tools to the adapted framework

The refined adapted framework describes the dimension S0 – S7 that span across and beyond the lifecycle of a redevelopment project and encompass both system world strategies and lifeworld considerations. To support the implementation of the framework, several operational tools can be aligned and mapped with the corresponding dimensions of the framework.

These tools function as practical methods already created by academia or practice that can strengthen the usability of the framework. Below the dimensions are first mentioned with the tools and its explanation, after which in table 30 the tools are mapped onto the framework.

Table 30 Operational tools mapped to the dimensions of the refined adapted framework

Tool	S0 History and context	S1 Policy	S2 Engagement	S3 Remedy	S4 Actions	S5 Targets	S6 Measurement	S7 Reflection
Monitor Brede Welvaart	✓					✓	✓	
Leefbarometer	✓					✓	✓	
Citizen Voice			✓	✓				✓
Terug naar de Buurt			✓	✓				✓
Social Value Formule		✓				✓	✓	
Feed Forward Method		✓*					✓	✓
Wijkwaardenkaart	✓		✓				✓	✓
BuurtSaam	✓		✓					✓

✓ Policy for the next project*

9.3 Concluding notes

The operational tools presented in this chapter explain how the adapted framework can be integrated into tangible actions that can improve social sustainability and create social impact for affected communities in urban redevelopment projects. While the adapted framework is a conceptual and structural foundation, the tools provide practitioners practical methods that help with each dimension and enable a more context sensitive, human centred approach. Together this reinforces the central ambition of this thesis; to realize meaningful urban neighbourhoods through measurable social impact.

10 REFLECTION

10 REFLECTION

Reflection on added value for practice

Reflecting on the potential added value of the adapted framework for practice, its main contribution lies not in prescribing specific actions, but in its capacity to subtly reshape how system actors approach social sustainability in neighbourhood development. Rather than functioning as a decision-making tool in its current form, the framework offers a structured way of *thinking through* the implications of ESRS S3 for affected communities at neighbourhood scale.

If further developed and adopted, through the steps described in section 8.6, the framework could influence practice by shifting attention from compliance-oriented reporting towards earlier and more deliberate consideration of social structures, lived experience and long-term community dynamics. For developers and municipalities, this could encourage engagement with affected communities not only as a formal requirement, but as an integral part of strategic reasoning throughout the project lifecycle.

In terms of decision-making, the framework has the potential to function as a reflective checkpoint rather than a prescriptive instrument, encouraging system actors to question which social dimensions are prioritized, which are overlooked, and why. Similarly, in engagement processes it may support more continuous and context-sensitive dialogue by offering shared language to connect regulatory expectations with neighbourhood realities.

At the same time, this potential influence remains conditional. Without institutional embedding, organizational incentives and accountability mechanisms, the framework risks remaining an interpretive aid rather than a driver of change. This conditional influence becomes clear in informal conversations during this research. Some practitioners were positive and recognised that the way social sustainability is currently approached may need to change. Others indicated that existing ways of working are unlikely to shift, even if the framework was considered interesting or well thought out. A number of developers described social sustainability as a current trend in the sector, while questioning whether it would lead to lasting change in practice. These mixed responses suggest that the impact of the adapted framework depends not only on its conceptual strength, but also on organisational culture, incentives and the willingness of system actors to engage with the social complexity of neighbourhood development.

Personal reflection

Looking back on the process of writing this thesis, I realize how much of my understanding on social sustainability in the built environment has changed and expanded. When I started researching this topic, mostly from a conceptual perspective through conversations with developers, social sustainability seemed underdeveloped by practitioners. I wanted to deepen my expertise and wanted to explore what it actually meant for communities and neighbourhoods, especially in the Dutch built environment context. I had clear structured goals and started confidently reading academic literature. I knew that my own experience, background and interest motivated me to do research on social dynamics in neighbourhoods, but I did not realize how much this research would resonate with my own experiences, values and identity. This research demanded much from me, as a student, researcher and a person.

My research confronted me with the socio-economic inequalities in the Netherlands, inequalities that I have seen myself were now reflected in my research cases. My background did give me a unique sensitivity towards these issues and the experiences of other people. And I realized many professionals in the built environment do struggle to fully grasp these realities, not because they lack empathy, they simply lack the exposure.

As I researched the cases, I became increasingly aware that social sustainability is not just a policy ambition or reporting requirement, it is a lived reality. It shows up when I talk to people, when others interact, when neighbours care for each other, when histories are shared and when fear for the future is acknowledged. I learned that neighbourhoods are social ecosystems that can not be captured by indicators alone. The interviews

with developers, municipalities and representatives made this clear, but also the informal encounters in the neighbourhoods when I visited, were an important part. When I greeted the older lady and talked about her family history in Katendrecht, or when I messaged with the 'buurtkamer' in Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten about their activities. I began to see how urban redevelopment shapes the everyday lives of people, whose voices can be fragile or fragmented in official reports, but the experiences are personal and impactful.

Researching the ESRS S3 standard opened my view on European Directives. I was glad that there was a reporting requirement on affected communities when I first heard of it. But when I started reading the directive, I realized the abstract nature of it. Over time however, I began to realize the intention and importance of the directive more and more. It does not prescribe solutions, it creates space for reflection, exactly what companies that state they are socially sustainable, need. Translating the disclosure requirements to easier language, with specific context related examples in neighbourhood development was challenging but very valuable. Not only for me, but in interviews I realized a lot of professionals and experts fail to understand the requirements. Developing the adapted framework through their input was essential in this translation process. Navigating between the ESRS S3 and what communities find important was challenging but allowed me to grow as a researcher into a role that is beyond solely analysing, it allowed me to propose insights and tools from my expertise.

An insight I will cherish and take with me in my future career and work is the interrelation of urban redevelopment and the partnership between stakeholders. Social sustainability moves beyond developers only. This research shows that in order to create a better environment for the community and create actual social value, a lot needs to be taken into account. From accessibility to availability, from health concerns to safety. The social domain in this thesis is the basis of a community. It is the cornerstone for us as individuals. The concept of social sustainability in our department and line of work moves beyond a personal experience or understanding, it is the collective wellbeing of society, in which organizations should and can be held responsible for their actions, which impacts this wellbeing.

The research process was not linear, I struggled with coding at first, analysing sometimes felt overwhelming. My thoughts went from one concept to another. There were moments of chaos and self-doubt, however these moments taught me the value of structure, focus and trust. They made me realize early on that I should enjoy this process, and I sure did. I enjoyed every meeting with my mentors, every little connection I made matching literature to statements in interviews, I celebrated every paragraph I wrote, I enjoyed every interview. I can confirm that a lot of people around me can summarize my research perfectly because of the energy and enthusiasm I showed when sharing about it. Each conversation about my insights, thoughts and reflections gave me more motivation to work harder, I realized that this intersection between the built environment and social sciences is really what matters for me. Projects that are centred around human wellbeing, human values and equity. This thesis became much more than an academic requirement for me, it sharpened my understanding of social relations, true sustainability, values and systems. It strengthened my ability to navigate complex concepts, map them in systems and it deepened my commitment to advocate for a more just built environment. This process made me more confident in what I want, more reflective on interaction and more grounded in the work I do.

A significant part of my learning curve throughout this thesis came from the guidance, support and trust of my mentors. Gerard and Roberto, thank you. From the start, when I approached them about this topic and my aspirations for my research, they believed in the value and relevance of my research. Where others questioned my ambition, found my topic too broad or too difficult to handle in this thesis, their confidence in me created space to explore a subject that mattered to me. A topic that does not always receive enough attention within our department, MBE. Many associate the social dimension to inequality or injustice in the Global South, in far places with extreme conditions, but my own experiences and research thought me the importance of researching this topic in within our own country. My mentors recognized the importance of the study, exploring the more subtle inequalities and helped me navigate the theoretical concepts together with the regulatory incentives. They challenged me, asked me critical questions without ever discouraging me. Their guidance helped me stay focused, grounded and confident in the direction of my work. The support shaped not only the quality of this thesis but also my own growth as a researcher.

On a more personal level, this thesis confronted me with different realizations, that I did not expect to feel so deeply. As someone who grew up between cultures, as part of a diaspora, questioning my belonging and identity, the cases grew closer to me than I thought. Researching vulnerable neighbourhoods made me realize how these neighbourhoods are seen from an outsider perspective, while I grew up in neighbourhoods like these. I have clearly seen how my path and my journey are part of my luck, having access to safety, stability and education freely without any constraints is my luck. Many people with equal ambition and more intelligence are denied the opportunities by circumstances beyond their control. This awareness made me sensitive to my position but also made me reflect during the interviews and analysis. Balancing empathy and academic distance was maybe even the hardest in this process. A quote that stuck by me, that I came across during this process is a quote by Carl Jung:

''Know all the theories, master all the techniques, but as you touch a human soul, be just another human soul.''

The emphasis on this quote is when you are touching human connection, empathy should guide the practitioner.

I finish this journey with a stronger sense of purpose, with a lot of gratitude for the people I shared this journey with and the aspiration to contribute to social justice and be a part of this movement.

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Appendix A Informed Consent Form

Uitnodiging voor deelname

U wordt uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek *Meaningful Urban Neighbourhoods, Measurable Social Impact.* Deze studie is in het kader van een master thesis, uitgevoerd door Ruba Ammiwala van de TU Delft.

Doel van het onderzoek

Het doel van dit onderzoek is om te onderzoeken hoe Nederlandse (gebieds-)ontwikkelaars strategieen rondom sociale duurzaamheid en getroffen gemeenschappen in stedelijke herontwikkelingsprojecten, definieren, implementeren en rapporteren. Het onderzoek richt zich op de vraag hoe deze strategieen aansluiten bij zowel de Europese duurzaamheidsstandaarden voor het rapporteren (ESRS), als academische theoretische kaders, met als breder doel om de verschillen tussen beleid, praktijk en sociale uitkomsten beter in kaart te brengen.

Interview details en gebruik van data

Deelname aan dit interview zal ongeveer 60 minuten duren

1: Tijdens deze sessie wordt u gevraagd naar uw ervaringen en visie met betrekking tot sociale duurzaamheid in de gebouwde omgeving, in het specifiek naar binnenstedelijke herontwikkelprojecten. De vragen gaan onder andere over hoe u of uw organisatie het concept van sociale duurzaamheid interpreteert, wat strategieen of raamwerken zijn die u gebruikt en uw perceptie op beleid en de kaders van ESRS S3. In de werksessie wordt gevraagd of u commentaar wil geven en notities wil plaatsen op een visueel raamwerk door middel van kaartjes. De bijdrage wordt gefotografeerd en meegenomen in de analyse. De interactieve sessie helpt bij het co-creeren en valideren van een aangepast kader voor het begrijpen, beoordelen en rapporteren van sociale duurzaamheid in de gebouwde omgeving.

2: In deze ronde wordt u gevraagd naar uw visie en ervaringen met betrekking tot sociale duurzaamheid in binnenstedelijkeherontwikkelprojecten. Met als focus de interpretatie, strategieen en acties rondom getroffen gemeenschappen in dat project. Er wordt gevraagd naar hoe uw organisatie het concept sociale duurzaamheid toepast en de invulling van de regelgeving ESRS S3. Er wordt een aangepast raamwerk geintroduceerd, aan de hand waarvan open vragen worden gesteld met betrekking tot het project.

Data veiligheid en vertrouwelijkheid

Zoals bij elke online activiteit is er altijd een klein risico op een datalek. Uw antwoorden in dit onderzoek zullen echter zo goed mogelijk vertrouwelijk blijven. Wij beperken de risico's door interviewgegevens zoals namen of directe verwijzingen te anonimiseren. Voor het onderzoek wordt met uw toestemming wel uw functietitel genoemd. Met uw toestemming wordt het interview of de sessie audio-opgenomen om de nauwkeurigheid van het onderzoek te waarborgen. Ook kunnen er aantekeningen worden gemaaakt. Opnames worden getranscribeerd en de originele bestanden worden na transcriptie verwijderd. Foto's en notities van de werksessie worden veilig opgeslagen in de TU Delft OneDrive en mogelijk ook gebruikt in het onderzoek. Alleen de onderzoeker en het onderzoeksteam (mentoren in dit geval), hebben toegang tot de identificeerbare data.

Vrijwillige deelname

Uw deelname aan dit onderzoek is volledig vrijwillig en u kunt op elk moment stoppen zonder het benoemen van een reden. U bent vrij om vragen over te slaan die u liever niet beantwoordt.

Vragen

1. Ik ga ermee akkoord dat mijn antwoorden, meningen of andere input mogen worden geciteerd in de onderzoeksresultaten.

□ Ja   □ Nee

2. Ik ga ermee akkoord dat mijn goedgekeurde samenvatting mag worden opgenomen in het onderzoek.

□ Ja   □ Nee

3. Ik ga ermee akkoord dat mijn functietitel en bedrijf mag worden benoemd in de resultaten van dit onderzoek.

□ Ja   □ Nee

Door akkoord te gaan met deelname aan dit interview geeft u de onderzoeker toestemming voor het gebruik van uw antwoorden in dit onderzoek onder de hierboven beschreven voorwaarden.

Voor meer informatie over het onderzoek of uw rechten als deelnemer kunt u contact opnemen met onderzoeker: Ruba Ammiwala, MSc student

Handtekening

_____   _____   _____
Naam deelnemer   Handtekening   Datum

Ik, als onderzoeker, heb het toestemmingsformulier aangeleverd en/of voorgelezen aan de potentiele deelnemer en heb naar beste vermogen ervoor gezorgd dat de deelnemer begrijpt waar ze toestemming voor geven.

Ruba Ammiwala   _____   *12-09-2025*
Naam onderzoeker   Handtekening   Datum

Appendix B Longlist case studies

	Urban redevelopment (area)	Year	Developers involved	Main theme & relevance to social sustainability	Context and affected communities	Relevancy to thesis	Scale of project	Link
1	Laan van Spartaan-Amsterdam	2010 – now	BPD	Mixed-use regeneration in Nieuw-West with a broad housing mix (from social rent to free-sector, student and elderly care homes); long-term public–developer partnership aimed at affordability and inclusion.	Transformation of a former disadvantaged area along the A10; impacts existing residents in Nieuw-West through densification, new amenities, and affordability measures.	Clear social-mix and affordability narrative; partnership model; alignment with ESRS S3 topics (access to housing, inclusion, local community benefits).	1.612 new dwellings of which 887 affordable.	https://www.bpd.nl/ons-werk/regio-noord-west/laan-van-spartaan-amsterdam
2	Hart van Zuid-Rotterdam	2016 – 2040 (phased)	PPS with City of Rotterdam; Heijmans & Ballast Nedam	Area redevelopment around Zuidplein & Ahoy. Hart van Zuid has a particular focus on social impact; talent development, entrepreneurship and work possibilities for residents is important. Project involves a social program.	Targets residents of Rotterdam-Zuid with improved facilities, mobility and jobs; major public realm renewal around shopping centre and transport hub.	Strong 'affected communities' focus (service access, culture, mobility); rich interview terrain on PPP motivations and outcomes.	Area +-60 ha	https://www.heijmans.nl/en/projects/Hart-van-Zuid/
3	Katendrecht (Rotterdam)	2000s – now	Heijmans, Woonstad, BPD, Van Wijnen projectontwikkeling	Waterfront renewal with culture-led regeneration (Fenix warehouses, Deliplein) and mixed housing; narrative of image repair and inclusion versus gentrification risks.	Historic working-class/port district transitioning to mixed-income area; effects on existing residents, affordability and identity.	Good case to test 'social value vs. displacement' narratives and participation approaches. (https://www.gebiedsontwikkeling.nu/artikelen/katendrecht-rotterdam-taking-a-walk-on-the-gentrified-side/)	+- 56 ha, 2100 dwellings of which 1700 new build.	https://www.gebiedsontwikkeling.nu/artikelen/katendrecht-grootscheepse-transformatie/ https://www.vanwijnen.nl/projecten/de-bund-rotterdam-katendrecht/
4	Oostenburg (Amsterdam)	2008 – 2025 (est.)	VORM, Being, Heijmans, Stadgenoot (and partners)	Inner-city brownfield into mixed urban district with diverse typologies and explicit social/affordable program (incl. 500 by Stadgenoot).	Central island conversion; mix aimed at varied incomes incl. youth/elderly; community facilities and public space. Was not a urban district before.	Clear policies on inclusion/affordability; multiple private & housing association actors—useful for compliance/ESRS discussion.	1,900 homes across 70 buildings; recent delivery of 203 social-rent homes.	https://vorm.nl/projecten/oostenburg-amsterdam
5	Cartesius (Utrecht)	2018 – 2030	Ballast Nedam	'Healthy Urban Living' concept: green, car-light district with central park, school	Former NS yard near Utrecht Zuilen; creates new housing supply	Explicit well-being framing → community well-being, mobility	2840 dwellings, large park, school, supermarket; 100+ shared cars.	https://www.ballast-nedam.com/what-we-

#	Name	Period	Developer	Description			Size	Link
			Developmen t & MRP	and amenities; inclusive housing mix and shared mobility.	and public green for wider west-Utrecht communities.	access).--> no affected community that lived there.		do/projects/2022/cartesius-utrecht
6	NDSM-werf (Amsterdam)	2005 – now	Onder andere: VolkerWessels	Transformation of shipyard into cultural/creative hub, new mixed-use housing; strong bottom-up identity with later densification.	Artists/makers and existing Noord communities; evolving balance between cultural space, affordability and new housing.	Good lens on culture-led redevelopment and safeguarding existing creative communities.	Cultural district, 4000-5000 dwellings	https://www.ndsm.nl/en/over https://www.volkerwessels.com/nl/nieuws/ndsm-werf-van-ruige-rafelrand-naar-modern-woon-en-werkcomplex
7	Overhoeks (Amsterdam)	2005 – now	Amvest (area developer) with housing corporations incl. Ymere	High-density IJ-riverfront district combining luxury and social housing; recent blocks include dedicated social housing buildings.	Former Shell site; integration with Amsterdam-Noord waterfront public realm; affordability mix within a premium context.	Examines inclusion and affordability in a flagship high-end waterfront redevelopment.	+- 3000 dwellings, 70.000 m2 kantoor/bedrijfsfunctie	https://archello.com/project/overhoeks-b1 https://www.gebiedsontwikkeling.nu/go-projectenkaart/overhoeks/
8	Stadstuin Overtoom (Amsterdam)	2012 – 2018	Era Contour	Family-friendly 'garden' concept (6 garden types) and climate-neutral ambitions; social mix.	Densification along Overtoom; adds green courtyards and mixed tenure for local residents.	Clear tenure mix, climate neutral, useful for trade-offs between E & S under CSRD/ESRS.	470 homes (30% social rent; 70% market sector).	https://www.eracontour.nl/projecten/stadstuin-overtoom-amsterdam
9	Binckhorst (Den Haag)	2015 – 2040 (phased)	municipality-led framework; private developers (BPD, VORM etc.)	Industrial-to-mixed urban district as part of the Central Innovation District (CID); large housing/job addition with mobility transition.	Impacts existing businesses and residents; focus on inclusive growth and sustainable mobility.	Large-scale inner-city densification with explicit inclusion and accessibility goals.	Target +-20,000–25,000 homes and +-30,000 jobs (CID/Binckhorst combined).	https://binckhorst-denhaag.com
10	Merwede (Utrecht)	2019 – 2030s	AM, Blink, Boelens de Gruyter, BPD	Bouwfonds Gebiedsontwikkeling,	One of NL's largest car-free districts; healthy urban living, shared mobility hubs, abundant green and mixed affordability.	Inner-city canal zone renewal; benefits include reduced car use and improved public spaces; manage affordability and displacement.	Strong ESRS S3 alignment on mobility access, safety, and community well-being.	6,000 homes planned; 1800 social, 1500 mid rent.	https://synchroon.nl/projecten/utrecht/merwede/ https://www.utrecht.nl/wonen-en-

		Greystar, G&S&, Lingotto, Orion Investment Partners, Synchroon, 3T Vastgoed.				leven/bouwprojecten-en-stedelijke-ontwikkeling/bouwprojecten/bouwprojecten-in-zuidwest/merwedekanaalzone/projecten-in-de-merwedekanaalzone/merwede
11	Strijp-S (Eindhoven)	2002 – present	Municipality of Eindhoven, VolkerWessels / SDK Vastgoed.	Adaptive reuse of former Philips factories into mixed living/working/creative district; entrepreneurship and cultural programming.	Retention of industrial heritage; creative economy; housing for diverse groups incl. social rent.	Shows long-term governance and social programming alongside redevelopment value capture.		https://www.strijp-s.nl/en/information
12	De Verbinding – Spaarndammerbuurt (Amsterdam)	2017 – 2021	Heijmans (with Eigen Haard for social rent)	Infill in existing neighbourhood with tenure diversity and equal quality across tenures; attention to neighbourhood fit.	Sensitive infill on former school site in a tight-knit neighbourhood; community integration and shared courtyard.	Compact project with clear inclusion/quality narrative—useful for micro-level ESRS S3 translation.	80 homes: 36 for sale, 20 private rent, 24 social rent.	https://www.heijmans.nl/nl/projecten/project-de-verbinding-amsterdam-west/
13	Dreven, Gaarden, Zichten (The Hague South-West)	2020 – 2040 (program)	Heijmans, Staedion housing association, Municipality of The Hague	Large-scale urban renewal: replace/renovate social stock, add new homes across tenures, improve facilities; keep residents in the area where possible.	Existing low-income neighbourhoods; phasing aims to minimise displacement and increase local opportunities.	Directly addresses 'affected communities', rehousing and participation at scale.	2,000 social homes replaced; 3,000 new social homes back + 2,500 mid-rent/owner; total +-5,500 renewed/new dwellings.	https://www.heijmans.nl/nl/projecten/dreven-gaarden-en-zichten-den-haag-zuidwest/
14	Wielewaal (Rotterdam)	2016 – present	BPD (area developer) & Woonstad Rotterdam (housing association)	Neighbourhood renewal balancing preservation of community identity with new mixed-income housing; resident association involved.	Post-war garden suburb; strong resident identity and concerns over affordability and continuity.	Rich governance/participation and affordability case in a sensitive existing community.	+-675 new homes; 248 affordable incl. 148 social homes/ownership + 100 mid-rent.	https://www.bpd.nl/ons-werk/regio-zuid-west/wielewaal-rotterdam
15	Indische Buurt (Amsterdam)	2002 – ongoing	De Alliantie	Major neighbourhood restructuring with strong emphasis on participation, social cohesion, improving public space, safety,	Inner-city neighbourhood with historic social issues (poor housing condition, safety, social problems), diverse ethnic mix; residents	Strong on participation, inclusion, social cohesion; clear example of affected communities; also good for	Includes 1400 renovations, 870 demolitions 750 new dwellings.	https://www.de-alliantie.nl/ik-huur/projecten/am

				greening, and mixed housing (renovation, selective demolition, sales, etc.).	deeply involved via neighborhood platforms; concerns of displacement, affordability, liveability.	looking at private vs social housing mix, narratives around affordability and identity.		sterdam/indische-buurt/
16	Wildemanbuurt (Amsterdam Nieuw-West)	2022 – 2037	Stadgenoot	Renewal of a vulnerable post-war social housing neighbourhood; emphasis on resident participation, social housing renewal + mixed tenure, improving liveability, public space, sustainability (e.g., energy, public realm)	Residents of older social housing (~1950s), many problems of building decay (moisture, mold, poor quality), desire among residents to decide between renovation vs demolition, strong participation; concerns around relocation, continuity of community.	Great case for exploring how participation shapes outcomes in redevelopment; trade-offs between preserving community and introducing new tenures; how developers define "vulnerability" and act on it.	All 656 housing units will be demolished in phases; replacement with +-1,200-1,300 new homes.	https://www.stadgenoot.nl/nieuws/nieuwsbericht/vernieuwingsplan-voor-de-wildemanbuurt-vastgesteld
17	Lodewijk van Deysselbuurt (Amsterdam Nieuw-West)	2021 – 2032	Rochdale	Large-scale demolition, sustainable renovation, building of new homes; goal is mixed housing types, improved liveability, new amenities, better quality of built and public environment; explicit participatory process.	Neighborhood built in the 1950s; mostly social housing (≈90%) owned by Rochdale; many homes outdated; demographic mix with many residents with migration backgrounds; issues of livability and public space; strong participation in planning.	Very relevant: strong alignment with themes of affected communities, participation, inclusion, tenure mix; also useful for testing ESRS S3 "access to housing / tenure mix", "participation / local voice", "well-being of residents"	1,200 existing homes; 650 renovated, 512 demolished; 1,200 additional new homes	https://www.heijmans.nl/en/news/rochdale-and-heijmans-to-transform-amsterdams-van-deyssel-neighbourhood/ https://www.rochdale.nl/deysselbuurt

Appendix C Interview Pitch

Slide 1

Meaningful urban neighbourhoods, measurable social impact

Interview round 1 – Pitch ESRS S3 and Shirazi & Keivani framework

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Slide 2

Abstract

An explorative study on the strategy compliance of developers with the CSRD – ESRS S3 reporting guideline and the impact on affected communities in the Dutch built environment.

- Growing emphasis on SS
- Strategies of developers on affected communities
- Linked to CSRD – ESRS S3 'Affected Communities'
- High level, regulatory framework
- Make it more grounded
- Use of academic framework, Triad of Social Sustainability (Shirazi & Keivani, 2018)
- Create a more grounded, practical, adapted framework.
- System- and lifeworld lens (Habermas, 1987)

Slide 3

Research gap

- CSRD & ESRS is a turning point
- Assess, strategize and report impact
- Policy is abstract, broad and open for interpretation
- Social sustainability often seen as vague
- Academia is more developed

- ESRS S3 = what to disclose
- Shirazi & Keivani (2018) = where to look

- Gap; how to connect regulation with real community impact?

Slide 4

ESRS S3 in short

The ESRS S3 standard asks companies to **report** how their **activities affect local communities**, both positively and negatively, and how these effects might also **create risks or opportunities** for the business itself as well as for the affected community (**double materiality**). It also requires them to explain **what actions** they take to **manage** these impacts and what results those actions have.

Slide 5

ESRS S3 as a placemat

- Disclosure Requirement **S3-1** – *Policies related to affected communities*
  - *Policies*
- Disclosure Requirement **S3-2** – *Processes for engaging with affected communities about impacts*
  - *Engagement*
- Disclosure Requirement **S3-3** – *Processes to remediate negative impacts and channels for affected communities to raise concerns*
  - *Remedy*
- Disclosure Requirement **S3-4** – *Taking action on material impacts on affected communities and approaches to mitigating material risks and pursuing material opportunities related to affected communities, and effectiveness of those actions*
  - *Actions*
- Disclosure Requirement **S3-5** – *Targets related to managing material impacts on affected communities*
  - *Targets*

Slide 6

ESRS S3 as a placemat

| ESRS S3 disclosure	What ESRS asks
S3 – 1 Policies	Disclose policies for affected communities; material impacts and risks and opportunities on communities.
S3 – 2 Engagement	Show how communities and their representatives are engaged; consultation, dialogue, frequency of engagement, assess effectiveness.
S3 – 3 Remedy	Explain grievance channels and remediation processes for community impacts.
S3 – 4 Actions	Report on actions to prevent/mitigate harm and create positive impacts.
S3 – 5 Targets	Disclose measurable, time-bound targets related to communities (progress over time).

Slide 7

Triad of Social Sustainability

- Social sustainability underdeveloped but essential
- Neighbourhood scale
- Lack of clear definitions, measurement tools > Triad
- 3 pillars, centred around neighbourhood
  - Neighbourhood > hard infrastructure
    - Physical environment
    - Building types, mix
    - Land use, urban pattern, density
    - Access to facilities
  - Neighbouring > soft infrastructure
    - Social processes
    - Perceptions
    - Activities
  - Neighbours > population profile
    - Social mix, diversity, demographics

Slide 8

Triad of Social Sustainability

What the adapted framework should say:

*ESRS S3 tells you **what** to disclose; the Triad of SS tell you **where** in the neighbourhood to look for impacts.*

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Triad of SS as an interpretation

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Appendix D Key Findings Expert interviews

D1 – Key Findings expert 1

Code	Finding
General remark	Poorest people live in worst houses and have lesser chances of development. Social impact for me is that everyone in the community meets basic needs.
	Developers are often busy with **S3-4 Actions**, and a little bit with **S3-2 Participation**
	Developers are not working on long-term monitoring phase which leads to them not being able to control their initial ideas - How do you ensure that in the long-term management phase, people actually execute the plans envisioned by you as a developer?
	Who will check the ESRS S3? Accountants do not have the knowledge, how do you make this reporting useful.
Added value in framework	Practical actions
	Clearly stated what is asked, indicators should not be accounted dubble (for both E and S)
	Only writing and reporting without aftercare does not have an effect. - If investor/asset manager thinks the space does not create enough revenue, the function of the space may be changed to something more profitable, which means that as a developer you can score high initially with your plan, but the aftercare will result in a different outcome.
	Minimum points that need to be met in order to do a project beforehand, if you do not meet it you can not be chosen for another project (blacklist) à ideal world.
	Establish demands and be accountable to safeguard the targets and ambitions, even after you have left the project and/or it causes less financial revenue.
+ in framework	Good steps towards concrete goals
	Quantifiable goals in framework
Needs work	ESRS S3 does not specifically ask and clearly state what developers should report
	ESRS S3 is too policy based
	How does sustainability in the traditional sense (E) come into play?
	What accounts as social sustainability, is not everything traceable as *this is good for the people*
	Additional: Building cycle with its 3 phases - Lead-up - Building phase - Monitoring and control phase (long-term) o Important to take into account the people affected, live in their life-world.
	Governance assessment is tricky, a lot of text but who checks if you have actually done it.
	Accountability on the basis of the actions and targets.
Indicators	Climate adaptive
	Safe location

	Flexible/accessible spaces
	  7. Prayer rooms, lactation rooms, public toilets for all
	  8. Concrete, practical facilities from inclusion and anti-discrimination

	Participation
	Noise pollution (during building phase)

D2 – Key Findings expert 2

Code	Finding
General remark	A reporting guideline like this forces organizations to report on what they have done and how much they have thought about it.
	You need to make choices in what you find important, when are you satisfied with the result, and be conscious of the fact that sometimes it goes well and sometimes the ideas or goals that you had do not go the way you planned (as a developer).
	As a developer you can make up S1 – S5, but there is a difference if you involve others in the process.
	After engaging the neighbourhood and going through the participation process, a developer can make choices to focus on one indicator or more in depth in the project. So the reasoning of choosing certain indicators is more important than focusing on all indicators.
	The adapted framework should help formulate the targets and goals regarding affected communities together with them, which leads to a concrete plan. The indicators help on neighbourhood level to make the plan actionable.
	Adapted framework; Where do you stand and what is the impact you want to make
Added value for framework	Evaluation box
	Make choices explicit, think about who you involve in the process. Why is it that you make certain choices, what is the motivation
	9. That shows how much effort has been put into the report
	Report on if you think engagement has been representative, accessible. Use participation as extra axis.
	If you do S1-S3 in a correct way, the their should be a concrete goal or percentage for S4 and S5 as outcome.
	Involvement in the neighbourhood is needed in order to understand it.
+ in framework	A helpful tool, situations are understandable once they are made more concrete.
	Adapted framework gives something a developer can hold onto.
Needs work	This framework does not measure yet, does not evaluate on how impactful you are on the S1-S5. Go a step further in thinking and writing about what it is that makes you impactful.
	You can write all you want but if you do not realize why you make certain choices, it is difficult to say how impactful you are.
	It is difficult to measure quantitively how much impact one has made, but it is measurable how much reflection has taken place.
	It should not be a check box, but what is the goal of the framework. Think about that, is it inspiration or does it help strategize.
	Integrate the context of the place/neighbourhood in the framework.
	Be clear in what you ask, ask for motivation and vision.
	If you jump to actions and targets (S4+S5) to quickly, you are overlooking affected community and what is already there in the neighbourhood.
Indicators	Networking and interaction.
	Participation; how are the targets/goals set up and how were the residents/community involved in shaping these targets.
	Targets should be ideally derived from participation
	Soft and hard aspects. Soft; how to involve people, cultural identity, history of the area. Hard; interventions to built environment

D3 – Key Findings expert 3

Code	Finding
General remark	Investing in social value means lower direct return for developer
	Look at Social Value Formule à looks at the current situation in a neighbourhood
	Ideally you would translate life-world into system world, that needs more humbleness from developers
	Municipality should write policy and frameworks for developers, that should be noted clearly.
	Understand who decides on the indicators (for example density) and who experiences the effects of it. Makes it more grounded.
	Developer should dare to invest money into social value and impact, even if it is at risk of losing that money.
	Framework should not be a checkbox, developers should create internal drive to create social impact. It should be a feeling of 'we need to do this.'.
	It is human to need each other and to create connection, if you feel it yourself you get the motivation to work on it.
	Think about which problem you want to solve, and how the CSRD can help with that.
Added value for framework	The more concrete, the easier it is for organizations to understand the goal
	Invite community organizations to understand CSRD in life-world terms, make it easier for them
	Social maturity meetlat à to measure impact you need to know what the problem/status quo is to then measure increased positive impact over the years and then to see the effect.
	Tool should help understand, where am I now and where do I want to go, where do I have direct impact versus indirect.
	Make tool supportive and motivating, do not make it too complex.
	Use community organizations to explain what is needed in a neighbourhood beforehand, adds diversity dimension. They know the place and the people.
+ in framework	Good start, tool that is a working tool and a living document could work for organizations.
Needs work	Social value indicators are difficult to measure, all the factors.
	Resistance against only thinking about impact you want to make and not actually being held accountable in your efforts.
	Example; density à set conditions, when does it have impact on people versus when does it not bother community. Does it affect greenery, or sightlines, to what extent has that been taken into account.
	Biggest problem is that the developer is not responsible for the area after delivery, which results in sometimes no (positive or intended) effects in the long-run on the community.
	Every stakeholder speaks a different language, dialogue is of importance to understand each other first before making plans/reporting CSRD.
	Make explicit how you involve vulnerable groups, that is very important.
Indicators	Sociale cohesive
	Veiligheid
	Toegankelijkheid
	Prettig en fijn gevoel, ontstaan van een community
	Participatiewet
	Activities and social mix should define and determine hard infrastructure, they know what the community needs.
	Ownership leads to sustainability

D4 – Key Findings expert 4

Code	Finding
General remark	SS is measurable in a certain way; there are no people in a poorly designed square, or there are certain groups of people and certain groups are not there. These are indicators of SS.

	2 models of reporting
	    10. Checklist/box:
	        a. + very clear
	        b. + comparable
	        c. – can feel mandatory, just get it done
	        d. – no inherent drive
	    11. To capture actual impact/effect:
	        a. + people centered
	        b. – not comparable
	        c. – different languages, difficult

	If we are happy with something, we should think; this is the outcome of the system, the system has worked well. Reporting will not change the system!
	'Death by a thousand cuts', cities will not die from a single bad project, but if every project lacks social cohesion, a mix of functions or simply is not aesthetic, a city will die by a thousand cuts.
	You can expect more from bigger developers than expected now from them.
	Developers are not judged based on their social return, also not on how a neighbourhood functions.
	If you want to go **to actual sustainability,** also financially, you need a area that works well, functions well, where people want to live.
	Ideal world; developer is responsible for the area 10 years after delivery.
Added value for framework	Look further than the stones, look at how a environment functions, where is the value, things will then stand out.
	As a developer, if you want to assess your impact, you need a framework from the municipality. Local requirements about social sustainability, European norms are not context related.

	Municipality should give more means to help realize SS goals:
	    12. Developers have no excuse that way
	    13. Developers are unburdened, they can do what they are good at and the municipality gets what they find important for the neighbourhood

	Developers leave after delivery, they should do a post analysis so they have a track record of their project;
	    14. Example; 5 years ago project delivered à post analysis à m2 price of dwelling is below municipality average // tendency to move is above average // the target group is different than the intended one by the developer // safety index is lower.
	    15. These are indicators that help report the impact, which for future projects can be used; how will you do it differently this time?

	Use research on correlation between livabilty and function mix (example) à which says optimal ratio is between 35-65%. If you mirror this onto a m2 prices map, you can draw conclusions:
	    16. These are financial opportunities for municipality and community
	    17. If you are not embedded in the neighbourhood or area, Excel will lead your case

+ in framework	Framework helps to make the goal of achieving social impact manageable, you cannot go from 0 to 100 in one time.
Needs work	Developers are revenue driven, that is the character of a developer.
	You need a primary focus on one or a couple of the indicators. You can not do everything, if your focus is all, your focus is none.

	Developers need clear instructions:
	    18. They work from their Excel, make a programme.
	    19. Municipality needs to be clear in their demands, so that developers make a program according to the set social values

	If you only leave it to the developer, it will be a lot of paperwork with nice words, without effect.
Indicators	Can you walk to the supermarket, is there a tram stop nearby, high quality green, shops à **qualities of a good city**
	Knowing your neighbours, a mix, seeing multiple people, can children play in the street, coming somewhere and just being happy à **qualities of a good neighbourhood**
	Certain groups do not have access to the place anymore
	Activities within public space.

Meaningful urban neighbourhoods, measurable social impact

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