

FEYENOORD CITY: A CLASH BETWEEN ECONOMY AND SENTIMENT?

A case study on discourse used by fans regarding the plans for a new Feyenoord stadium



FIGURE 1 STADION FEIJENOORD, ROTTERDAM.

Walthièro van der Kamp

*Bachelor thesis Geography, Planning and Environment
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen*

June, 2022

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*Walthièro van der Kamp
Student number: s1013723
Supervisor: dr. Iulian Barba Lata
Wordcount: 20.416*

*Bachelor thesis Geography, Planning and Environment
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen*

24 June 2022

Preface

Dear reader,

You are at the beginning of reading my Bachelor Thesis: “Feyenoord City: A clash between Economy and Sentiment?”. Over the last couple of months, a lot of time, stress and work have been put into this project. However, now that this project has come to an end, I can conclude that it has been a pleasure.

Via the Feyenoord City project I have been able to combine my two main interest, geography and sports, into a research project. Sports stadia especially have fascinated me for a long time. It’s hard to exactly point out what elements of stadia interest me; the architectural aspects of stadia, the history of a certain stadium, or the dynamics inside the stadium? In any case, these are all aspects I am able to talk about for hours. Or, regarding this Bachelor Thesis, I was given the opportunity to talk about the subject in approximately 20.000 words.

I would therefore like to thank Dr Iulian Barba Lata for giving me the opportunity to conduct this research regarding this subject, the fast and clear communication, and the constructive feedback during the process. I would also like to thank my girlfriend, Sara Kok, for the support, insights and language checks she offered me during this period. Sometimes a quick walk around the neighbourhoods, or some words of affirmation, are the only thing necessary for being able to get back into it.

I hope you will enjoy reading this thesis!

Walthièro van der Kamp

Nijmegen, June 2022

Summary

For a lot of sport fans, the stadium of their favourite team is a building of big significance, more than just a place to watch sports. A place visited regularly, where precious memories are made, friendships are formed, and a common identity is shared. Therefore, stadium relocation projects are often more than just a planning issue, in which infrastructural or other challenges need to be tackled. Relocation projects can have big societal impact, and are able to evoke a lot of emotion.

Which is the case regarding Feyenoord's plan to relocate to a new stadium, Feyenoord City. The current stadium of Feyenoord, Stadion Feijenoord, is greatly appreciated by the Feyenoord fans. The relocation plans have therefore received much resistance, which is not uncommon and, therefore was to be expected. However, the protest against the Feyenoord City project have escalated fiercely, ultimately leading to the threatening of Feyenoord board members, and the architect involved (van der Krol, 2020). Feyenoord seems to be an outstanding case in this regard, as the escalation of the protest to such a level that the safety of stakeholders cannot be warranted anymore, has never happened before (van Dam, 2000).

Which provokes the question: what sets the case of Feyenoord apart from other stadium relocation projects? The goal of this research is to find the cause behind the disparity between Feyenoord and other cases, regarding the fierceness and the perseverance of the resistance against the Feyenoord City plans. This leads to the main research question of this thesis: *"What are the reasons for the widespread opposition against the building of the new Feyenoord stadium?"*

By the means of a content analysis, discourse within the online Feyenoord fan community FR12 has been analysed, and compared to comparable cases via a literature research. The outcomes of the content analysis and literature research is placed into context using Habermas theory *The Colonisation of Lifeworld*, part of his work *Theory of Communicative Action*.

Habermas' Colonisation theory prescribes that Lifeworld, the collection of presumptions and intersubjective understandings communicated between people is, in modern capitalist society, corrupted via the impersonal systems of money and power (Fairtlough, 1991, pp. 351 - 353). Translated to the case of Feyenoord: lifeworld colonisation has forced the factor of economic rationality into the decision whether leaving the current Stadion Feijenoord is desirable. The cultural and societal stock of knowledge is not able to comprehend the rationality that these systems bring with them, leading to a newly formed lifeworld, not only reconstituted by symbolic reproduction, but also by material reproduction via the systems.

The analysis has uncovered a common understanding within the Feyenoord fan community regarding the significance of Stadion Feijenoord, and the shortcomings the stadium has in regards to certain facilities. Together with a common understanding of the positive relation between money and success for a football club, and the consensus that Feyenoord being as successful as possible is desirable.

However, no common acknowledgement is reached within the fan community regarding the financial benefits, and the influence on club identity and atmosphere the new stadium would have. On top of that, there is no consensus about the trade-off between sentimental values and economic benefits. How much of sentimental value is someone willing to bargain for a certain amount of economic gain for Feyenoord?

This trade-off turned out to be the most crucial factor. As in other cases, eventually the rationality of the relocation has been accepted by a vast majority of the fans involved. While in the Feyenoord case, the fact that economic system has not been able to create a new rationality to which everyone could

agree, has left space for a large group of Feyenoord fans to still actively question the degree to which the relocation actually makes sense.

The fact that in Feyenoord's case no new economic rationality could be created to which everyone agreed, does not imply that the financial strength of the plans were the only cause of the conflict. Factors as mistrust in the Feyenoord board or other stakeholders, or insufficient communication towards Feyenoord fans can also be indicated as causes leading to a rejection of the plans.

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1. Introduction

There have been countless of Association football¹ clubs around the world that changed stadia in the past decades. These relocations often happen because of a convergence of factors, such as infrastructural factors, financial factors and safety issues (van Dam, 2000, p. 133). These relocations have often led to resistance within the fan community of a club, because fans feel attached to the stadium they have been visiting for years (Irving, 2019, p. 751).

When Feyenoord Rotterdam proposed plans to build de Nieuwe Kuip, a new stadium part of the bigger area development plan Feyenoord City, they did not expect any pushback. However, the reaction from fans seemed to be vastly different from what the club expected. Protest against the new stadium are more violent and fierce than ever seen in the Netherlands, or even in Europe (Rijnmond, 2021). The question, then, of how this conflict could escalate this much arises quickly. Therefore, this thesis seeks to find out what factors have led to the escalation of this conflict. What makes the old stadium, Stadion Feijenoord, so worth fighting for? Or which features of the proposed stadium cause so much anger?

1.1 Problem Statement

Stadion Feijenoord, popularly known as de Kuip, is the current stadium of football club Feyenoord Rotterdam². Feyenoord is, after Ajax and PSV, the third most successful football club since the founding of the Dutch Eredivisie (Transfermarkt, n.d.-a), and has played a big role in the development of football in the Netherlands. Feyenoord was, for instance, the first Dutch club that won the Europe Cup I, the competition the UEFA Champions League originated from (Feyenoord Rotterdam, n.d. p.20).

As big as the reputation of the club Feyenoord is, one could argue that the reputation of their stadium is even bigger. Stadion Feijenoord has been in use since 1937. Almost all Feyenoord fans alive today have therefore never seen a match in a different home stadium. The stadium has also hosted, beside the home games of Feyenoord and the Dutch National Team, finals of the national cup, multiple European cup finals, the final of EURO 2000 and many concerts from world-famous artist such as Michael Jackson, Madonna and The Rolling Stones (Stadion Feijenoord, n.d.). Therefore Stadion Feijenoord is seen by many people, including people outside of Rotterdam, as the most iconic football stadium of the Netherlands.

The age of Stadion Feijenoord is significant, the last renovation was completed in 1994, and since then no big improvements have been made. Stadion Feijenoord has gradually lost its position as *de facto* national stadium to the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam³. This because of reasons such a lack of sponsor capacity, lower scores in satisfaction surveys and a lack of parking spots (Kouwenhoven,

¹ From now on, the term 'football' will be used to refer to association football or, not to be confused with American Football.

² From now on, "Feyenoord" will be used to refer to the football club Feyenoord Rotterdam. Not to be confused with Stadion Feijenoord, which is the name of the stadium. Or 'Feyenoord City' which is the project name of the proposed stadium.

³ Home games of the Dutch national team are appointed individually per game, however in the last decade the allocation of most games have been awarded to the Johan Cruyff Arena, instead of Stadion Feijenoord.

2012). This has also resulted in the fact that Stadion Feijenoord is not a contender anymore for hosting European finals (Kouwenhoven, 2012).

There are other reasons for the relative income loss for Stadion Feijenoord, next to losing their position to the Johan Cruyff Arena. Many games of Feyenoord are sold-out, especially in games against bigger teams (Transfermarkt, n.d.). Which would indicate that even more tickets could potentially be sold. The food- and drink stands in Stadion Feijenoord are also not able to deliver to the demand during games, causing the club to miss out on potential consumption revenue. On top of that, Stadion Feijenoord cannot host as many business seats as desirable during home games. And there are not enough facilities in the stadium to host big non-sport events in the way that a 'modern' stadium can (van Dooijeweert, 2021).

Feyenoord's long-term ambition is to maintain its position as one of the top football clubs in the Netherlands, and as a European sub-top team. Therefore, the club deems it necessary to generate more income. A stadium can be an important factor for generating income. As stated in previous paragraphs, Feyenoord misses out on potential revenue because Stadion Feijenoord not being able to keep up with market demands. Therefore, Feyenoord has spoken out the ambition to build a new stadium more than once.

The earliest plans for a new stadium date from the early 2000's (Kouwenhoven, 2012), many proposals for a new stadium or renovation have followed since then, which also partly explains why the stadium has not been maintained properly since 1994. Ultimately leading to the plans for Feyenoord City, which was the only proposal that eventually became a solid plan.

The plans of the new stadium of Feyenoord are part of the area development plan *Feyenoord City*, an area of 600.000 m² situated in Rotterdam-Zuid on the banks of the river Maas, in which functions such as housing, retail and recreation will be combined. The stadium will be the centrepiece of this area development project. On top of that, with a capacity of 63.000 it will become the largest stadium in the Benelux, suitable to host international finals, concerts, conventions and other events (Gebiedsontwikkeling Feyenoord City, 2022).

Important note is the fact that during this research, the plans have been cancelled definitely, the rise in building costs have been put up the main reason for cancelling the project (NOS, 2022). At the beginning of this research, the plan were already put on hold.

As good as this may sound, the plans have been met with a lot of backlash within the Feyenoord fan community. Fans have voiced their dissatisfaction about the plans via banners, chants and marches, some went as far as threatening members of the Feyenoord board, the architect and potential investors (van der Krol, 2020; NU.nl, 2021).

Although there have been multiple cases of violence associated with football fans in the Netherlands, Feyenoord's S.C.F. Hooligans group is especially well renowned through the whole of Europe for their violence. This level of intimidation and threatening against their own club is quite unusual. Therefore the question arises how this conflict could escalate so fiercely, and what makes this case so different from other, similar cases? How are arguments and sentiments structured?

Earlier research on the topic of stadium renovations and relocations have explored the significance of stadia, and consequences that relocations have on the neighbourhood and match experiences using various cases. In which factors such as – but not limited to –; power relations between fans and operators (Church & Penny, 2013), territorialization of stadia (Bale, 1993), and the feeling of connectivity between fan and club (Guschwan, 2014; Irving, 2019), have been researched.

Especially relevant is the work of Kennedy, in which discourse used by Everton fans regarding the plans for a new stadium outside of their city, have been analysed using Habermas' work as a basis (D.

Kennedy, 2012). Kennedy draws a link between the commodification of football and Habermas' theory regarding colonisation of the lifeworld. In this framework economic arguments, in favour of the relocation, are construed socially as 'rational', while arguments in favour of staying at the current stadium, to continue the existing life world, are construed as 'sentimental', which allows economic thinking to win momentum (Kennedy, 2012, p. 351).

This research will explore to which extent the same distinction can be made for Feyenoord. Can, in the case of Feyenoord, the conflict also be contextualised as a clash between tradition and economic rationalism? And if so, is it able to explain the position of Feyenoord as an extraordinary case?

As resistance against the commodification of football is a reoccurring phenomenon in football, using the umbrella term "Against Modern Football" (Numerato, 2015). One could argue that resistance against the new stadium, for which the plans are proposed on the basis of economical imperatives, go hand in hand with the general rejection of the commodification of professional football. Habermas' theory regarding the Colonisation of Lifeworld could give insights in how economic imperatives and sentimental values relate to each other in the sensemaking of these plans, and therefore lay out how Feyenoord's case is extraordinary, in comparison to other cases.

For the reasons outlined above, a focus will be put on the possible conflict between sentiment and rationality in regarding to Feyenoord prospective move to the new stadium. To conceptualise this relation, Habermas' thesis on the Colonisation of Lifeworld will be used as a framework to structure the arguments. In his work *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas identifies 'economy' and 'state' as subsystems in modern capitalist society that interfere in, and essentially colonize, the 'life world' (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, p. 36).

A possible cause could be an absence of sustaining economic arguments in favour of relocation which would attenuate the 'rationalisation' of arguments. Or, since colonisation does not imply replacement, economic thinking could still influence discussions about the new Feyenoord stadium, but not to an extent that would prevent the Feyenoord fanbase wanting to preserve their current lifeworld (Fairtlough, 1991, p. 554).

1.1.1 Research objective

The fact that Feyenoord's case seems to be an extraordinary case in an undesirable manner, as the safety of stakeholders could not be guaranteed at all times, leads to the objective of this research: getting an overview on what factors have led to the escalation of the resistance against the relocation plans of Feyenoord, making it more perseverant and fierce than other cases.

Therefore, the goal of this research is not only to create an overview on the argumentation against the stadium, but also to get a deeper insight in how argumentation is structured in the debate, and how different dimension of stadium relate to each other, especially how the economical and the sentimental dimensions of a stadium relate.

1.2 Research Questions

In order to conduct this research, a solid research question needs to be formulated. The answer to this research question should be able to include every aspect analysed during this research.

As the goal of this research is to determine which factors have contributed to the fact that the resistance against Feyenoord's potential stadium move is much fiercer and more perseverant than expected on the basis of other cases. The following research question is deemed as most suitable:

“What are the reasons for the widespread opposition against the building of the new Feyenoord stadium?”

To be able to deal with every aspect thoroughly, and to be able to distinguish between the different dimensions of this research. Multiple sub-questions have been formulated:

1. How are the plans for the new stadium being viewed, and shaped, in the fan community?
2. To what extent does the opposition in Feyenoord's case express itself differently than in other European cases?
3. To what extent can the colonization of lifeworld explain found differences?

These sub-questions will make sure that not only every aspect of this case is treated in this research, these questions also ensure that the research will be done according to a sequence that makes sense. A solid theoretical knowledge, and knowledge about other cases is needed to be able to approach the analysis of this specific case in a good manner.

1.3 Societal relevance

The aim of this research is first of all to bring more clarity around the problems surrounding the Feyenoord City case. Despite of the fact that the plans have been cancelled for now, the findings of this research are still very relevant for Feyenoord to this day. As Stadion Feijenoord still has its shortcomings, sooner or later, relocation or redevelopment will be on the decision table again.

The results from this research can give crucial insights into the factors deemed as most controversial by the fan community. Therefore Feyenoord, and other policy makers will be able to lay more focus the aspects deemed as very important by fans. As well as being better prepared for dealing with the opposition against the plans, for instance by putting more effort in club communication at aspects this research shows to be a source of conflict.

As football is played professionally in almost all European countries. Feyenoord City will not be the last case of a football club seeking to move to another stadium, with possible backlash thereof. In the Netherlands for instance, clubs such as FC Volendam, NAC Breda and SC Cambuur have publicly stated that they are exploring the possibilities of building a new stadium (Schapendonk, 2022; Voetbal International, 2022; Walraven, 2021). The problems that have occurred in Rotterdam, can also appear to a certain extent in these cases. New insights about the problems surrounding Feyenoord City could therefore prevent future conflicts.

1.4 Academic relevance

Feyenoord City seems to be an exceptional case within the context of stadium relocation issues. Such fierce resistance, leading to violence and threatening's, let it seem that there is something inherently different about this case in respect to other cases in The Netherlands and the rest of Europe.

On top of that, a majority of research on the subject of stadium relocations and fan culture are fulfilled by the means of American cases. However, it is a generally accepted fact that there is a big difference in sports- and fan culture between the United States and Europe, and therefore stadium visits are experience in a different way (Guschwan, 2014; Thornley, 2002).

Van Dam discusses in his paper the position of stadium issues in the field of geography and planning (2000). He uncovers that in Dutch academia, especially in comparison to the UK, there is little to no attention for this field of planning, despite stadium development issues being major planning issues in (local) governance (van Dam, 2000, p. 137). Although his paper was published in the year 2000, since then not much academic work, besides economic analyses, has been published specifically on Dutch stadium issues. Therefore this research would fill a gap in the existing academic knowledge about this subject in general, and especially on the knowledge specifically the Netherlands.

This research might be able to uncover factors that were not previously highlighted in regards to the spatial and societal dimension of stadia. The usage of Habermas in research regarding sports and sport stadia is rare (P. Kennedy, 2017, p. 359). Therefore this research would not only add to the existing knowledge about stadium issues, it would also help shape how Habermas can be used in future research regarding lifeworld, systems and stadia.

Habermas' colonization of the lifeworld, does seem to be able to explain the clash between the Feyenoord board and Feyenoord fans, as a clash in which economic imperatives collide with the identity of Feyenoord and the attach mint felt by Feyenoord fans to their current stadium. However, the

process of colonization describes by Habermas, seems to follow a different path in this case. The growing influence of the economic subsystem seems to be rejected. What causes this difference between Feyenoord and other cases is therefore not only of relevance for this particular case. It could have an impact on how colonization of the lifeworld is being viewed in the context of sports stadia and the commodification of football.

2. Literature review

In order to get a broader view of which issues play a role in (the protest against) stadia relocations and redevelopment. A selection of articles from multiple authors will be discussed in the following paragraph. Point of departure in this literature review is the interaction between factors regarding stadium experience, fan identity, or other socio-cultural factors and the commercial or bureaucratic factors influencing stadium relocations and redevelopments.

Guschwan has analysed the role sports stadium have in the Italian public space (2014). His paper adapts the vision of Margaret Kohn on Habermas' concept of public sphere. Habermas uses the term 'public sphere' as the ideal space for democratic discourse, in which citizens can form rational opinions and participate in rational discourse without demands from work, government or private life. The ideal public sphere is the European salon, according to Habermas (Guschwan, 2014, pp.884-885). Kohn emphasises the importance of public space being part of the public sphere, as this allows participation of underprivileged and minorities, while the European salon is only accessible for exclusively white educated males (Guschwan, 2014, p. 855). Guschwan's research is specifically done on the case of Italian stadia, to a certain extent his research can be extrapolated to other European countries, such as the Netherlands, however he mentions the big difference between Italian and European stadia (Guschwan, 2014, p. 897).

Guschwan states that Italian stadia greatly offer the conditions to act as a place to display political and social identities. Not only is the stadium a space to meet (new) people, and discuss social and political issues. The Italian stadium is also a space to express political and social identities, via speech choirs or the demonstration of flags and banners. The stadium, being an oval or rectangular structure, in which everything is centred towards the field, also allows visitors of the stadium to be viewed by the other fans present in the stadium (Guschwan, 2014, p. 865).

Bale discusses the territorialization of sports stadia, and the link that can be drawn with Foucault's panopticon prison (Bale, 1993). Sports, and therefore football, is being territorialized since the eighteenth century (Bale, 1993, p. 122). From the first limitation of playing space, to segregation between players and spectators, to stadia being an enclosed, segmented space. Visitors are being segregated on multiple basis (players vs. spectators, home vs. away fans, rich vs. poor), and security in stadia is nowadays on a very high level (Bale, 1993, p. 127). Connecting to it, Church and Penny describe a certain 'post-fandom', due to higher ticket prices, increased regulation in stadia and more extensive television coverage of matches, New spaces have emerged where fans gather to develop collective experiences (Church & Penny, 2013, p. 820).

Church and Penny have further researched the changing dynamics of power relations due to the relocation of Arsenal FC from Highbury to their new Emirates Stadium (2013, p. 819). A case somewhat similar to Feyenoord City. The paper shows that there is a interdependence between the owner and/or operator of a stadium and the fans (Church & Penny, 2013, p. 829). Which leads to a complex power relation, as stadium visitors cannot be categorized as one group; the vociferous "Ultras" fans have quite contrasting wishes than members of the business club for instance, these different groups also have different ways to exert their power. (Church & Penny, 2013, p. 830).

Irving deals in his paper with the effect that moving to a new stadium had on fan culture in the cases of Manchester City and West Ham United (Irving, 2019). Both stadia were built for mega events (the Commonwealth Games and the Olympic Games respectively). The paper focusses on the impact these movements had on match day experiences, and whether the move is being seen as an improvement for long-standing supporters. According to Irving, fan experiences have indeed changed after the move; ticket prices went up, the atmosphere was considered to be inferior, and a change in fan

demographics has been noted (Irving, 2019, p. 752). In both cases these changes are seen as negative, and both fan groups feel a large amount of nostalgia towards their old stadium.

However, the extent to which the move is perceived negative differs vastly between these cases. The Etihad Stadium of Manchester City is now appreciated much more by its fans than the London Stadium by West Ham supporters. Which is largely due to the fact that after the move of Manchester City to their new stadium, the club experienced the most successful period of recent time, in which the club has won the Premier League four times. Therefore the Etihad stadium is associated with these times of success (Irving, 2019, p. 753). This is not the case for West Ham. As this club has not had the opportunity to build these positive association to replace the feelings of nostalgia (Irving, 2019, p. 753).

Fans of both clubs have stated that as long as they feel ‘part of the club’, they are able to ignore all negative aspects of their match experience. A club can have the ‘perfect stadium’, but if fans do not feel a sense of belonging they will leave. And vice versa: a stadium can fall short on everything, but as long as they feel welcome and connected to the club they will keep visiting (Irving, 2019, p. 753).

A somewhat similar case to Feyenoord’s, is the case of Atletico Madrid and its move away from Estadio Vicente Calderón to the hypermodern Estadio Wanda Metropolitano, which Junghagen discusses in his paper on stadium relocations in relation to brand identity, club authenticity and fan acceptance (Junghagen, 2017). This paper focusses on football clubs from a brand management perspective. Club identity, culture and traditions are therefore assets to strengthen the brand, and market position of a club. In this paper, stadia are viewed from two viewpoints, an identity approach and from a community approach. This paper was written during the building phase of the new stadium, so at that time Atletico still played in Vicente Calderón, but the relocation was already an established fact.

Stadia are important carriers of the brand identity of football clubs, therefore a move to a new stadium can have a significant impact on the brand identity. The degree in which a stadium dictates brand identity differs however from case to case. In the case of Atletico Madrid, the Vicente Calderón stadium is of great importance for the club’s identity. Fans especially point out the atmosphere, which was considered outstanding in comparison to other big clubs in Spain and Europe (Junghagen, 2017, p. 15). The loud cheering, singing and yelling is not only something fans enjoy to participate in, they consider it as something crucial to Atletico’s success, as the atmosphere pushes their own team forward, while at the same time the atmosphere intimidates opponents. This frame, in which Atletico’s fans are considered the “12th man on the field”, is also embraced by media outlets and opponent coaches (Junghagen, 2017, pp. 15-16). This reputation is something Atletico fans take great pride in, and is considered something crucial to the club’s identity, Atletico Madrid wouldn’t be the same club if the atmosphere would become very tame (Junghagen, 2017, p. 17). Atletico fans contrast themselves with rivals Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, these clubs have a much bigger global fanbase, resulting in a larger amount of tourist visiting their matches, which usually lowers the atmosphere during games (Junghagen, 2017, p. 19).

The plans for the new stadium were therefore slightly mistrusted by fans, as Vicente Calderón was not considered as a stadium in need of replacement. Some facilities, such as toilets, could use a touch up, but besides that, fans were very content with Vicente Calderón. The reason Atletico wanted to relocate were mostly commercial reasons, to facilitate more tourist and corporate visitors. Fans were

afraid Atletico, which originates as, and is still considered a working class club, was going to be Americanised⁴ and less distinctive from Real Madrid and FC Barcelona (Junghagen, 2017, p. 19).

Further Junghagen identifies why there has not been a larger widespread opposition against the Wanda Metropolitano. Fans have stated that the success Atletico's first team achieved in the past years, has distracted fans from the case regarding the stadium. Most fans are sure that the stadium relocation will have enormous (negative) effects on stadium atmosphere and overall experience and in the past, and there have been protest actions and court cases in order to frustrate the relocation process. Most fans have come to terms with the fact that Atletico's board will do what they consider the most rational option, which is building the new stadium. This does not imply that fans therefore agree that a new stadium is in any case a rational decision (Junghagen, 2017, p. 21).

Van Dam has looked into planning choices made in the late 20th century regarding stadium refurbishment, redevelopment or relocation in the Netherlands (van Dam, 2000). Although it is important to be aware of the fact that this paper is more than 20 years old, and that therefore not all claims are still relevant or correct, it delivers a clear overview on how stadium redevelopment and relocation of the nineties has been experienced in the Netherlands. He describes a growing commodification in football, while at the same time growing negative spill overs regarding football stadia, partly because of hooliganism and other safety issues (van Dam, 2000, p. 135). Stadia needed to be more safe, while at the same time commercial opportunities could be exploited.

It was often a broadly accepted among fans that something needed to be done against the outdated stadia. Especially stadia that had multipurpose functions, such as the Goffertstadion in Nijmegen, which had a cycling- and athletics track between the stands and the field, were not popular by fans, as the pitch was far away making the fans feel separated from the game (van Dam, 2000, p. 140). Therefore most plans did not receive significant backlash amongst fans, as most fans saw the new plans as an advancement in comparison to the old situation.

No significant difference can be found between resistance against refurbishment, redevelopment or relocation plans, which is in contrast to cases in the rest of Europe (van Dam, 2000, p. 142). Van Dam attributes this to the fact that, except in Rotterdam and Eindhoven, no cities have more than one professional football club. Therefore a club's identity is often built around the whole city and/or region, which means that the exact location of a stadium is less relevant to fans. In contrast to cities as London or Istanbul, where many professional football clubs are located, making these football clubs strongly connected to a certain neighbourhood. Relocating a stadium to the other side of the city would have an enormous impact on the identity of a club in these cities, while this effect is far less relevant in many Dutch cases.

The cases handled in this chapter show resemblance with David Kennedy's case on Everton's possible move to a stadium in Kirkby (2012). Kennedy describes the clash between 'tradition' and 'sentiment', and argues via the theory *Colonization of the Lifeworld*, that the commercialisation of football drives football fans to adapt a commercial rationality (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 356). I would argue that a parallel can be drawn with the cases of Atletico Madrid and Manchester City; fans describe the drastic, negative changes in their lifeworld, but accept (or do not resist against) these changes, because of the commercial rationality that a new stadium will result in better on-field achievements of the club they support. This theoretical underpinning will be further clarified in the next chapter.

⁴ There is no framed definition of 'Americanised', but it refers to the degree in which big sport events in the United States are highly commercialised, and the differences in fan culture between European sports and American sports.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter will present an overview of the key theoretical concepts used in this research. In this case the *Theory of Communicative Action* by Jürgen Habermas, with special regards to his concept of Lifeworld colonisation.

3.1 Theory of Communicative Action – Jürgen Habermas

As stated, the work of Jürgen Habermas will be used as the main lens in this research. Habermas is widely reckoned as the leader of the ‘second generation’ Frankfurt School thinkers, a collective of neo-Marxist social theorists (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 201). Habermas has stated that his work is an attempt to connect and use the work of Weber and western Marxism (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 202). He builds further up on Weber’s idea of Western rationality, in which efficiency, control and calculability are deemed as rational instead of moral and social values. This concept of rationality is the ideal basis in which modern capitalism and bureaucracy can develop (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 202).

Habermas does not completely agree with Weber’s view. In his first work, *Knowledge and Human Interest*, he states that, besides as a way to acquire material needs, humans do interact with each other. Habermas identifies three cognitive interest of humans, namely instrumental interest, emancipatory interest and the aim of reaching mutual understanding. In which the latter forms the basis for his work the Theory of Communicative Action (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 203).

In his work *Theory of Communicative Action* Habermas states that communication can be identified into two categories, strategic communication and communication aimed at understanding, which he calls communicative action. The goal of strategic communication is purely to transfer a plan or statement to the hearers, with no intent to reach an agreement, only to set social action into motion. Although strategic communication is often hidden, and can be altered to better fit the audience, strategic communication does not influence the predefined goals. The hearers are solely seen as objects that need to be steered (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 204).

Unlike strategic communication, communicative action is aimed at reaching a common understanding of each other. Goals are not predefined, but mutually agreed via a communicative process. Therefore the goals that result from communicative action are not the result of an instrumental calculation, but formed via mutual agreement on what is desirable and what not. The defined goal cannot be seen separately from the language used, and single communications cannot be seen separately from previous communications, as communicative actions requires a basis of existing presumptions that guide the persons communicating to a mutual understanding (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 205).

3.1.1 Lifeworld

The existing presumptions, discussed in the previous paragraph differ from person to person. Through the process of enculturation and socialization each person creates what Habermas calls, a ‘lifeworld’. Lifeworld, according to Habermas, is the collection of presumptions and intersubjective understandings that are communicated between people (Fairtlough, 1991, p. 551). Lifeworld is primarily carried through (non-verbal) language and culture, which enforce societal integration and the formation of a personal identity. Lifeworld is not static, every interaction could possible alter the lifeworld, which influences future interactions and therefore possibly future lifeworld (Fairtlough, 1991, p. 552).

Habermas has identified three components of lifeworld; culture, society and personality. Culture embeds the common stock of knowledge necessary to reach an understanding with each other on what is interpreted as the situation and what is desirable. Society relates to the social connections that people

have with each other, leading to solidarity and security. Personality refers the individual competence to participate in activities and discourse, from which one can adapt an own identity (Baxter, 1987, pp. 47, 48).

Via communicative action, a certain situation or problem will be identified and tackled by matching each other's lifeworld through language in order to reach a common understanding of the situation. By explaining their interpretations and knowledge linguistically, an agreement on what is happening, and what should be done is reached (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, p.42). The process of matching each other's lifeworld does not always happen in an explicit way, as reaching a common understanding or consensus, in the most efficient way possible is something nestled in most societies, and therefore in lifeworld. (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, p. 43).

The 'stock of knowledge' embedded in the lifeworld forms the basis for actors to pursue their individual goals. Via communicative action, this stock of knowledge is formed, renewed and applied to specific themes. The institutional order formed in the lifeworld by communicative action, contributes to the harmonization of ones actions. Without this coordination, every individual action would exist in isolation, not aligning with other actions from other actors, and therefore often leading to conflict (Baxter, 1987, pp. 46 - 48).

“When participants in interaction reach an understanding with one another as regards their situation, they stand within a cultural tradition that they simultaneously use and renew; when they coordinate their action through the intersubjective recognition of criticisable validity claims, they rely upon their membership in a social group and at the same time strengthen its integration...” (Habermas & McCarthy, 1985, p. 208)

Therefore, when trying to understand, and give meaning to the lifeworld, the importance of communication must be acknowledged, as via communication the lifeworld is established and renewed. This form of reproduction is what Habermas calls “symbolic reproduction”. Symbolic reproduction entails the formation or renovation of cultural knowledge, personal identities and solidarity through human communication (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, pp. 42, 43).

3.1.2 Colonization of the Lifeworld

Nowadays in modern capitalist society there is, besides symbolic reproduction, material reproduction. In material reproduction, actions and discourse are disconnected from symbolic reproduction. Instead of factors as culture, society or personality, actions and discourse are steered via impersonal mechanisms. These mechanisms are, according to Habermas; the market economy and the political-legal-bureaucratic mechanism (Fairtlough, 1991, p. 553). The steering media create and take over existing shared preconceptions, the systems corrupt the lifeworld (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, p.36, 43).

“The thesis of internal colonization states that the subsystems of the economy and state become more and more complex as a consequence of capitalist growth and penetrate ever deeper into the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld” (Habermas & McCarthy, 1985, p. 367).

Symbolic reproduction primarily takes place via communicative action, as the stock of knowledge on which the rationality of a certain action is based is embedded in the lifeworld, a mutual understanding and agreement is quickly reached, and therefore strategic action is often not needed to reach social action (Baxter, 1987, p. 52). In the form of, for instance, cooperative social labour, material social action can take place via communicative action. However in material reproduction actors are often set into motion via strategic communication (Baxter, 1987, p. 52).

Baxter uses a capitalist company as an example: The overall goal of the company is profit maximalisation, therefore the company aims for its workers to contribute to this profit maximalisation. However, the individual worker has no interest in the amount of profit the company makes, by implementing bonuses besides the wages, the company steers the workers into action that ensures profit maximalisation, without the workers explicitly intending to contribute to this predefined goal (Baxter, 1987, p. 52).

Systems are the parts of society that function via impersonal, instrumental action. Systems receive their place in society via a functional integration implemented by people, from that point the system takes control of certain mechanisms in society, leaving little to no control by people over it (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 209). Using the system of the market economy as an example, phenomena such as the conjunctures of (un)employment or supply and demand cannot be related back to the actions or intention of one person or group of people, but can dictate and affect a great part of an individual life. Systems are steered by money and power, the rationality of an action is therefore not defined by the consequences it has on individuals, but by the degree it creates money and power. Actors no longer have to act according to social norms, values and goals agreed in lifeworld, in order to pursue life in the most rational way (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 209).

Systems are embedded in lifeworld, they are perceived the same as exogenous forces such as the weather. The systems are continually gaining power in human activity. However, as all humans depend on humanity to give life purpose, systems are unable to displace lifeworld completely, steering media are only able to alter the lifeworld. A clear distinction between lifeworld and systems does only exist in theory, everyone that participates in modern capitalist society has been influenced by steering media from the day they were born, no single action can be classified as solely a lifeworld or system action (Fairlough, 1991, pp. 554, 555).

Which is why Habermas argues that the current (im)balance between lifeworld and system is dangerous. Although he does not state that systems are inherently bad and that systems may be unavoidable in the complex modern society of today, Habermas stresses the fact that systems need to stay connected to lifeworld. Consensus about the degree, and the way in which a system can dictate a part of society should be reached within the lifeworld. Not the other way around, in which systems prescribe the rationality in certain debates, and therefore colonize the lifeworld (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 210).

Habermas states a couple of reifying effects that explain how these systems overtake lifeworld. First he describes what he calls *Sinnverlust*, which roughly translates to loss of meaning. The cultural stock of knowledge is unable to keep track with certain developments in capitalist society, therefore cultural knowledge loses its function in the sense making of new social situations. Development in capitalist society therefore results in a decreasing instrumental function for cultural knowledge (Allen & Mendieta, 2019).

In the case of stadium redevelopment issues, an example of this could be a club deliberately raising the ticket prices in order to receive more revenue, even if this results in lower attendances and therefore lower ambiance. The cultural stock of knowledge, which implies that higher attendances are always more desirable, is not able to explain the rationality of possibly lowering the attendances.

Second Habermas describes a loss of social solidarity. As power relations are more steered via systems, creating and maintaining social relations are less relevant in coordinating new situations. Group regulation and identities do not completely disappear, but their function changes. The last effect described are *psychopathologies*. The way someone's self-image is formed, and how one places itself in society is deformed by these systems. Actors are alienated by these systems (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, p. 37).

These two effects can be highlighted via the way football fans, and their interest, are being handled by clubs or governing bodies in football. For instance, top clubs in Europe such as FC Barcelona or Manchester United attract an audience from all over the world, and their stadium is often filled with loads of 'tourist' visitors. This development has not only shifted the way the club looks at its stadium visitors; from fans, who carry the identity of the club, to one-time visitors, solely consumers carrying an economic value. It has also resulted in fans selling their own season-ticket for exorbitant prices to tourist and other one-time visitors (Swan, 2018). Examples of how social solidarity, and the identity of football fans are undermined by imperatives of the economic system.

3.2 Application of Colonization Theory to similar cases

The lens of Habermas' distinction between a life world and a systems world has been used in previous cases regarding football and stadium issues. In particular by Peter Kennedy (2017) and David Kennedy (2012), not to be confused with each other. In both cases a clash between lifeworld interest and economic system interest are being described.

Peter Kennedy has analysed the economic and political context from previous UEFA European Football Championships, using Habermas' framework to interpret the growing economic imperatives around these mega events (P. Kennedy, 2017, p. 355). He describes a certain contradiction between UEFA's main stated objective and the outcome of UEFA's own strategy. Although the European Championships offer a great amount of joy and entertainment to a ton of people in Europe, and the UEFA invests, via national associations, in grass-roots development of football. UEFA's policy is built around profit-interest, utilizing football for the reproduction of capital, while disregarding negative local and national impacts (P. Kennedy, 2017, p. 365).

This case shows how football, something emerged long ago in public space as a form of recreation, has been colonized by economic systems into a vehicle to reproduce capital via mega events, at the cost of local communities experiencing negative impacts. This case can therefore be used as an example of how public sphere is the battlefield between the life world and the systems world (P. Kennedy, 2017, p. 366).

David Kennedy researched the language used by fans regarding Everton's possible move to a stadium in Kirkby, just outside of their home city Liverpool. This case shows a clear contradiction between commercial interest and interest regarding 'tradition' and 'identity'.

The proposed stadium in Kirkby offers big economic opportunities for the club, which could potentially lead to a more successful first team (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 343), while on the other hand, the move to a different city would leave a drastic, and possibly negative, impact on fan-culture, matchday experience and the identity of Everton being a club representing the people of Liverpool.

In the context of life world, in which there is a mutual understanding what being a fan of Everton entails, and how matches are experienced in their current stadium, Goodison Park, it would make no sense at all to move to a stadium in Kirkby (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 351). Therefore the influence of the systems world is very clear in this case, the only way in which a move to Kirkby is desirable is when economic thinking has taken over part of the lifeworld.

Everton fans stating that these economic arguments are deemed as rational and 'good business sense', while arguments in relating to tradition and identity are dismissed as sentimental, which leads to economic arguments getting a greater hearing than other arguments (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 352). Habermas himself stated: *'motives of performance and competition gain the force to shape behaviour. The communicative practice of everyday life is one-sidedly rationalised'*. Which this case indeed shows, under the presumption that economic success leads to sportive success, Everton fans are 'forced' to let economic thinking, and therefore the systems world, influence a possible drastic change in their lifeworld.

The mechanism described above can be affirmed by the way the relocation is discussed in the fan community of Everton. Kennedy analysed the fan discourse regarding the relocation plan. He found that fans from both 'sides' adopted a certain economic imperative in their argumentation. Not only the group of fans in favour of the relocation, claiming economic rationality, but also opponents of the relocation, whose main motivation was on the basis of factors as tradition and community, adapted economic language targeting the economic rationality of the relocation plans. Instead of trying to convince the side

in favour of the relocation of why tradition and community are more important than the economic benefits of the relocation (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 344).

3.3 Operationalisation

In order to be able to use Habermas' Colonisation Theory to explain the Feyenoord case, lifeworld and systems need to be applied into phenomena regarding stadia, and fan experience.

Lifeworld is not something that can easily be framed and operationalised, as it is dynamic and differs for every person. It is therefore not possible and not necessary to strictly frame what entails the lifeworld and what not, as long as the distinction between lifeworld and system is clear. However, based on the theoretical framework, a guideline of what the lifeworld of a Feyenoord fan entails can be made. The lifeworld of a Feyenoord fan is in any case, but not exclusively built around the notion of shared experiences inside a stadium, traditions and interactions inside the stadium, attachment to the stadium, and a common identity the fans of Feyenoord share, and the influence of Stadion Feijenoord to the identity of the club.

Shared experiences inside the stadium could refer to historic events such as certain matches or trophies won by Feyenoord, or other precious memories created with other people. The traditions and interactions inside the stadium are for instance matchday-routines, manners of conduct on certain stands, or certain songs that are played before every match. Attachment to the stadium could express itself in an appreciation of the architecture, but also in a more sentimental sense, in which Stadion Feijenoord feels as a home. The common identity of Feyenoord fans, and the stadia role in that identity could for instance refer to Feyenoord's origins as a working class club, in which an old, rustic stadium fits a working class identity more than a hypermodern arena. It could also refer to the significance of Feyenoord, and its stadium to the identity of the city Rotterdam for instance.

Habermas has identified two mechanisms that he describes as the systems colonizing the lifeworld. These systems are, as described in the previous chapter, the market-economy and the political-legal-bureaucratic mechanism.

As stated in Peter Kennedy's work on Habermas regarding the UEFA, football is something emerged in public space centuries ago as a form of recreation, nowadays (professional) football is used as a vehicle for capital reproduction (P. Kennedy, 2017, p. 366). The colonization of the economic system into the lifeworld has therefore forced football fans nowadays to look at football with a market-led attitude, which changes the discourse around what is deemed as rational and desirable. Therefore, arguments towards economic market thinking or towards arguments in favour of adapting to governmental power, which are contesting the existing lifeworld, can be identified as systems colonizing the lifeworld.

In the case of Feyenoord, economic imperatives for the new stadium being brought up as a crucial reason to push the relocation despite, or instead of reasoning focussing on the symbolic value of a stadium. Is an example of a market-led attitude taking over the discourse regarding the new stadium. The fact that proposed plans are part of a larger, political significant area development plan, placing greater importance on the plans needing to succeed, is an example of the political-legal-bureaucratic mechanism colonizing part of the discourse.

As Habermas' Colonisation Theory stems from his Theory of Communicative Action, discourse and communication are a vital part of identifying the interaction between lifeworld and system. As rationality is debated via (digital) speech acts, analysing the communications between people is the key to identify lifeworld colonisation. Therefore the distinction between symbolic and material reproduction is therefore of high value, as it uncovers how lifeworld colonisation takes place in discourse.

One can speak of symbolic reproduction when its basis is formed on the components of culture, society and personality. In concrete terms; when there is a mutual understanding of the situation, and one is able to act according to social values corresponding with their social group and their own personal identity, it is a case of symbolic reproduction.

If these components do not appear to exist or harmonize in certain discourse, and instead the discourse is coordinated by the influence of the market economy and, or also the political-legal-bureaucratic system; the discourse can be identified as material reproduction.

3.4 Conceptual model

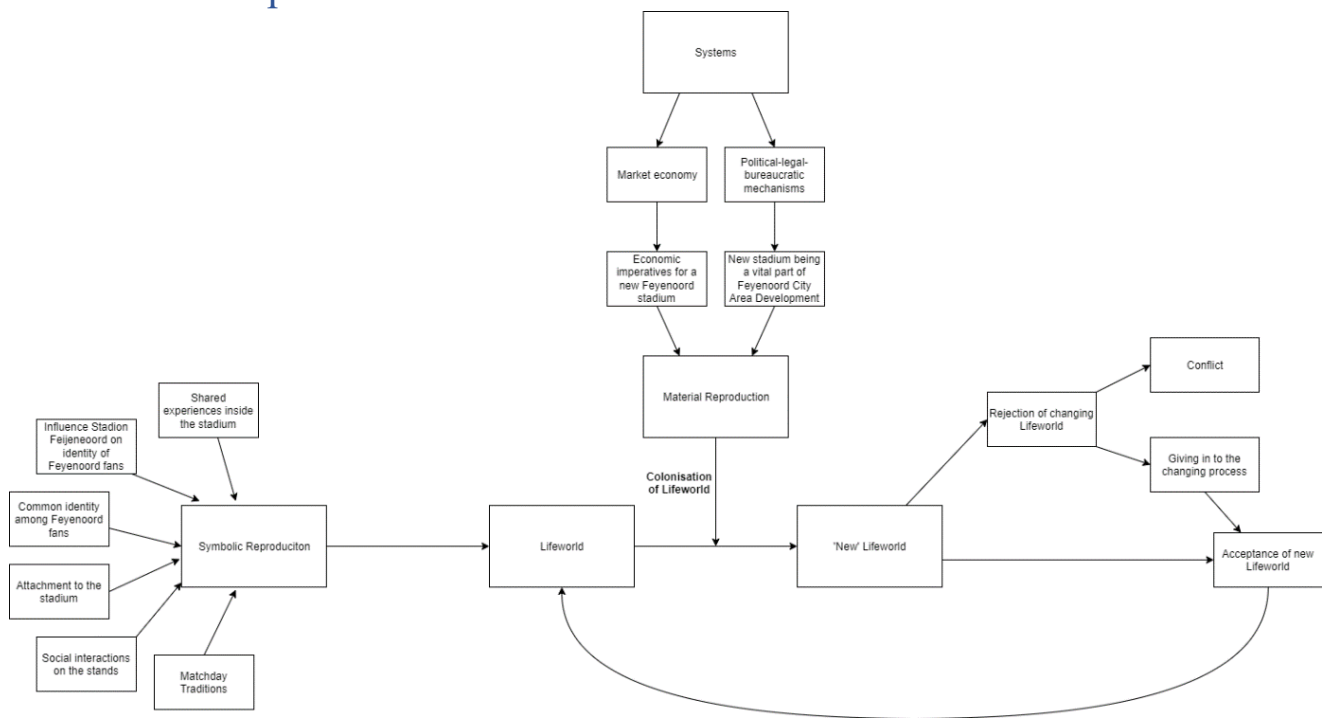


FIGURE 2 CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Inserted above is the conceptual model of this research. A magnified version of this model can be found in appendix 5. This theoretical model visually describes the process of Lifeworld Colonisation, which forms the basis of this theoretical framework.

The factors of the left side of the model form the common understandings among Feyenoord fans, which are shared with each other via communicative action, and eventually forms the Lifeworld of a Feyenoord fan. The process, in which via communicative action common experiences and ideas are shared is called symbolic reproduction. Symbolic reproduction will always contribute to the reproduction of Lifeworld, however the degree to which the Lifeworld is dictated by symbolic reproduction differs, depending on the material reproduction of the Lifeworld.

As Habermas sets out via *Colonisation of the Lifeworld*, by the influence of the subsystems of the market economy and the political-bureaucratic mechanisms, the Lifeworld gets corrupted (Fairtlough, 1991). Systems take over certain mechanisms embedded in the Lifeworld, in this case the discourse about the desirability of a new Feyenoord stadium. Economic imperative and political interest are forced into the discourse regarding a new Feyenoord stadium. This colonisation alters the reproduction of the lifeworld. In the ‘new’ lifeworld, the social and cultural stock of knowledge is not able to reach a consensus about the desirability of the new stadium.

While other cases, for instance Junghagen’s case on Atletico Madrid, the fans accepted the new situation directly, or gave in after some initial resistance, and therefore accepted the new Lifeworld (Junghagen, 2017). In Feyenoord’s fan community this does not seem to be the case as the resistance, has never stopped, resulting in conflict. The analysis will therefore attempt to uncover why Feyenoord’s case a large share of fans have never reached the phase of acceptance, adapting to the newly reproduced Lifeworld, and therefore ending up in a phase of conflict.

4. Methodology

In this chapter the methodological framework of this research will be outlined. First the research strategy will be explained, thereafter the methods used will be described and elaborated upon.

4.1 Research strategy

The goal of this research is to explain the opposition against Feyenoord's plans for building a new stadium. Therefore the reasoning within the Feyenoord fan community needs to be analysed, in order to be able to ask the question what sets Feyenoord apart, and how this can be explained using the theoretical framework.

Verschuren & Dodewaard describe three core aspects that should be made before considering any further methods, these fundamental aspects are: in-depth versus wide-ranging; qualitative versus quantitative; and descriptive versus empirical (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 157). Because the Feyenoord fan community is quite a well framed research unit, an in-depth analysis, makes the most sense. A wide-ranging research to football fans in general could also be useful of course, however this type of research would not be able to make definite claims regarding Feyenoord specifically.

As the reasoning of Feyenoord fans regarding their potential stadium relocation is the core research unit, using qualitative methods retrieved in an empirical way is the most suitable option. Conducting this research using quantitative methods would also give some useful insights, for instance in the distribution of certain sentiments. However uncovering how certain arguments are exactly structured and debated would be quite hard using quantitative methods.

To be able to conduct a research, Verschuren & Dodewaard have described five main research strategies: survey, experiment, case study, grounded theory approach and literature review (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, pp. 157 – 160). For this research a case study, in combination with a literature research is most suitable. Via the case study, an in-depth analysis of the argumentation within the Feyenoord fan community can be conducted. The literature research will be able to uncover the findings of comparable studies, to which the results of Feyenoord's case study can be compared.

4.1.1 Case study

The main compartment of this research will be formed by the case study of Feyenoord's fan community. A case study is a type of research in which the researcher is ought to get an in-depth and complete insight into a framed research subject (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 177).

A case study should entail a small domain of research elements that, via extensive, in-depth, qualitative methods, will be analysed in its natural environment via a strategical selection of data (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 178). In this case, the discourse used by Feyenoord fans on the FR12 fan-website regarding the potential move to the new stadium, will be analysed via a content analysis.

The case study will be used as the basis for getting an overview of how opinions regarding Feyenoord City are structured within a large group of Feyenoord fans. The domain in which the arguments of Feyenoord fans will be analysed is the fan-website FR12. Subsequently, the results from this content analysis will be placed within the context of the theoretical framework. Via Habermas'

theory Colonisation of the Lifeworld, the phenomena Lifeworld, systems and the colonisation of lifeworld by systems will be adopted to the results of the content analysis.

Fan acceptance of stadium relocation plans has been researched before, for instance by David Kennedy and Sven Junghagen who have respectively studied the cases of Everton and Atletico Madrid (Junghagen, 2017; D. Kennedy, 2012). Both conducted their research by using discussion on fan-websites as a basis for their research. The results of these analysis offered an extensive overview on the variety of arguments presented by fans, how these arguments related to each other, and how debates between opposing arguments were structured.

Junghagen has used the results from this analysis for further specific research using a focus group (Junghagen, 2017, p. 10). While Kennedy has implemented a experiment in which he submitted an article written by him to the fan-website, to subsequently be able to analyse the comments on his submitted article (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 342).

This research will be using the results from the case study of Feyenoord's fan-website to compare to findings of comparable researches, which includes the work of Junghagen and Kennedy. As well as fitting the outcomes of the analysis within the theoretical framework based on the work of Jürgen Habermas.

Content analysis

For conducting the case study, content analysis will be used as the main analysing tool. A content analysis is a research methods used for generating data from written documents, as well as audio-visual media. Content analysis can be useful when there is a lot of available data, in which sensemaking can only be done via a methodological approach (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 230). In comparison to interviews, material analysed in a content analysis is often no subject to distortions such as the urge to express strategic or socially desirable answers (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 231).

This research uses the comments to articles posted on FR12 as the research material. The online environment is a place where people can speak relatively anonymous, therefore people can feel less urge to stick to socially acceptable opinions about the subject, as they will not be addressed to it in real life. By analysing the opinions stated, and the discussions held on the forum, a large number of opinions of different people can be gathered. The conversations held on the forum are real interactions, taking place in a natural environment, the users participate from its own intention, in which they can state their own opinion, or respond to other statements. These engagements are therefore not only an usable source for mapping out all the different arguments used, but also how these arguments are used in conversations, and how people with different views, use these arguments to engage with each other.

On the FR12 forum, there is no interview setting in which participants, subconsciously, take into account that their views are used for research purposes. Therefore analysing the discourse on an internet forum is ideal for researching the process in which arguments are created and shared in a natural environment. On top of that, this research process has started in January 2022, at that point the plans had been put on hold already, in March 2022 the plans had been officially cancelled. These developments can have massive influence on how people look at the project, as the debate around the project has shifted back from a current issue to a hypothetical issue. The content analysis makes it possible to 'go back in time' as the conversations held on the forum years ago are still available.

As real life communications are analysed, this internet forum is not only a very useful platform to get insights on the arguments used itself, but also to get insights on the application of colonization theory on the subject, as the importance of communication for this theory is strongly empathised by Habermas.

As FR12 offers a broad spectrum of opinions from a large group of people, in combination with the other advantage regarding analysing an internet forum earlier mentioned, no other sources of content

will be utilised. As this research has its respective, restricting timeframe, the utilisation of time should be allocated in a careful way. Adding other sources of content, such as opinion articles in newspapers. Of course, these articles could also add usable insights to the analysis, for instance more focus into individual reasoning, as opinion articles are in general a lot longer, and more extensive than a FR12 comment. However I would argue that a larger variety of argumentation, and a larger amount of discourse adds more to this particular research than a couple of deep dives into specific individual beliefs. As this research tries to uncover the interplay between arguments, and the way debates are structured. I would argue that focussing as much time as possible to the content retrieved via FR12 can be considered as the most strategic choice.

4.1.2 Literature research

A literature research can be conducted by the means of three categories of literature: Academic research, secondary sources, or administrative static material (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 197). For this research only academical literature regarding other, comparable case studies are utilised. In order to maintain coherence in information provision of the collected cases, sticking to one category was the most useful.

During the literature research, existing literature about similar European cases have been studied in depth, against which the Feyenoord case are compared to. The literature research will be used a tool to create a general overview on which themes were relevant in stadium relocation projects, and how these themes were handled.

It was a conscious decision not to use one or two specific cases, but to generate a broader picture, with more cases. This is due to the fact that Feyenoord is expected to be an exceptional case, and would therefore deviate from the general picture. As every case is different, and different themes are relevant for each specific research, there is no ‘perfect case’ to which Feyenoord can be compared directly. Therefore a diverse selection of case studies, and literature about stadium issues is selected.

4.2 Research material

This section will clarify the used literature, and the collected data for the content analysis. As well as a description of the process of analysis.

4.2.1 Literature Research

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the goal of the literature research is to create a general overview of the significance of stadia in fan culture and beyond, and an extensive insight into other stadium relocation cases, to get a better overview on which factors Feyenoord’s case could potentially deviate.

The selection of cases, and other literature focusses solely on European cases, as mentioned in the academic relevance, almost all previous research is based on American or European stadium issues. Because of the enormous differences in sports culture, fan culture and stadium experiences, between the USA and Europe, research on American cases is less fitting to compare to Feyenoord (Guschwan, 2014;

Thornley, 2002). As there was enough usable research on European cases, there was no need to explore the applicability of cases from other parts of the world, such as South America or South-East Asia.

Although a broad description of European fan culture and stadium experience can be formulated, to which other fan cultures can be compared. This is of course very generalised, and cultural differences within Europa should be taken into account. Therefore it was vital to delve into literature specific on Dutch stadium cases. As there was not an extensive amount of research available specifically on Dutch cases, the work of van Dam, who created an overview on planning choices made in the Netherlands regarding stadia in the 20th century, is vital for placing Feyenoord in the academic debate around stadium relocation issues in Europe.

4.2.2 Content analysis

The content analysis forms the basis for analysing the standpoint of Feyenoord fan's regarding their potential stadium move. During the content analysis the comments of a selection of FR12 articles will be analysed. FR12 is a fan owned website, regularly posting articles about Feyenoord. All these articles have a comment section, in which users state their opinions about the news or debate with other users, discussing their viewpoints regarding a certain topic. Articles that spike the interest of a lot of users, for instance articles focused on Feyenoord stadium plans, can receive more than 1000 comments.

As these articles have such a large amount of comments, the timeframe of this research does not allow an enormous amount of different articles to be analysed. The selection of articles is therefore vital. During the selection of articles the amount of comments, the date of writing and the specific topic of the articles were the most crucial factors on which articles were chosen.

Eventually, four FR12 articles were analysed. Which may not sound like a lot of articles, but as all these articles had between 500 and 1200 comments, a lot of data could be extracted from these articles. Ultimately, the analysis has produced 649 unique quotations, distributed into 58 codes, and 10 different code groups.

As these articles, and therefore the comments were written in Dutch, the coding process is also executed in Dutch. As the rest of this research is written in English, all documents, codes and quotations will be translated as direct as possible, in order to maintain the readability of this research.

After the data has been gathered, the content needs coding. Most comments are a couple of sentences, in which one or more statements or arguments are expressed. All unique arguments get a corresponding code, for instance: "Stadium too expensive" or "Old stadium aesthetic good". This is a form of open coding, as the code are not created beforehand, but made at the first moment it is used (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021, p. 232). This means that some codes are only used once or twice, as some arguments are not shared broadly or relevant for many, also some comments receive more than one code, as in these comments more than one argument of element are treated.

All the codes are categorised in code groups, in contrast to the codes itself, the code groups were made beforehand. These groups bundle together all codes that shade the same sentiment, for instance "against new stadium" or "Stadium as revenue source". Although most code groups were made beforehand, a couple of code groups were made afterwards. Every code has been allocated to at least one code group, some codes were allocated to two or more code groups.

As the specific codes were made in an organic way, by free coding, the codes needed some tidying up after the coding process. Some codes were merged, sometimes because of two codes representing an almost identical argument, other times because of certain codes being too specific and

therefore only used once or twice, which made them more usable when merged into a broader code. At the same time, a couple of codes were divided, as some arguments were made both ways. For instance the code “call for economic realism” has been made by supporters and opponents of the new stadium. To be able to make a statement about a certain argument the code should indicate how the project is viewed by the user, otherwise the argument could be interpreted completely the wrong way.

4.2.3 Selection of articles

As stated in the previous paragraph, four articles have been chosen to analyse. For the selection of cases in casestudy, Verschuren & Doorewaard mention three possible strategies for collecting content (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2021): Minimal variation, maximal variation or snowball sampling. In regards of this research, within the frame of FR12, maximal variation has been chosen as the most desirable. The four articles are bound to cover as much factors of the development plans as possible, varying through different stages of the project, with different tones regarding the relocation process.

During the selection process, only articles with more than 500 comments were chosen. Not only because more comments lead to more data, the amount of comments an article receives also indicate the degree in which the article is contentious. If an article receives a low amount of comments, it indicates that not a lot of Feyenoord fans find the article noteworthy enough to comment to it, while articles that receive a lot of comments have evidently evoked more people to react to the article. Therefore these articles are more suitable for analysis, as they provide more insights into how the argumentation takes place among Feyenoord fans.

Eventually the four articles in the table following this paragraph made the cut. The four articles are bound to represent a different spectrum of the process in which the relocation plans were presented. In the first article, the developments regarding Feyenoord City take a leap forward, as the business case has been approved by Feyenoord. While in the fourth article the plans were cancelled by the Feyenoord Board. In the second article, an economics professor criticises the Feyenoord City plans. While in the third article, Goldman Sachs and ING announce their support and funding to the project.

A full translation of the articles is available in the appendix.

	Name	Date	Quotations	Summary of the Article
1.	Feyenoord agrees with business case Feyenoord City	28/04/2021	207	Details of the business case presented publicly. Together with the announcement that Feyenoord has approved the business case.
2.	Feyenoord City reacts to report Tsjalle van den Burg	19/06/2018	108	Van den Burg, economics professor at the University of Twente, has written a paper containing critique on Feyenoord City. Feyenoord has reacted with counterarguments
3.	Goldman Sachs and ING partake in Feyenoord City	23/03/2018	100	Goldman Sachs and ING will take care of a significant part of the funding for the project
4.	What is your opinion about the cancellation of Feyenoord City?	06/11/2021	234	Plans for Feyenoord City have been cancelled by Feyenoord’s board. FR12 has conducted a poll in which respondents could vote whether this was a good idea. 35,4% was satisfied with the news, 64,6% dissatisfied

5. Results

In this chapter, the results of the content analysis will be presented. A clear overview of the arguments, and how these arguments relate to each other will be outlined. First a general picture regarding the state of the discourse will be painted, further in this chapter possible interesting findings will be highlighted.

5.1 Distribution of arguments

The analysis showed no striking gap in the distribution of opponents and proponents of the Feyenoord City plans. Almost an equal amount of quotations could be identified as positive regarding the new stadium, as negative regarding the new stadium (315 vs. 314 quotations). Of course, as this content analysis is qualitative by nature, and not every comment posted was suitable for coding, numbers cannot not paint the whole picture. But, in any case, this analysis showed no indication that one group forms a big majority of Feyenoord fans.

However, in one article visitors of the forum were asked via a poll if they were satisfied or unsatisfied about the news regarding Feyenoord cancelling the Feyenoord City plans (Appendix 4). Resulting in 35,44% voting for ‘satisfied’, and 64,56% voting for ‘dissatisfied’⁵. Which is in line with claims made by people in favour of the new stadium, stating that they form a silent majority. The claims of this group, about being the silent majority, can be placed in a broader context in which proponents and opponents question the competence and intentions of the opposing group. Which will be further elaborated later on in this chapter.

Beside the comments that could easily be categorized as opponent or proponent, a lot of comments were rather indecisive, or nuanced. Commenters stated that they were not against the fact that Feyenoord is going to relocate to a new stadium someday, however they do have issues with the Feyenoord City plans, or specific elements of the plans, which will also be further elaborated later on in this chapter.

Other users try to add nuance to the discourse, stating that eventually Feyenoord is the more important than any stadium could possibly be. Or admitted that they have changed their position over time, for instance ‘Weef’ stated:

“This poll does not have a lot of dimensions. I was not necessarily against the Feyenoord City plans, but I think it is good that the plans are cancelled, now the buildings costs are extraordinary high” (Appendix 4)

⁵ To be able to see the results of the poll, I had to vote myself. In order to not affect the results I did vote on two different occasions, so that each option received one vote.

5.2 Arguments against Feyenoord City

Opponents of Feyenoord City have mentioned various arguments on why the move would be undesirable, ranging from very specific issues mentioned in the plans or business case to fundamental issues regarding club identity. However, comments often do not stick to one dimension of argumentation. Therefore, some subsection will overlap partly.

5.2.1 Economics

Arguments regarding the economical aspect were mentioned the most by the group of opponents. These arguments can be divided into two categories: The new stadium is not worth it, or the stadium will result in economic problems. The fundamental difference between these two type of arguments is the acknowledgement of economic benefits of the stadium, but still opting for an alternative, versus the belief that the stadium plans are altogether a bad idea.

Within the first category of argumentation, regarding Feyenoord City not worth the effort, often mentioned is the 7.5 million euro extra annual revenue Feyenoord is expected to receive once it would move into the new stadium (Appendix 1). People stated that they expected a larger sum of money, and that that amount of extra revenue will not help Feyenoord significantly in ‘closing the gap’ with rivals Ajax and PSV. To reinforce the argument, they often refer to the amount of money clubs can make by selling players on the transfer market, or to the proposed plans of the Champions League, in which clubs receive a much larger sum of money. To put it in the words of user ‘SebasFR12’:

“(...) Ajax participates one time in the Champions League and receives a multitude of that 7.5 million. Isn't it a better idea to implement a proper strategy? A clear tactical base, starting in the youth academy, so you will be able to sell players for a lot of money. Besides, we have proved to be able to win the league in de Kuip” (Appendix 1)

As the comment of SebasFR12 shows, the fact that Feyenoord will profit from the move is acknowledged. However by referring to other ways for Feyenoord to be able to receive revenue and by arguing that the current stadium is suitable for winning titles, the fact that the relocation is still not desirable is implied, without mentioning what makes the current stadium worth preserving. Which is a reoccurring phenomenon in the comments of opponents, discourse is mainly focusses on the downsides of relocation, while the benefits for staying in the current stadium are hardly explicitly mentioned.

The other category of argumentation is the group of users not believing Feyenoord City will be beneficial to the club. Arguments are ranging from a fear that the project will fail enormously, to arguments involving critique and a general mistrust of the presented plans. Fearing that in reality the revenue would disappear due to higher costs or lower income than expected. As said by user “Dik”:

“If you want to overthrow the club, you should build a new stadium. How do you ever earn back an investment of 350 million euro?! We should keep our feet on the ground. Fraudulent building activities are not the best for Feyenoord.” (Appendix 2)

Lastly, the capacity of the new stadium is another concern brought up by Feyenoord fans. A proposed capacity of 63.000 is considered by many as too large, resulting in a lot of empty seats during matches. Which has negative impacts on the atmosphere, but fans are also afraid that the calculated revenue will also be lower because of it. This aspect can therefore be categorized as an economic argument, as well as an argument regarding a changing atmosphere.

5.2.2 Stadium Gentrification

Besides the question whether Feyenoord City's business case is viable, a lot of concerns regarding certain aspects of the new stadium are mentioned. A lot of these comments refer to concrete problems, to which I have attributed the umbrella term 'Stadium Gentrification'. As a lot of similarities between the concerns described by Feyenoord Fans regarding the changing dynamics in the new stadium, and the processes in gentrifying neighbourhoods can be drawn.

Fans have mentioned concerns regarding higher ticket prices, a different seating plan, and a changing (inferior) atmosphere as concerns. Which is a process that works both ways; Feyenoord is planning to have a higher ratio of business seats, on top of that, in some plans the option to move the hardcore to another part of the stadium has been included. Which will influence the atmosphere negatively, but can be seen as a calculated policy result, as it is Feyenoord's intention to attract different stadium visitors, or to alter the seating plan and therefore the dynamics in the stadium.

However other processes, such as the ticket prices increasing, will also lead to a changing atmosphere, not directly intended. As not everyone is still able to afford a ticket, these seats will remain empty, or be filled with new fans, possibly from a different socio-economic background. This replacement of fans will, unintendedly, change the dynamics inside the stadium. A process similar to changing demographics in gentrifying neighbourhoods, caused by higher rents due to higher property values. "Gozerkerel" argues:

"If this plan succeeds, which I highly doubt, you'll become like Arsenal: An historical old stadium which has been demolished for a new one, because more money should be attracted so the fans are not important anymore (we most probably won't get a supporters home either), if money can be generated all is well."

Our club won't have any unique aspects anymore, yes you have a shiny new stadium, but for that new stadium you've sold your soul and have thrown your whole identity through the window. You will get a show public, which won't even have that much result financially as you've hoped, the only thing you still have is the name Feyenoord, apart from that nothing sets the club apart anymore. (Appendix

1)

5.2.3 Renovation of Stadion Feijenoord

Renovation of the current stadium is more or less the only alternative brought up by opponents of Feyenoord City. Almost no one argues that nothing should be done about the current stadium. Within the fan-community of Feyenoord, a consensus is reached about whether the current situation needs improvement.

Stadion Feijenoord is deemed by Feyenoord fans of great importance for the club identity. Feyenoord is considered by its fans as a 'club of the people'. However, as mentioned earlier in this

chapter, the specific components of the current stadium that are crucial for the club identity are hardly mentioned by visitors of the FR12 forum. The positive sentiments regarding Stadion Feijenoord cannot be assigned to a selection of tangible features the stadium has, it manifests itself in more broader terms as ambiance, nostalgia or the feeling of being home. On top of that, as the FR12 forum is a place Feyenoord fans come together, one can assume that a substantial amount of users visit the stadium regularly. Therefore the positive aspects of the stadium are not always specified, as these aspects are commonly acknowledged by the Feyenoord fans, and do not need further elaboration on a fan-forum.

The only structural arguments being made are that a modern stadium would not fit the identity of Feyenoord as a club of the people, and that the current stadium is braided into the identity of Feyenoord. The steel construction of Stadion Feijenoord connects well to the reputation Feyenoord has as being the club of (dock)workers. As the foreseen revenue of Feyenoord City is not seen as a very significant amount of money, identity remains a very relevant condition for some. In quite an extensive plea “010Pattaya” tried to put this sentiment into words:

“(…) The discussion is about “tradition versus renewal”. We are a traditional people’s club, playing in a stadium that has received praise worldwide. Even something as “Kuip-fear” exists. The stadium and fans are that impressive. Have you ever heard about “Meer⁶-fear”? Ever heard an Englishmen give praise to the PSV stadium?

Almost no fans that have seen Feyenoord play on different home turf. Generations have grown up in de Kuip. Hundreds of thousands of fans have fallen in love with our club in this stadium. It whirls, it shakes, it trembles. Many ‘outsiders’ desire new, big and modern. But Rotterdammers want to keep tradition. Is that so bad?(…)

Renovate de Kuip, modernised, skyboxes, toilets that smell like lavender, whatever the complaints are; but please keep the tradition. And I swear to you, every football fan in the Netherlands and Europe will be extremely jealous when they drive every other weekend to their hypermodern spaceship stadium. Does a stadium make you rich? I do not think so, they do that on the pitch and in the offices of directors and player agents.” (Appendix 4)

On top of the preference for renovation, some fans stated that renovation has not ever been considered in a good manner. Which connect to a broader sentiment in which opponents do not feel taken seriously, by board members and by people in favour of the new stadium. These dynamics will be further elaborated later on in this chapter.

5.3 Arguments in favour of Feyenoord City

Users in favour of a relocation to the new stadium used mostly economical argumentation in their comments. Besides financial benefits, aspects as aesthetics, reputation were also mentioned. Not all argumentation referred back only to the proposed Feyenoord City plans, a lot of discourse also regarded the (economical) shortcomings of the current stadium.

⁶ De Meer refers to the previous stadium of Ajax, that closed in 1996.

5.3.1 Benefits of Feyenoord City

In the majority of the comments in favour of relocation, the argumentation was mainly built around economic argumentation, or a call for ‘economical realism’. The only way for Feyenoord to succeed in modern days is by building a new stadium. The connection between economic success and sportive success is sometimes stated explicitly, but most often implied. For instance by “Thomasboy123”:

“Let me say first of all that I love de Kuip like it is now. But something has to change in order to raise our players budget, in order to grow as a club. You have to grow continuously as a club, instead of lingering in the past because de Kuip is so nostalgic. Of course de Kuip is the most beautiful stadium, but why can the new stadium not be even more beautiful? (...) The stadium will be built, if we want it or not. (Appendix 3)

The Aesthetic value of the Feyenoord City plans were also referenced frequently by proponents of the plans. Sometimes in combination with remarks about a big, impressive stadium being good for Feyenoord’s reputation as a top team. ‘Peperbus12’ mentioned the economic opportunities that a stadium with such a reputation could give”

“The new stadium will become a crowd-puller, you’ll see, everyone want to visit the stadium. Just like in Barcelona, stadium tours for 20 euro per person, count your profits, or am I thinking the wrong way now?” (Appendix 3)

5.3.2 Shortcomings of Stadion Feijenoord

What the comment of ‘Thomasboy123’ also entails is an acknowledgement of the positive feelings towards the current stadium. This acknowledgement is made often by proponents of the stadium, before stating their concerns with Stadion Feijenoord. Or before arguing on why Feyenoord City should be pursued. These remarks are probably often made to strengthen their persuasive power, by finding common ground on which everyone can agree on, opponents will be more likely to listen to the arguments presented by the advocates for Feyenoord City.

Despite the sentimental appreciation, many users in favour of the relocation have concerns regarding Stadion Feijenoord. Renovation is often considered as a bygone station, because of the lack of maintenance in the last 30 years, renovation is considered as too expensive or not beneficial in the long term.

Especially in the 4th article, in which the cancelation of the plans is discussed, the fact that Feyenoord will keep playing in the current stadium is seen as disastrous by some people. This group does not only see the new stadium as an economic opportunity that should be utilised, but as a dire necessity because the current stadium will stand in de way of club development. In reaction to a comment of someone satisfied with the cancellation of Feyenoord City, ‘DrF’ responded cynically:

“This is the definite deathblow for Feyenoord. We will never catch up anymore. But you stay happy about being able to go ahead in de Kuip. Eventually we will fight every year for the fourth, fifth or sixth place in the league. But it doesn’t matter. If we can just stay in de Kuip” (Appendix 4)

On top of that, article 4 was posted short after the collapse of a stand in the Goffertstadion in Nijmegen (RTL Nieuws, 2021). Which made some people question the structural integrity of Stadion Feijenoord, and therefore the safety of the stadium. Which then could be utilised as an argument in

favour of relocation. Other shortcomings mentioned are lack of consumption stands, long rows for the toilets, cramped seating and a lack of business seats.

A striking pattern in the argumentation of most proponents of Feyenoord City is the direct correlation between the shortcomings of Stadion Feijenoord, and the benefits of Feyenoord City. Within the group in favour of Feyenoord City, there seems to be a common acknowledgment of the sentimental value of Stadion Feijenoord. There also seems to be a common acknowledgement about Stadion Feijenoord being an burden for Feyenoord's economic opportunities, and the economic benefits that the new stadium would create.

5.4 General Discourse

5.4.1 Discourse regarding the process

Across the whole spectrum, a general disapproval of the matter of goings can be found. The code ‘Negatief gang van zaken’ (Negative matter of goings), is the most used code throughout the whole analysis. Especially in article one and four, a lot of comments were critical about the process. In the first place about the process taking ages, and the lack of communication. Later, after the cancellation many comments accused the stakeholders of incompetence, as the new stadium could have already been built, or could have been renovated, but instead both options are not possible in the near future anymore. User “Zeeland” tried to summarize this disapproval:

“Such a shame that this just now became relevant, they should have pushed this plan ten years ago, but this is typical for Feyenoord, no decisions only muddling through. The municipality has also failed, in other cities, also in foreign countries, they make up a plan, where all stakeholders can partake constructively. But not in Rotterdam. We missed our chance, and now have to stay in this old mess because renovation will cost you top price (...)” (Appendix 4)

Besides the general disapproval of the matter of goings, a lot of distrust in the Feyenoord board, and other persons responsible for this relocation process is noted. Especially mistrusted is Goldman Sachs, one of the main investors of Feyenoord City. However, this can be over highlighted due to the fact that one of the articles focussed mainly on their participation in Feyenoord City.

A lot of commenters question the intentions of people behind Feyenoord City. In their eyes, Feyenoord City is not transparent enough. This lack of transparency makes some people question whether the plans for Feyenoord City are good for Feyenoord, or just lucrative for the stakeholders involved, or to put it in the words of “SVR”:

“All these parties join in because they can benefit from it. The whole world will be better off because of Feyenoord City, and Feyenoord will be the last to get a piece of the pie. If there isn’t any pie left anymore, Feyenoord (and the fans) will be worse off” (Appendix 2)

5.4.2 Discourse regarding opposing opinions

Besides argumentation on whether the relocation in itself is a good idea, a remarkable amount of discourse focusses on the interplay between opponents and proponents. Opponents of Feyenoord City do not always feel taken seriously. The fact that they, generally speaking, give more value to sentimental elements of a stadium, makes their arguments easy to put away as just emotions.

On the other hand, the proponents of Feyenoord City put more importance into the economic benefits of Feyenoord City, therefore they consider themselves often as more rational. Or state that opponents of Feyenoord City are not realistic enough, too dumb or too sentimental. As “Hasil” argues:

“A part of the fans stay wondrous people. And are as selective as one can be. They are not consistent, and everything is steered by emotion. Arguments and facts are apparently not important anymore. Years and years they yell that the club should be more professional in every dimension. (...) But whether the board want to keep this professionalisation going by, rightfully, building a new stadium they scream blue murder, because we should keep on playing in a stadium that is not going to earn us a single penny (...)” (Appendix 2)

6. Discussion

In this chapter, the sub-questions formulated for this research project will be discussed and answered. Each section in this chapter will be dedicated to one of the sub-questions. This research was split up using the following sub-questions, and will be discussed via the respective order:

1. How are the plans for the new stadium being viewed, and shaped, in the fan community?
2. To what extent does the opposition in Feyenoord's case express itself differently than in other European cases?
3. To what extent can the colonization of lifeworld explain found differences?

6.1 Sub-question 1: Discourse in the fan community

The Feyenoord fan community is quite divided regarding the Feyenoord City plans. As this research has no quantitative nature, no definite statements can be made about the exact distribution of opponents versus proponents. However, the group in favour of the Feyenoord City project seems to be in a majority. A lot of discourse regarding 'the opposing group' can be found, claiming the other group does not know what is best for Feyenoord. People in favour of the plan are stating they are the only ones looking at the plans rationally, while opponents of the plan feel they are not taken seriously because they care about more aspects than just money.

A common understanding throughout the whole Feyenoord fan community on certain aspects can be established. Throughout the whole spectrum of opinions, the positive aspects of the current stadium are commonly acknowledged, as well as the shortcomings of the stadium. There is also a common understanding of the problems Feyenoord face as a club, and the importance of money for achieving on-field success. No one stated that they would prefer Feyenoord to become less successful, if that means they can stay in their current stadium. Besides the common acknowledgements about Stadion Feijenoord, dissatisfaction about the process has been expressed throughout the entire spectrum of argumentation. Together with a lot of factual discussion, for instance regarding the proposed ticket-prices or seating plan. Which suggest a stronger information supply from Feyenoord and Feyenoord City, could have prevented a part of the discussions held, and therefore a part of the disputes within the fan community.

Of course, there are a lot of aspects on which the fan community was not able to reach consensus. Not everyone believes that Feyenoord City will be beneficial for the club financially, as not everyone is sure if the investment can be recuperated. The Feyenoord fans were also not able to reach an agreement on what impact the new stadium will have on club identity, ambiance and stadium experience.

However, most people do believe that Feyenoord will benefit financially of the move to a new stadium, at least a part of the opposing group does mention the fact that Feyenoord will benefit financially from the move, however they question the degree to which the financial gain is significant. Further, despite not being able to reach a consensus on the degree in which 'sentimental' values will be impacted by the move, a majority of Feyenoord fans do believe that the new stadium will not have the same ambiance and feeling, and that a part of Feyenoord's identity will be lost due to the move. This is also acknowledged by at least a part of the fans in favour of Feyenoord City.

The recognition mentioned in the paragraph above leads to the main consideration dividing the Feyenoord fan community: The trade-off between financial gain for Feyenoord, and the decrease of 'sentimental' aspects of a stadium visit for Feyenoord fans. Leaving the question which amount of

financial gain justifies the decrease of values as identity, ambiance, tradition and experiences inside the stadium?

6.2 Sub-question 2: Feyenoord City regarding other cases

The articles treated in the literature review all contribute to understanding Feyenoord's case better, and to be able to place the case in a broader context of the significance of stadia in society and in planning.

6.2.1 General picture

Bale's paper, in connection with the paper of Church and Penny discussing the territorialisation of sports stadia and the existence of 'post-fandom', does offer interesting similarities with Feyenoord's case (Bale, 1993; Church & Penny, 2013). Bale describes a growing segregation, on the basis of various factors, between people in stadia (Bale, 1993, p. 127). Which connects to the research of Church & Penny, who observe a 'post-fandom' in which the stadium is not accessible anymore for every fan, and new spaces emerge where fans gather to share experiences (Church & Penny, 2013, p. 820).

One could argue that FR12.nl is one of these spaces, the site offers a forum page during each match in which people can discuss the game. More broader topics can also be discussed, connection to football and Feyenoord, such as the stadium case, but also trivial topics as the weather or Dutch politics. Which connects to Guschwan's paper regarding the role Italian stadia have in the public sphere, mentions how a stadium can be a space for meeting people, and discussing social and political issues (Guschwan, 2014, p. 895).

However, I would argue that FR12 is not used as an alternative for the stadium, as many users state that they visit Stadion Feijenoord regularly, and stadium experience for Feyenoord fans is seen as a common understanding. For some people, FR12 is a viable alternative to visiting the stadium, but not mutually exclusive to each other.

The fear that the new stadium will be more territorialized and exclusive is mentioned often in the analysed forum pages. Higher ticket prices, more business visitors, and less desirable seating placement for the most passionate fans, factors I have put under the umbrella-term Stadium-Gentrification, are stated as concrete issues people have with the Feyenoord City plans.

Van Dam (2000) has provided an oversight in planning choices made in the Netherlands regarding stadia in the 20th century. The general picture van Dam painted was that most stadia were that outdated, and therefore not much resistance was noted from fan communities against relocation of redevelopment plans. A common understanding that a new stadium was necessary for the club was present, and in some instances, the new stadium was not considered as a downturn in ambiance by the fan groups, as the old stadia had athletics tracks, or other elements forming a barricade between the stands and the field (van Dam, 2000, p. 140).

Feyenoord's case is not comparable with the picture painted by van Dam for two reasons: First, and most importantly, there is no agreement within the fan community that relocation will be beneficial, let alone desirable or necessary. Second, Stadion Feijenoord was a part of the relocation and renovation wave described by van Dam. As the stadium has been renovated in 1996. The case regarding Stadion Feijenoord can therefore not be described as late compared to the wave described by van Dam, but possibly as the start of a new wave of stadium relocation/renovation cases in the Netherlands.

6.2.2 Specific Cases

Manchester City & West Ham

Irving has researched the impact that the stadium relocation has had on the fans of English clubs Manchester City and West Ham United. In both cases the same changes have been experienced; decline in atmosphere, higher ticket prices and changing fan demographics. However, the degree in which the move is seen as negative differs vastly between the two cases. Irving brings the difference in sportive success the clubs have experienced since the relocation as the main reason. Manchester City fans have had the opportunity to create new valuable memories in the new stadium, replacing nostalgia. Which is not the case for West Ham supporters, since their move was more recent, and has not resulted in more notable success yet (Irving, 2019, p. 753).

Feyenoord fans mentioned the changes experienced by West Ham and City fans, as fears regarding the possible relocation. The analysis showed that the fact whether, to which degree the relocation would result in a more success, and which trade-off between sentiment and success is desirable are the factors debated the most within the FR12 community. The difference between the cases of Manchester City and West Ham therefore affirms the existence of this trade-off, as eventually club-success is considered most important by a majority of the fans.

Atletico Madrid

Another case that forms a lot of commonalities with Feyenoord is Junghagen's case study on Atletico Madrid, which he conducted before Atletico's move to their new Wanda Metropolitano stadium. Atletico Madrid is quite a similar club to Feyenoord in terms of club identity, reputation and connection with their stadium. Both clubs have a working class identity, with fierce, loyal fanbases that have received a lot of praise by opponents (Junghagen, 2017, p. 15). Both are considered a top-club in their respective country, but considerably less successful than their rivaling top-clubs, and contrast themselves with the other big clubs in the country (Junghagen, 2017, p. 19).

Atletico's previous stadium, Estadio Vicente Calderón, was considered as an important identity carrier of the club. The stadium architecture, and the atmosphere created in the stadium was something the fans took great pride in, opponents of the club also stated that winning at Vicente Calderón was considered as extra difficult because of it (Junghagen, 2017, p. 16). Which is something also described by Feyenoord fans regarding Stadion Feijenoord, FR12 users mentioned a 'Kuip-fear' among opponents. Feyenoord fans stated the atmosphere, and architectural components of Stadion Feijenoord contribute heavily to the identity of Feyenoord. And that Feyenoord would be less distinctive from other (rival) clubs if it would play in a more generic stadium.

In both cases the 'gentrification' of the stadium is referenced as one of the biggest concerns by fans. Atletico fans described this process as the 'Americanisation' of their stadium, becoming more commercialised and more focussed on tourist, instead of their own fan base. On FR12, tourism is not often mentioned explicitly as a threat for their new stadium. However the changing demographics of stadium visitors as a result of this stadium gentrification, which would include more tourist visitors, is mentioned a lot by Feyenoord Fans.

Besides the commonalities, there are also differences between the two cases, which also help explain the different ferocity of resistance between both cases. Atletico fans stated a lot more trust in the board of their club, although they were not happy with the relocation plans, these plans were filed by the same people that have led Atletico to a very successful last decade (Junghagen, 2017, p. 21). Despite one league title and a handful of domestic cups, Feyenoord fans are not satisfied with the performances of the first team the last seasons, on top of the administrative disarray Feyenoord has

experienced in recent years. Whilst Atletico fans could presume that their board would make a wise decision, Feyenoord fans view decisions made by the club with a lot more suspicion.

The trade-off between sentiments and success still exists for Atletico fans, however the dilemma is quite clear, as there is a common belief that the decisions made by their board are rational and will benefit the club eventually. Whilst Feyenoord fans are much more divided in the degree to which the board decision is at all rational, making the trade-off a lot more complicated.

Everton

David Kennedy's case study on Everton's possible move to a stadium in Kirkby offers resemblance with Feyenoord in a different way. Both relocation plans created a large division in the fan community, in both cases none of the 'sides' had a convincing majority, and surveys conducted by the clubs were mistrusted by a part of the fans (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 342).

The cases deliver a great resemblance in how the plans are discussed between fans. Kennedy argued that the debate could be simplified to 'tradition versus rationality' (D. Kennedy, 2012, p. 344). Supporters of the relocation, in both cases are claiming that they are the only ones looking 'realistically' to the matter. The other group is too drawn in sentiments to look at the case in a rational way.

However, in both cases the opponents of relocation, embracing 'tradition', often switched to economic imperatives when trying to convince a supporter of the relocation. Tradition and identity are aspects deemed as very important by both fan groups, however when it comes to persuasion force, the discourse is taken over by economic imperatives.

6.3 Sub-question 3: Application of Habermas

In this section, the findings of the content analysis and the literature review will be viewed through the lens of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, with special focus on his theory regarding the Colonisation of the Lifeworld.

6.3.1 Lifeworld

The analysis provides strong indicators of the role of Stadion Feijenoord in the Lifeworld of a Feyenoord fan. Everyone seems to agree on what makes Stadion Feijenoord great, and what the club Feyenoord means to them. As there is little to no discourse about what a stadium experience should entail, how it is experienced currently or what the identity of Feyenoord explicitly means, but these factors are referenced to when discussing the relocation plans.

Therefore, I would argue that these factors are deemed as a common understanding. Habermas described the process of matching each other's lifeworld through communicative action, is something often not done in an explicit way. As communication often happens in the most efficient way possible, and many factors of Lifeworld are nestled into a community (Allen & Mendieta, 2019, p. 43). The only factor of Stadion Feijenoord actively discussed are the facility shortcomings in the stadium, toilets and consumption stands for instance.

There seems to be a common acknowledgement of the significance Stadion Feijenoord has on club identity, and how great the atmosphere is deemed. However no consensus is reached about the degree in which Stadion Feijenoord is significant for these factors. Which leaves the question; do the Feyenoord fans make Stadion Feijenoord a great place, or does the stadium make Feyenoord great fans?

Lastly, a consensus on the fact that every fan of Feyenoord wants the club to be as successful as possible is reached. No comments stated explicitly that the results did not count, as long as the stadium is preserved. On top of that, there is also common agreement on the link between economic success, and sportive success. Therefore, a common agreement on the way economic interest are imbedded in the lifeworld, is also reached.

6.3.2 System

This case forms a clear example of how the market economy system colonizes the lifeworld. The main point of discussion between fans entails the trade-off between economic benefits, and 'sentimental' values such as atmosphere, identity and nostalgia. As there is a consensus about Stadion Feijenoord being highly rated among fans, and facilities inside the stadium needing an upgrade or renovation, without economic incentive, renovating the current stadium would make the most sense.

Because of the fact that modern football clubs require economic power in order to succeed, fans are forced to take economic factors into account. And are forced to use economic language when trying to convince other people, even if financial imperatives are not the primary motivation for someone to partake in the debate. Via (digital) speech acts, actors contribute to the growth mechanism of material reproduction.

The debate between opponents and proponents of Feyenoord City can be categorized into two dimensions. The first being the factual dimension: To which degree will ticket prices go up? How big of an impact would the relocation make on the budget of Feyenoord? Will the relocation be financially beneficial for Feyenoord at all? These are questions that eventually can be answered with yes, no or a number.

In contrast to the second dimension of questions, which contain more fundamental questions: To which degree will the relocation affect club identity? To which degree will the relocation affect stadium atmosphere? Is more income for the club worth a lesser stadium experience? These questions are normative of nature, and therefore of great relevance in order to understand the colonisation of the Lifeworld in this case.

All discourse analysed on FR12 is, for at least a great share, eventually built around the notion of economic rationality. Which also becomes clear when analysing beyond the used argumentation, namely the discourse about the debate itself. Fans in favour of the relocation claim they are the only realistic group, because they choose economics above sentiments.

At the same time, opponents of the relocation do not stay away from economic language use, and try to convince the other group of the economic downsides the relocation would have, or state that the economic benefits are insignificant and therefore not worth the trouble. Factors such as atmosphere and identity are not presented as the main argument, but used only to add extra persuasive power to the argumentation. This adaptation of economic language use in communication, in order to stay within the frame of economic rationality, is also described by David Kennedy in his research using Habermas to study language use by Everton fans regarding their possible stadium move (P. Kennedy, 2017, p. 344).

I would argue however, that an important factor in this could be confirmation bias. Someone who values the sentimental aspects of Stadion Feijenoord highly, is more interested in obtaining information about the possible economic sensitivities the project has. While someone who finds the idea of Feyenoord in a modern stadium exciting is more interested in information regarding the possible financial benefits the project has.

On top of that, talks about the gentrification of the stadium indicates a consciousness of the system colonizing the lifeworld. The commercialisation of football is observed and experienced, and reviewed by many as something undesirable. Yet, it is seen as a process which is hard to stop, despite the resistance. Which connects to Fairclough's interpretation of Lifeworld Colonisation, stating that the process is often perceived as something exogenous, such as the weather (Fairclough, 1991, pp. 554, 555).

6.3.3 Application to Feyenoord City

As argued in the previous paragraphs, the resistance against the Feyenoord City plans can be framed as a clash between system and lifeworld. But how does this colonisation process exactly manifest itself? Habermas states that, when steered by the subsystems money and power, rationality is not defined by the consequences it has on individuals, but on the degree an action creates money and power. Which results in the alienation of actions from its cultural meaning, as the systems define new rationality, which the cultural stock of knowledge is unable to explain (Ritzer & Smart, 2001, p. 209)

In this case: If in terms of money and power Feyenoord would benefit from a move to a new stadium, this would be considered the most rational and therefore the most desirable option. Overruling what the cultural stock of knowledge and social understandings would prescribe. Which would prescribe the exact opposite, as Stadion Feijenoord is valued highly among the Feyenoord Fans, and the stadium is an important identity carrier of the club.

However, Habermas also states that systems are unable to completely take over the lifeworld. Symbolic reproduction is therefore not completely irrelevant. The influence of systems is limited, depending on the power of the steering media, and the value given to the existing lifeworld (Fairclough, 1991, p. 555). Which explains why not everyone agrees on the trade-off between sentimental value and economic gain for Feyenoord, as no one lives one hundred percent according to system rationality, the exact given value to phenomena as culture, society, identity, money and power differs from person to person.

If we dive further into this trade-off, we see that in other cases analysed, the fans have eventually accepted the new stadium and therefore their changing lifeworld, when it proves to benefit the club's sportive success, for instance the cases for Manchester City and Atletico Madrid prove this. In the case of Feyenoord, there is no consensus on whether Feyenoord City would benefit the club in on-field success. Leaving space to question if a further colonization of their lifeworld is desirable, and therefore limits the power of the economic system.

A lot of comments are stating that the financial benefit Feyenoord receives in the new stadium does not outweigh the downsides of the move. Which suggest a certain 'turning-point', a certain amount of economic growth, and thus sportive success, that outweighs the downsides of the relocation. As there are almost no comments where someone explicitly states that they would prefer a less successful Feyenoord in exchange for staying in the current stadium. This 'turning-point', needs further explaining, as I believe it is crucial for clarifying exactly how system colonize lifeworld in this case.

Systems are mechanisms that slowly take over lifeworld, however, systems have limiting power. As human beings depend on humanity to give life value, systems need a certain amount of 'power' to colonize one's lifeworld. A human being does not simply wake up one day and decides to live every single part of its life to contribute to material reproduction solely, it needs a reason to believe that adapting a certain economic rationality is in its own interest.

This process in which a human being adapts economic rationality in a certain part of its life, expresses itself in this case in the question where the turning-point to which the trade-off between

sentimental values and economic benefits for Feyenoord exactly lays. The answer differs from person to person and depends on loads of presumptions. Personal bias plays a big part in this. If someone is impartial to factors as ambiance or identity. It would adapt economic arguments a lot sooner for instance.

Therefore, I would suggest everyone has a 'turning point', in which someone would accept systems taking over their lifeworld. If the economic benefits are large enough eventually everyone would accept the new stadium. Which also works the other way around, if the lifeworld would be corrupted in a drastic enough way, there would a turning point to which everyone would see the economic benefits as inferior.

For example, a hypothetical scenario: An economic analysis would suggest that it would be beneficial for Feyenoord to move to a stadium in Amsterdam. in this case I would believe that fans would not accept this, and would stop supporting the club and visiting matches. Even if the move would benefit Feyenoord enormously. As relocation to Amsterdam, the city of the biggest rival of Feyenoord, goes against almost every common understanding Feyenoord fans have of what entails the identity of Feyenoord and its fans.

For some people this point would have already been reached if Feyenoord would move to the new stadium. As there were some comments from people stating they would never visit the new stadium as they won't feel at home anymore in the new stadium. Of course, such a statement should be taken with a pinch of salt, saying that you will cancel your season-ticket is a lot easier than actually cancelling your ticket. But the fact that it is an option for some people proves the point that this turning-point also works the other way around.

The fact that in this case the economic system is unable to create a new rationality that is commonly acknowledged among the Feyenoord Fan community, leaves space for a group of Feyenoord fans to question the move. Therefore, as long as rational arguments can be made supporting conserving the current lifeworld. The systems will clash with the lifeworld.

Which means that I would argue that if the plans would be economically 'stronger', carrying a rationality to which everyone can agree, people would be far less resisting the system colonizing the lifeworld. Which has been proved by other cases, such as the Atletico Madrid case. However, the fact that the economic system is unable to create a new rationality in which the Feyenoord Fan community can reach a consensus about the desirability of the new stadium, does not imply that the plans were objectively bad in an economic sense. This could also be cause by other mechanisms generating doubts among Feyenoord's fan community. For instance an insufficient information provision by Feyenoord and Feyenoord City, or the general mistrust Feyenoord fans withhold against the Feyenoord board and other institutions.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter the main research question will be answered by the means of the three sub-questions formulated. On top of that, recommendations for further research and reflection on this research will be contemplated. The research question used to conduct this research is:

“What are the reasons for the widespread opposition against the building of the new Feyenoord stadium?”

The goal of the research was to determine which factors have led to the escalation of the protest from Feyenoord Fans against the stadium project Feyenoord City. In other, comparable, European stadium relocation cases, much resistance has also been observed in the first place, but it has never escalated to the heights in which Feyenoord’s protest escalated. By the means of Habermas’ theory Colonisation of the Lifeworld an explanation for this discrepancy will be attempted to find.

What immediately stood out in the analysis was the distribution of opponents and supporters of the new stadium, the fierceness of the protest would suggest that a large majority was opposed to the new stadium. This seems to not be the case, as the analysis indicated that supporters of the new stadium were probably in a slight majority. In any case nothing indicated a large majority of the fans being opponents of the new stadium. The analysis proved further a common acknowledgement among Feyenoord fans on the significance and valuation of Stadion Feijenoord for the club identity, together with a consensus that the current state of the building and the facilities are insufficient.

However, no consensus could be reached on whether the new stadium would be able to deliver on the appraised factors that the current stadium has, regarding stadium experience, identity and accessibility. On top of that, no consensus is reached on the trade-off between economic prosperity and ‘sentimental’ factors as identity, atmosphere and stadium experience. This trade-off seems to be the biggest source of conflict within the fan community, as the discussions regarding this trade-off are drawn from a more fundamental perspective.

This exact trade-off is also what seems to be setting Feyenoord’s case apart from the other cases treated in this research. Especially in the cases of Manchester City and Atletico Madrid, the same fears, doubts and negative aspects are mentioned by the fans of the respective clubs as Feyenoord’s fans have mentioned. However, in the cases of Manchester City and Atletico, the fans eventually came to terms with the relocation, as it would benefit the club financially and therefore in on-field success. This belief is not shared widespread in the Feyenoord fan community, as a significant part of the fan community does not believe a relocation would be in Feyenoord’s best interest. The difference between Feyenoord and the other cases, on how the relocation plans are perceived as rational by the fan community, can be designated as the most important factor that sets Feyenoord apart.

The observation that Feyenoord’s case differs from the other cases, regarding the degree in which the relocation plans are widely viewed as rational, is primarily an isolated fact. To be able to answer the main research question, one must also uncover why Feyenoord’s case differs on that factor. This is where Habermas’ theory Colonisation of the Lifeworld plays its part. This theoretical perspective has been able to explain the results of the content analysis, and the study of Feyenoord’s case in comparison to other cases, in a context of Lifeworld and Systems.

The main result from this theoretical analysis was the fact that in Feyenoord’s case, the economic arguments were not able to create a new rationality commonly acknowledged in Feyenoord’s fan community. As a significant part of Feyenoord’s fan group has not been not convinced that the new stadium would improve Feyenoord’s economic position. Or valued the economic gain for Feyenoord as low, making the financial imperative to move to a new stadium as negligible. Therefore arguments

regarding ‘sentimental’ values, in favour of maintaining the current lifeworld, could still sustain as rational. While in other cases, resistance against the new stadium would slowly fade away, as sooner or later all fans would adapt the new commercial rationality in which their club would be financially better off in the new stadium.

7.1.1 Reflections & Recommendations

The theoretical context of Habermas explains Feyenoord’s position as an exceptional case, it explains why the resistance has not faded away, which happened in other cases. This theoretical framework is however unable to explain the exact level of fierceness, resulting in for instance, the outburst of violence against Feyenoord’s board members. The question of why the ongoing resistance against the new stadium has escalated in such outburst of violence, I can only answer with suggestions, on which further research, outside the domain of geography and spatial planning, can be conducted.

On the basis of the content analysis I can deduce that Stadion Feijenoord is highly loved among Feyenoord fans, leaving the stadium would always evoke a lot of emotion, even if the move is widely considered as a rational decision. Especially considering the rise in violence around football matches and hooliganism in recent years, I believe other causes for the violence outburst can be found by sociological and, or psychological research. Therefore I would recommend further research on this Feyenoord case from that perspective.

Due to time related reasons, I have not been able to consider every aspect regarding stadium relocation issues. Although I believe I have been able to generate a sufficient overview of the considerations and argumentations of Feyenoord fans, a more extensive content analysis, or in depth interviews could always reveal more interesting perspectives, and would even more confirm the validity of this research. The interviews could for instance give more insight in how the ‘turning-point’, I described functions on a personal level.

I believe that Habermas’s theory the Colonisation of the Lifeworld can be used in many more comparable cases as a framework to better understand the trade-off between sentimental values and economic incentives. Also outside of the domain of Geography and Spatial Planning, this framework could be useful in my eyes. Sticking to the subject of football, there is for instance an ongoing resistance against the further commodification of the sport by various fan communities. Under the umbrella of ‘against modern football’ fans protest multiple developments within football that, in their belief, only benefits the biggest clubs and the people that have financial interest in football. For instance the proposed European Super League, the World Cup 2022 in Qatar, but also smaller developments such as reserve teams of big clubs partaking in the Keuken Kampioen Divisie (the second division in the Netherlands).

One case that connects well to my research, which I have not been able to include in this thesis, is the case of Wimbledon FC and Milton Keynes Dons FC. In 2003 Wimbledon FC, a London based football club, relocated to Milton Keynes, about 90 kilometres away and renamed itself to MK Dons. This move was considered very controversial, as it has vanished the complete identity of the club. The response of the Wimbledon fans, a vast majority did not go on to support MK Dons after the relocation, but decided to establish a new Football Club “Wimbledon AFC”. In the context of the trade-off between economic interest and ‘sentimental’ interest as identity and fan experience, an extensive analysis of this case, using the same theoretical framework could give useful insights into a case in which the lifeworld would be colonised in such a drastic way, that the new situation has been rejected by a vast majority of the people involved.

Lastly, in further research I would advise a more intensive effort into the role that the (absence of) diversity and representations plays inside the stadium. In the Netherlands, the stands of a stadium are still mainly filled with straight white men. The question of why there is little diversity in the football stands is, due to time related reason, a matter for another study, even though it is a very interesting and relevant subject.

I find it a great pity that I've not been able to include this dimension more into my research. As I firmly believe that it is no coincidence that there is little to no diversity inside the stadium, it is very important to pay attention to the fact that not everyone feels equally at home in the stadium. And that the reasons why current stadium visitors prefer to keep everything how it is, could also be the exact reason for another group of football fans, and therefore potential stadium visitors, to stay at home. Neglecting this aspect is therefore not only ethically questionable, but also academically hard to defend.

8. Figures

Figure 1: Sopakuwa, G. (2022, February 10). Stadion De Kuip [Photograph]. Architectenweb. <https://architectenweb.nl/nieuws/artikel.aspx?ID=51461#photoid=426153>

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10. Appendix

10.1 Appendix 1-4: Translation of analysed articles

Appendix 1: Feyenoord agrees with Business Case Feyenoord City

Date: 28/04/2021
Comments: 527
Citation: (FR12, 2021a)

Feyenoord's chances of moving to Feyenoord City have increased again, according to the 'Investment Memorandum New Stadium' published today. The Business Case shows that in the first season in the new stadium, the 2025/2026 season, Feyenoord will be able to raise over 25.4 million euro annually, which means around 7.5 million euro in extra revenue each year. The club believes that is a reason to agree to the Business Case.

The agreement brings the realisation of the new stadium one step closer. In the coming months, work will be carried out to get the two remaining conditions right. This concerns the financing and an agreement on the construction costs. It is expected that the financial close will take place in the fourth quarter of 2021, so that the construction work can start in 2022. The stadium is scheduled to open in 2025.

Feyenoord would like to move to Feyenoord City to generate more money to compete with Ajax and PSV. "It's all about ambition", says commercial director Joris van Dijk. The ambition of Feyenoord is to be successful in the future. As everyone knows, over fifty years ago we were the best in Europe and the best in the world. Those achievements have put Feyenoord on the map worldwide, and of course we all want to relive those times again. In 1937, De Kuip was a very big stadium for Feyenoord and in 2025 the new Kuip will also be a very big stadium.

"We are going to 63,000 seats. It is a powerful statement towards the future, that is how I see the new stadium. A boost for new growth and new golden times. Whichever way you look at it, Feyenoord has to grow," Van Dijk continues. The Business Case that Feyenoord agreed to today is seen by many as ambitious. General manager of Feyenoord Stadium Jan van Merwijk doesn't think so. We do not think so. We have of course had a good look at it, had it tested externally and it is widely regarded as a realistic business case.

Appendix 2: Feyenoord City reacts to report Tsjalle van der Burg

Date: 19/06/2018
Comments: 761
Citation: (FR12, 2018a)

Feyenoord City does not agree with the criticism made by Tsjalle van der Burg, associate professor of economics at the University of Twente. The project reacts to the criticism in the report in the following statement.

“We are very disappointed by the careless way in which our plans for Feyenoord City and the new stadium are criticized. In our opinion, this report cannot be considered a scientific publication. We conclude that the report:”

- Not based on current knowledge. Old and outdated information is frequently used, while a lot of information is simply available on our website,
- Contains many inaccuracies, omissions and falsehoods.
- It is full of assumptions, suggestions and speculations, which are not substantiated.

We would like to provide Mr. van der Burg with insight into the figures and research we have used. We would therefore like to invite Mr. van der Burg again to discuss a detailed response to his report. We have already invited Mr. van der Burg for a meeting on the 12th of March. During this meeting we wanted to discuss the various insights. This invitation was declined by Mr. van der Burg at the time. The board of ‘FSV de Feijenoorder’ has always had access to all documents.

The boards of directors of Stadion Feijenoord and Feyenoord are dealing carefully with the decision-making process for the new stadium. The road towards it is followed very precisely. At the moment, the process is dominated by drawing, calculating, testing and more testing. Specialists from OMA (architect), RoyalHaskoningDHV (structural engineer), IGG (construction costs), International Stadia Group (operations) and Goldman Sachs and ING (financing) are calculating the design, construction costs, operations and financing of the new stadium down to the last decimal point.

The starting point for Feyenoord City is that continuity and the future of Feyenoord come first and that a new stadium must contribute to more budget for the football club. In short, we are currently taking the following actions to ensure maximum care:

- An extensive market survey will be conducted among season ticket holders to once again verify whether the wishes of supporters correspond to the starting points of the business case.
- On behalf of the banks and Stadion Feijenoord, International Stadia Group is thoroughly reviewing the entire operation (turnover and costs) and testing it against market demand.
- The existing sketch design of the stadium is developed into a Preliminary Design. During the design process, the construction costs are monitored in order to align the budget with the operating calculations in the business case. In this way, everyone knows whether the high demands regarding, for example, safety, operability, football regulations and suitability for events are realistic and affordable.
- The financing of the new stadium will be worked out in more detail with the banks and other financial parties. Is the project fundable? And are there enough banks and investors willing to finance the project?
- There is intensive participation with residents, interested companies and supporters.

At the end of the summer, Feyenoord will decide on the next step in this dossier. This decision will be based on the following criteria:

- Does this stadium meet the club's wishes?
- Can the stadium be built within the financial framework?
- Can the business case be realized based on the proposed design
- Does this stadium make a sufficient contribution to a higher player's budget.

Appendix 3: Goldman Sachs and ING partake in Feyenoord City

Date: 23/03/2018
Comments: 690
Reference: (FR12, 2018b)

The construction of the new Feyenoord stadium has come another step closer. Today (23 February) Feyenoord City signed an agreement with Goldman Sachs and ING to raise a significant part of the necessary finance.

The cooperation of the two major banks increases the chances of getting the full financial picture. CFO Carl Berg and financial advisor Bastiaan van der Knaap of Feyenoord City call the agreement 'a milestone in the project'. The municipality of Rotterdam has been informed extensively about these developments. If everything goes according to plan, construction of the new stadium will start in 2020.

€17.5 million bridge loan

Goldman Sachs has provided a bridge loan of € 17.5 million for the further development of the stadium plans. The bank is also the 'leader' of a banking consortium that is to raise a loan of € 232 million. The aim is to receive the letters of intent for this in the summer. Whether the signatures will actually be put on the contract depends, among other things, on the findings of the stadium experts from International Stadia Group (ISG). In the coming months they will investigate the market potential for the stadium and further map out the revenue model.

ING, as financial advisor, is responsible for placing the cumulative preference shares with investors such as insurance companies, pension funds and so-called 'family offices'.

Support and trust strengthened

The active role played by Goldman Sachs and ING is important for strengthening the support base, involving major investors at home and abroad, and for building confidence in the success of the plans. The project also benefits from Goldman Sachs' broad international stadium expertise. The bank financed the new stadia of Tottenham Hotspur in London, the New York Yankees and the San Francisco 49ers, among others. In New York and London, Goldman Sachs has special 'stadium teams'. These 'stadium teams' have already paid several visits to Rotterdam and the proposed stadium location.

Total construction costs new stadium: € 422 million

The construction of the new Feyenoord stadium will cost around € 422 million. The investment will be financed by a bank loan of € 232 million, the issue of shares (€ 90 million) and € 100 million in equity.

Crucial for success of Feyenoord City

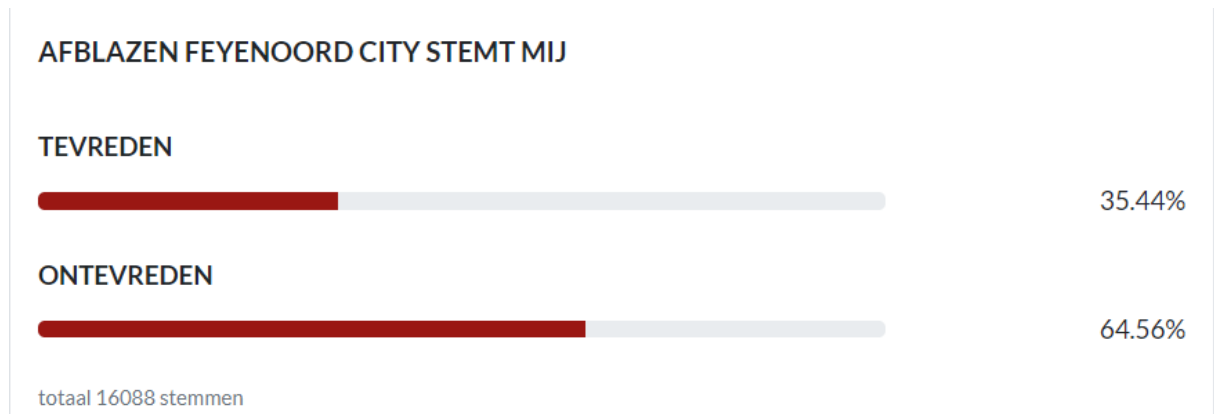
The arrival of the new stadium is crucial for the success of the overall Feyenoord City plan. This project also includes the transformation of De Kuip and the development of catering and leisure facilities, shops and houses and the related infrastructure in the area between the Coen Mouljijnweg and the Nieuwe Maas River.

Appendix 4: What is your opinion about the cancellation of Feyenoord City? (Poll)

Date: 06/11/2021
Comments: 1109
Reference: (FR12, 2021b)

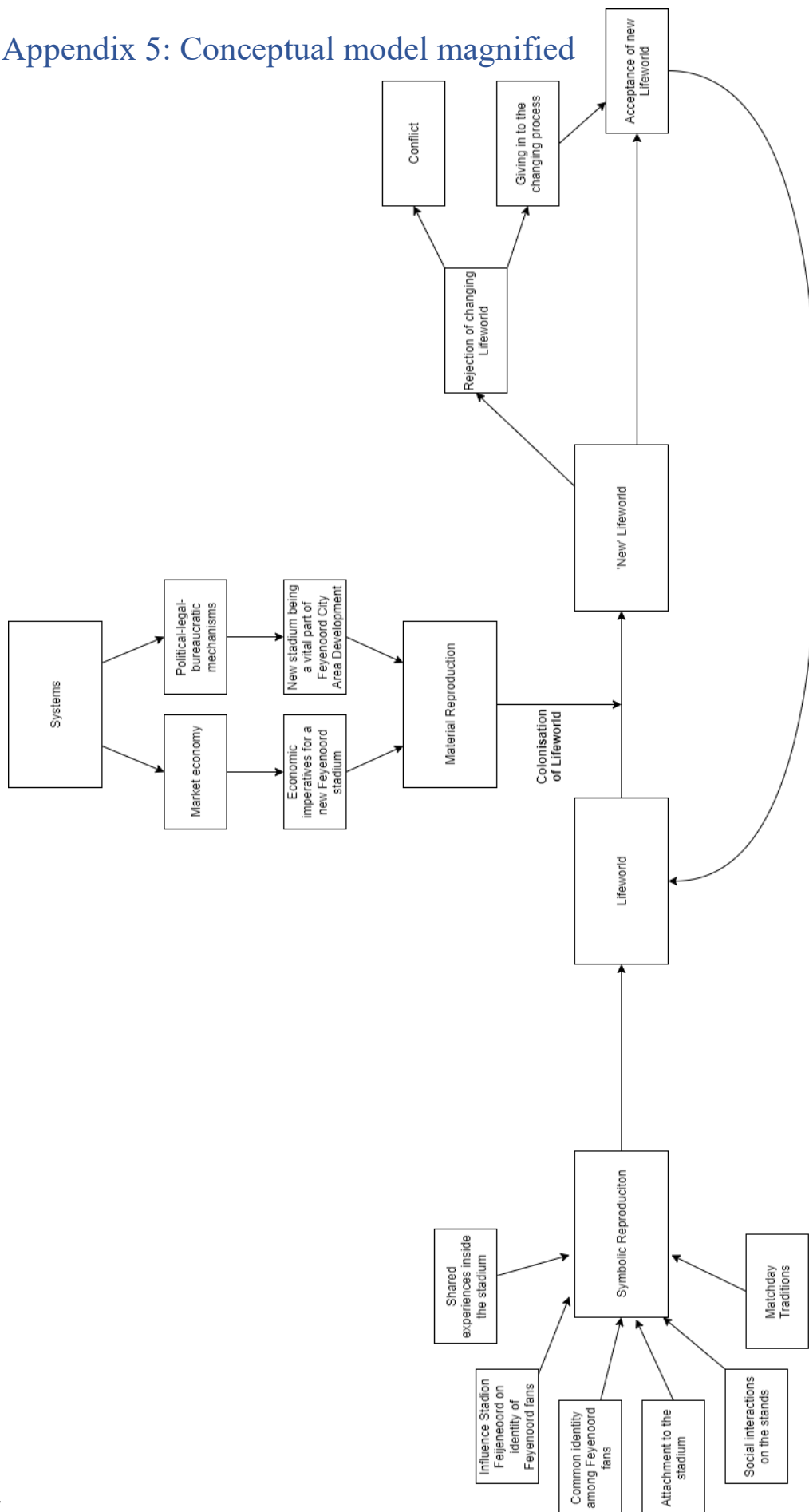
Feyenoord watcher Dennis van Eersel came up with some big news on Saturday afternoon in a good week for the Rotterdammers. The stadium project has stirred up a lot of emotions among Feyenoord supporters for years. Emotions ran high and that in turn caused a lot of division among the supporters.

Feyenoord has spent over ten years trying to get the mega project of Feyenoord City off the ground. There have been repeated requests for postponement to get financing in place. Now construction company BAM has drastically altered the terms and increased the building costs, the club's management has lost faith. The plug has been pulled permanently. We are now waiting for an official announcement from the club.



Translation: 35.44% is satisfied with the cancellation, 64.56% dissatisfied.

10.2 Appendix 5: Conceptual model magnified



10.3 References Appendix

FR12. (2018a). *Feyenoord City reageert op rapport Tsjalle van der Burg*.
<https://www.fr12.nl/nieuws/47360-feyenoord-city-reageert-op-rapport-tsjalle-van-der-burg.html>

FR12. (2018b). *Goldman Sachs en ING doen mee met Feyenoord City*.
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FR12. (2021a). *Feyenoord akkoord met Business Case Feyenoord City*.
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<https://www.fr12.nl/nieuws/wat-is-jouw-mening-over-afblazen-feyenoord-city-poll>