

Philanthropic foundations and the city

Droom en Daad

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Abstract:

This paper makes a critical analysis of the role played by philanthropic foundations in local governments. Specifically, the privileged position that makes foundations able to influence (cultural) urban planning agenda's, which results in changing the symbolic economy and cultural identity of cities to their vision. The central question in this thesis is: How does the cultural philanthropy of Droom en Daad shape the symbolic and spatial dynamics of urban development in Rotterdam, and what forms of capital are mobilized in this process?

To answer this question Critical Discourse Analysis and a case study on Droom en Daad in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, is implemented. The results show that Droom en Daad uses their position to implement changes in their favour. These changes can lead to acceleration of processes inclusion and exclusion and are linked to gentrification and social stratification. Further research on the influence of philanthropic foundations in the Netherlands is needed to understand how these foundations implement change in society.

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1. Introduction

Philanthropic foundations enjoy an increasingly powerful position in Western societies. Especially the last decades, starting from the 70s, have been coined “the golden age” of philanthropic involvement (Fuentenebro & Acuto, 2021, Moran, 2014). This makes it’s crucial to critically analyze the influence of these foundations in society, especially on the urban level where these organizations fund an increasing number of social and cultural projects alongside local municipalities (Maclean et al., 2021). This involvement has been accredited to the growing number of city dwellers and the subsequent influence of cities on a national and international level. Cities are becoming ever more important, specifically on a global scale, which explains why these foundations are inclined to involve themselves on an urban level (Puttick, 2023). The competition between cities, and the growing agency of cities, also explains why city officials and local municipalities are willing to form these partnerships. Indeed, these foundations, and their financial capital, enable cities to compete on the national and international level. But the involvement of philanthropic foundations in the urban planning agenda is not only financial. Foundations are not solely giving grants, they are actively influencing urban policy in their favor (Puttick, 2023). The ethos of this type of philanthropy, coined philanthrocapitalism, is centered on ‘social entrepreneurs’ and ‘impact investments’. Philanthrocapitalism is interested in funding projects that maximize their return in capital, whether it be symbolic, social, cultural or financial (Thomson, 2022, Webber et al., 2020).

Despite the growth and the importance of this phenomenon, research on this topic is sparse and is only slowly catching up. As a matter of fact, influencing (local) politics can affect the lives and livability of those residing in the city. Centering on elite-focused narratives could, for example, erase the voices of the marginalized (Nisbet & Schaller, 2019). This focus can operationalize itself in the funding of specific areas and projects, which can accelerate processes of city gentrification, social stratification and in general increase social inequality within city borders (Nisbet & Schaller, 2019).

This thesis explores how philanthropic involvement in local government can influence and change the cultural identity and cultural economy of cities. This research implements two social theories to examine how philanthropic foundations create the opportunity to position themselves as a major actor within urban renewal projects and implement the image and organization of cities. First, by following Bourdieu’s capital

accumulation theory, it will be attempted to examine how financial capital is at the core of all other forms of capital; strategically using monetary involvement for the socially acceptable creation of social, cultural and symbolic capital (Harvey et al., 2020). Second, by using Zukin's theory on the increasing involvement of private companies and foundations in urban government. Zukin states that these partnerships shape cities in ways that are beneficial for them. Furthermore, she also states that culture is increasingly used as a means to attract capital into the cities by creating "city marketing" and thus commodifying public and private spaces in the city (Zukin, 1990).

To examine philanthrocapitalism in an urban context, this thesis will implement a case study which will focus on a philanthropic foundation located in Rotterdam, the second largest city of The Netherlands. The foundation named Droom en Daad (dream and action), has since its creation in 2016 been one of the major actors of funding cultural projects within the city. Because their projects are mainly located in historically important and prestigious buildings, they also influence the urban planning agenda. To examine their involvement in the city and their social, symbolic, financial and cultural influence this thesis will make use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a research method that searches for underlying social, ideological and political processes through the vehicle of text analysis (Fairclough, 1995).

1.1 Problem statement and research question

The cultural philanthropic foundation, Droom en Daad, enjoys an influential position within the urban planning agenda of Rotterdam. This thesis will explore how this foundation accumulates and converts capital streams to achieve this position and why the local government accepts and accommodates this position. The thesis will focus on how Droom en Daad influences and controls city perspectives and cultural symbols, which are used to shape the symbolic economy and cultural identity of Rotterdam.

The central research question in this thesis is:

How does the cultural philanthropy of Droom en Daad shape the symbolic and spatial dynamics of urban development in Rotterdam, and what forms of capital are mobilized in this process?

2. Philanthropic foundations and the city

Cities are attracting more people in numbers. This trend, started in the 1950's, is likely to continue and global urban populations are expected to increase to 2,5 billion in the next 30 years (Mahtta et al., 2022). New challenges emerge, such as housing shortages and growth of social stratification. City officials and governments are working with different actors and institutions to battle those issues and better city dwellers quality of life (Puttick, 2023). Philanthropic foundations have increasingly sought to fund city centered projects and (social) organizations (Nisbet & Schaller, 2019, Puttick, 2023). Though philanthropic foundations are present on the urban level for a long time, their growing importance since the 70s, coins our age as the “heyday” of their involvement in the urban landscape. Furthermore, we currently see that these foundations are explicitly intervening in urban planning agendas (Puttick, 2023). The growth in philanthropic funding within local governments is gaining scholarly attraction, which has resulted in the use of the concept “philanthrocapitalism”; a philanthropic ethos focused on ‘social entrepreneurship’ and ‘impact investments’ (Puttick, 2023., Webber et al., 2020).

The interest of those philanthropic organizations in urban issues lies, partly, in the fact that “getting involved” on a city level is easier materialized than on a national level (Thomson, 2022). Besides, with the steady growth of urban areas, some cities start to gather influence on a national or even international level. Puttick (2023) states that philanthropic organizations involve themselves on two levels. The first one is institutional. City officials heavily intertwined with philanthropic foundations to set up major urban initiatives centred on, for example, “urban resilience”. In matters like urban development programs, this could translate into the provision of public goods or long-term resilience development agendas (Puttick, 2023). The second level is inserting affluent individuals, named high net worth individual (HNWI) in local urban governance. Many of these HNWI have close interest in these cities for personal or business reasons. By gifting money to the city, they enjoy privileges and define policy making agendas; which has now been dubbed “philanthro-policymaking” (Ravazzi, 2016). The influence of philanthropic foundations can be huge in this “golden age” of philanthropy, called super-philanthropy (Puttick, 2023).

Puttick's statement shines light on how philanthropic foundations can leverage their wealth and connections to implement changes that favour their interests. It also underlines the growing “new entrepreneurial” mindset displayed by philanthropists in which foundations or individuals seek maximum social return by

targeting investments (Ravazzi, 2016). By funding local projects, through the vehicle of “grant-giving” philanthropic foundations bend the process of urban planning in a socially desirable way and implement changes in their favour. Collaborating with the municipality gives them the power to decide which and when projects are realized. Consequently, social inequality within city borders might increase (Fuentenebro & Acuto, 2021).

Placing this within a Dutch context, it is important to point out that national government powers were decentralized in 2012. Whereas prior to this power would flow from national to local governments, now local municipalities have now more agency to decide what happens in their city (Thomson, 2022). This decentralization resulted in a (global) rivalry in which cities compete against one another to attract capital, companies and specific actors (Fuentenebro & Acuto, 2021).

3. Theoretical framework

This thesis will implement two social theories to ground the subject and guide the analysis of the processes and mechanisms that Droom en Daad implements within the municipality of Rotterdam. The first theory will focus on Bourdieu's theory surrounding the accumulation of differing types of capital, and how these mechanisms of wealth accumulation are rooted in historic and economic processes. This will highlight how philanthropic foundations can use different streams of capital and "convert them" to accumulate other types of capital. The second part of the theoretical framework will implement theories of Zukin on how public-private partnerships can influence the cultural identity, the culture and economy of cities. This theory, which is heavily inspired by Gramsci's theory on cultural hegemony, states that wealthy individuals can become influential, intellectual, leaders that implement their power for the – perceived - greater good, while mostly servicing their own interests. These theories help to explain how Droom en Daad, in relation to philanthrocapitalism, uses urban renewal projects to assert their power and legitimize their position to change the cultural identity of Rotterdam.

3.1 Bourdieu and the accumulation of capital

As is mentioned in the introduction, this thesis will analyze philanthropic foundations in the entrepreneurial sense, and more precisely through the concept of philanthrocapitalism, which grounds philanthropic funding in an ethos where individuals or organizations strive for maximum (social) returns when funding projects (Webber, et al., 2020). This kind of philanthropy is characterized by extensive donor engagement, the application of business methods, partnership working, the pursuit of socioeconomic change and systematic measurement of outcomes (Harvey et al., 2020). It is "infused" with the ideology of neo-liberalism and characterized by heavy institutional support, which consolidates the philanthropic foundations and legitimates their approach. Bourdieu's theory on the accumulation of capital enables a critical examination of philanthropic foundations, when they use their existing position and capital to "strategically" accumulate more capital, be it social, economic, symbolic or cultural (Ritzer & Stephinsky, 2018). It is important to note that economic capital lies at the root of all other types of capital, because its transformation gives opportunity to produce power in specific social fields, be it artistic, political or

academic (Harvey et al., 2020). Furthermore, whereas economic capital is accumulated with the objective of profit maximization, social, symbolic and cultural capital is accumulated for subjective, ideological purposes. Philanthropic giving provides an opportunity to immediately convert economic capital into other capital streams that are otherwise usually obtained through legacy, inheritance and dedicated time to specific causes (Harvey et al., 2020). Bourdieu states that philanthropy rewards the giver with social, cultural and symbolic capital which may also be redirected into more “fresh” economic capital (Harvey et al., 2020). Therefore, philanthropy acts as an interconnected and mutually sustaining mechanism where capital is gained and converted into other forms of capital. Within this ethos, philanthropic giving is thus not solely an act of altruism, but also a legitimate way of converting and accumulating capital. In this sense, philanthropic giving is a valuable asset to those who have the means to “give back”, while enhancing their ability to achieve personal objectives and strengthens their position within the field of power (Harvey et al., 2020). Furthermore, and especially in this age where social inequalities in regard to income have increased substantially, in both developed and developing countries, voluntary transfers of funds from the wealthy to the poor can be seen as a way to decrease resentment (Maclean et al., 2021). Thus, philanthropic giving can buy popular goodwill, tolerance of power asymmetries and access to politicians and government officials.

Philanthropic giving strategies of domination are heavily conditioned by the power and resources someone already has to their disposition. These assets are grounded in society and are yet used to stay ahead of others and secure an affluent position for the foreseeable future. Philanthropy is thus fundamentally linked to the exercise of power within social systems. Bourdieu also states that power is embedded in structures and relationships and is implemented in multifaceted ways that are often – but not always – visible. One’s position in the field of power is determined by how much capital, derived from all flows of capital, one has obtained. The ultimate power is the possession of all types of capital: symbolic, economic, social and cultural. Legitimacy, the acceptance of domination by the subordinated, is characterized by the possession of symbolic capital, it has the power to influence change within society as a whole (Ritzer & Stephinsky, 2018, Maclean et al., 2021). In this context, power gained through philanthropic giving is considered a strategy implemented by the elite to gain more flows of capital in a socially desirable way. This is supported by institutions that ensure legitimacy, which means influence is accepted, endorsed and implemented (Maclean et al., 2021).

3.2 Zukin, who has the right to the city?

In this second part of the theoretical framework, several concepts from the urban sociologist Zukin will be implemented. Zukin concerns herself with problems surrounding the influence of public-private partnerships on cities and gentrification, a process in which low-income areas experience an influx of capital which displaces longtime residents (Zukin, 1998). This thesis is centered on the effects of private philanthropic foundations and how their capital flows influence the symbolic economy and cultural identity of the municipality of Rotterdam. Implementing Zukin's theories will thus exemplify how and why cities endorse relations with external partners and depoliticize urban planning processes in order to realize goals and projects.

Zukin theorizes about the concept of cultural identity in her essay "Whose culture, whose city" (Zukin, 1998). In this essay, attention is given to who has the power to implement changes in the city and to determine what kind of culture is fitting and what kind is not.

Zukin states that culture is a powerful means to control cities. It helps to regulate the public spaces in terms of inclusion and exclusion and thus to condition the collective memory by choosing what to preserve and what to highlight within the cities (Zukin, 1998). Zukin also shows how culture is used and implemented to "sell" the city to those who do not reside within it. This "production of culture" is a mean to encourage outsiders to invest, visit or spend their money, which is part of the "symbolic economy" of cities (Zukin, 1998).

Zukin also highlights the "terrain of struggle", a concept inspired by the sociologist A. Gramsci. This terrain of struggle is a territory claimed by the elite or ruling classes that controls culture (as well as the means of production), which results in the dominance of one class's worldview and norms, in cultural hegemony (Zukin, 1998). Zukin states that the struggle over this cultural production of power is a "battle" between the dominant crafters, which among others entails city governments, corporations, local communities, and neighborhoods. The winners of this battle have the power to decide how and for who cities are shaped and imagined, thereby creating the symbolic economy of cities (Zukin, 1998). Nowadays, the symbolic economy is more often than not shaped by public-private partnerships.

Zukin also states that, in the context of controlling cities, culture is highly visible within in the field of urban redevelopment: historic preservation or buildings that used to be the place for manufacturing are now businesses of culture (Zukin, 1991).

Especially nowadays where multiculturalism is at its peak, the cultural power to create an image and frame a city within a certain ideology has become increasingly important. Those who have the power to visually influence and create the collective identity of the city and its people, have the power to include, exclude and highlight what and who they desire within the city (Zukin, 1991).

Zukin also identifies a “third” party related to this entrepreneurial activity: city advocates and business elites, which includes philanthropic foundations that have the desire to stamp their identity on the city and its “symbolic economy” by, for example, building art museums and parks that represent a “world-class city” (Zukin, 1991). The aesthetics of a city reflect decisions about how individuals should experience the public spaces. Those decisions, such as for example the placement of (specific) public art or the implementation of hostile architecture, shape geography and ecology to create places and spaces of transformation that are not value and politics free (Zukin, 1991). In fact, they develop a symbolic economy which involves, and has effects on, a multitude of other facets and mechanisms, such as housing markets, luring investments and negotiating political claims for public goods (Zukin, 1991). Zukin states that when cities put more importance on the “visuals”, public art and fine art museums for example play an important role in defining public culture (Zukin, 1991). Public culture is thereby socially constructed by those whose resources allows them to capitalize on it.

In Zukin’s *Landscapes of Power* (1991), symbolic culture and its rise within cities is factored into two aspects: the economic decline of cities in comparison to non-urban spaces and the increase of abstract financial speculation (Zukin, 1991). Culture, in this sense, has become a way of creating goods that do not include material products: the cultural economy. Since the 1970s, the cultural landscape has increasingly become an instrument of local governments’ entrepreneurial strategies to market their city within the “hierarchy of cities”. For example, building a big museum suggests wealth, or can be a sign of vitality in the financial sector of its city (Zukin, 1991).

The symbolic economy of cities has thus two production systems: the production of space which entails capital investment and cultural meanings, and the production of symbols that entails a currency of commercial exchange and a language of social identity (Zukin, 1991). Rearranging space in the city also means changing the representation of that city and framing it within a certain ideology. Executing projects backed with social esteem is important to city officials within the context of city branding and attracting capital. This explains why relationships with third party organizations are accepted and even celebrated.

4. Methodology

4.1 Case study

This research paper is centred on how philanthropic foundations shape symbolic and spacial dynamics in urban development, specifically in urban planning. In order to examine this topic, a case study analysis is implemented that examines the role of Droom en Daad, a philanthropic foundation located in Rotterdam within the municipality's city planning. This thesis investigates how they acquired their privileged position by funding cultural projects, and how they leverage this position to implement changes (Jorritsma, 2024). A case study enables to examine these social phenomena in detail, and to better understand both the social mechanisms and the role of the individuals connected to these complex cases. Furthermore, it enables to analyse a subject and recognize patterns that can possibly be applied to or recognised in other contexts and situations.

4.1.1. Droom en Daad

Droom en Daad is a Dutch philanthropic foundation founded in 2016 by the family van der Vorm and located in Rotterdam (Droom en Daad, 2024). The family van der Vorm is well known in Rotterdam, as they have long been involved in philanthropic work and have other philanthropic foundations that are intrinsically linked to the city (Stichting De Verre Bergen Rotterdam, 2024). While their other foundation, De Verre Bergen, is focussed on social, community projects, Droom en Daad centers its efforts on big, cultural prestige projects. The family earned their wealth in the historic "*Holland-Amerika Lijn*", and the selling of HAL investments in 1989 (Geluk, 2023). They have, for a long time, been active in funding social and cultural projects within Rotterdam's city borders, for which they have acquired the nickname "*suikeroom van*

Rotterdam” (sugar uncle of Rotterdam) (Dohmen, 2024). Between 2016 and 2025 the family has gifted the city of Rotterdam close to 80 million euros in grants, they are thus an important actor within the cultural geographic of the city (Geluk, 2023, Dohmen, 2024, Jorritsma, 2024).

Wim Pijbes, director and main spokesperson of the Droom en Daad foundation, is a prominent figure in the Dutch cultural landscape. He was head of the Kunsthall in Rotterdam from 2000-2008 and head of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam from 2008-2016. Pijbes was also shortly director of the private museum Voorlinde in Wassenaar before starting his function at the foundation Droom en Daad since 2016,

4.1.2. Projects

Droom en Daad has been active for 9 years now. In this period, they have funded quite an array of cultural initiatives in Rotterdam (Droom en Daad, 2025). On their website, the projects in which the foundation participates are divided into two sections: “Droom en Daad’s cultural projects” and “funded initiatives”.

Under the first section we find the 13 “big” funded projects, some of which are still in production, including the new museum Fenix. Furthermore, they also fund projects in public spaces such as “het Park” and “Beelden in de buitenruimte” (statues in public spaces). Droom en Daad also has two different publications covering the cultural and artistic landscape of Rotterdam and the Netherlands: Publicatiefonds and De Kunstbode. They also found other projects, centered on the linguistic arts or information for city walks (Droom en Daad, 2025).

The second category consists of 87 funded initiatives centered on an array of cultural projects, among others Boijmans bij de burens, Kunsthall Rotterdam and Nederlands Fotomuseum.

In total, the foundation has funded approximately 100 programs and initiatives and gifted a total of 94.2 million euros, to which must be added the 80 million euro grant that was given to fund the renovations of the Boijmans van Beuningen museum. Though the foundation’s main focus is Rotterdam, they also fund projects outside the Netherlands, such as The Birmingham Royal Ballet. This makes Droom en Daad one of the biggest, culturally focused, philanthropic foundations of the Netherlands (Droom en Daad, 2025).

In the analysis, focus will be put on the recently opened Fenix Museum of migration and the foundation’s influence on public spaces such as “het Park”.

4.2 Data collection

This thesis uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate how social-power processes are enacted, reproduced and legitimized within social and political contexts (Fairclough, 1995, Van Dijk, 2015). CDA is centred on analysing social problems and political issues. It tries to examine how dominance in society can reproduce social inequality through the vehicle of linguistics (Fairclough, 1995).

A variety of documents and articles will be used which will allow to observe structures of power and notice and analyse possible ideologies and patterns in discourses.

Documents have been selected based on time of publication, relevance and source. The documents analyzed within this thesis have been published between 2016 up until 2025. The papers come from a broad mix of sources, including international newspapers such as the New York Times and The Observer, national newspapers Het Parool, NRC and de Volkskrant, and (independent) Rotterdam-based newspapers such as Vers Beton and Open Rotterdam. Platforms that focus on art in Rotterdam such as Platform Beeldende Kunst (BK), and de Kunstbode are also incorporated as well as De Dikke Blauwe, a publication specifically focused on philanthropy in the Netherlands. Finally, the analysis includes articles posted by the foundation Droom en Daad itself and affiliated organizations such as Kunstinstituut Melly and Nederlands Fotomuseum. Specific attention has been given to select articles that reflect differing opinions on the matter of the involvement of Droom en Daad in the cultural dimension of the city and municipality of Rotterdam.

The selected documents can be categorized into three different sections: official communication from the affiliated organizations, media (news)articles, and articles from art and culture platforms. The documents from the first section, official communications, are accessed through websites, and possibly physical publications, and aimed at the general public, the press or other cultural organizations. The documents from the second section, media (news)articles, are accessible on national and local platforms, though often only through a paywall, and are aimed at the general public, local inhabitants of Rotterdam and those that are active in the cultural sector of the Netherlands. These articles are mainly written to inform individuals. There are also opinionated articles that are aimed at “starting a conversation” about the ways philanthropic foundations use financial capital to influence certain actors and the municipality of Rotterdam. Lastly, the documents from the art and cultural platforms are mainly aimed at informing people about upcoming projects, events or give general information about the Rotterdam-based art scene.

In total, 30 documents will be used in this analysis. Employing multiple sources, and thus implementing triangulation, will enable to analyse the research subject from different perspectives, in order to ensure objectivity (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The main research question will be subdivided into two sub questions, which will be derived from the two social theories of the theoretical framework. The first sub question will concern the theory of Bourdieu's capital accumulation and the second Zukin's theory.

In view of the foregoing, the sub questions will be:

1. How does Droom en Daad create and implement streams of capital (social, financial, symbolic and cultural)?
2. How does Droom en Daad legitimize and exercise its position of power to shape the symbolic identity and cultural economy of Rotterdam?

4.3 Data analysis

The selected sources will be analysed following Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, which comprises a micro, meso and macro dimension (Fairclough, 1995). The micro dimension focuses on the actual texts, and the underlying symbolics of their words and sentence structures. In this section, attention is given to word choice, grammar and other linguistic aspects, as well as to the discursive strategies that are used to build arguments and base implications (Fairclough, 1995). The meso dimension, starts with an analysis of the different sources, their authors and ideologies. This segment is centred on how the sources are produced, distributed and consumed (Fairclough, 1995). In the analysis of this thesis, the texts will also be analysed in opposition of each other; including intertextuality and the documents context, such as the source of the document. The focus lays on the differences that emerge from the various sources, local, national and international. The third and last dimension, the macro dimension, looks into social, political, economic and cultural practices that are shaped by specific language use. This dimension is centred on the way ideology and power are produced and used in society and how this drives society to societal change (Fairclough, 1995).

The data will be analysed using a coding system based on concepts within the social theories of Bourdieu (the different types of capital) and Zukin (cultural leadership, symbolic culture and the influence on urban planning). Deductive coding will be implemented, because the categories have been created before analysing the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The texts will be analysed and categorized within these categories

when certain themes in connection to the codes are recognized. This will be done within the program Atlas.ti.

To analyse these different aspects, I will be implementing the following categories in the discourse:

Coding categories	Codes	Definition	Analysis
Social capital	Social capital	Social relational network	- Social networks of the foundation “Droom en Daad” - Social network in relation to cultural projects.
Financial capital	Financial capital	Forms of financial resources	- How and where funding efforts of Droom en Daad are centred. - Grants and sponsorships.
Symbolic capital	Symbolic capital	Honour and prestige of the foundation	- How “Droom en Daad” is framed or perceived in cultural and political context. - Reputation of the foundation and the status/prestige it has within Rotterdam.
Cultural capital	Cultural capital	(Type of) cultural assets	- Impact “Droom en Daad” on the cultural sector in Rotterdam - Which projects are funded, why and what is their relationship to the city.
Intellectual leadership	- Consent and legitimacy - Depoliticization - Intellectual leadership - Moral framing	Moral and political authority	- Influence, direct or indirect, and position “Droom en Daad” on policy debates and city planning within Rotterdam. - Framing of Droom en Daad within the municipality
Symbolic culture	- Symbolic culture	Symbols and non-material culture	- Ideology relating to non-material culture - Language defining a society (Rotterdam specifically)
Influence on urban planning	- Strategic partnerships - Meddling governance - Philanthrocapitalism - Private over public - Urban planning influence	- Droom en Daad influences the urban planning agenda of Rotterdam	- Direct influence on urban renewal projects - Impact investments in relation to cultural projects - Exclusive relations/privileged position within local government

Table 1. Coding categories and Analysis

4.4 Limitations

This research paper is centred on philanthropic foundations, which implies that all relevant information might not be publicly available. Droom en daad has an ANBI (Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling¹) status which gives tax exemptions, but even though they are required to publish certain information they do not have to be fully transparent. For example, they do not have to publish a list of individual grants and donations (Belastingdienst, 2023). Therefore, the data may be incomplete, biased or inaccurate, which may influence some results. As this paper is centred on one case, certain patterns that are present in other cases may not be present here, which means that this case may not be directly translatable to other studies. The results of this case study, that of the philanthropic foundation “Droom en Daad” within the context of Rotterdam, may thus not be representative of other philanthropic foundations or cities (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

4.5 Ethical considerations

This research paper utilizes public resources. Possible biases based on these published sources will be reflected upon. This paper will implement triangulation to ensure the research subject will be analysed from multiple perspectives to be as objective as possible. Finally, as this paper implements critical discourse analysis, and thus interpreting nuances in texts that may differ between authors, the position of the researcher on the subject may be biased. This is why a large number of documents from a multitude of sources have been selected. Finally, I am aware of my positionality and possible biases in relation to the research subject and have tried to be aware of this throughout the research.

5. Analysis

The analysis will be divided into a micro, meso and macro section, following Fairclough's critical discourse analysis three-dimensional framework. The micro analysis of text will investigate the recurring patterns and how the actions of Droom en Daad are framed within the selected documents. The texts will then be analyzed in the meso dimension, where attention will be put on the positionality of the authors and the

¹ PBO (Public Benefit Organization)

intertextual patterns that occur throughout different sources. And finally, the texts will go through a macro analysis, in which bigger patterns concerning societal, political and symbolic processes will be examined. The micro dimension will be divided into two sections following the two social theories, and sub questions, that were implemented in the theoretical framework: capital flows and conversion (capital theory of Bourdieu) and urban planning influence and symbolic culture (symbolic culture theory of Zukin).

5.1 Micro-dimension

5.1.1 Capital flows and conversion

Droom en Daad focusses its efforts on the cultural landscape, such as the funding of museums and linguistic arts (Droom en Daad, 2025). As such, it fits into the picture of philanthrocapitalism, using philanthropy as a method of targeting investments, but in compliance with a socially desired conduct; one that aims at improving the livability of the city.

“We manage ‘conscious capital’, mindful capital: we are an engaged investor, and we want you to do well.”² - (Kappelle, 2023, p. 8)

In this quote, Wim Pijbes states that the foundation is “investing conscious and mindful capital” into the cultural economy of Rotterdam. Calling their efforts conscious is positioning the funding of selected projects as morally and ethically correct. They also frame their efforts as “professional” by only injecting money where the foundation sees fit. This enables the foundation to position itself as an actor that makes moral and ethical decisions “for the greater good of the city”. By deciding what’s best and which projects to fund, Droom en Daad converts economic capital into symbolic capital. Subsequently, they convert their symbolic “soft” power into cultural capital by funding big cultural prestige projects.

“Philanthropic money has an advantage: we can afford to take greater risks. If a project fails, it's unfortunate, but we don't have to answer to donors or voters.”³ - (Kappelle, 2023, p. 9)

² Original text translated by author: "We beheren ‘conscious capital’, bewust kapitaal: we zijn een betrokken investeerder, we willen dat het goed met je gaat."

³ Original text translated by author: "Filantropisch geld heeft een pre: wij kunnen ons grotere risico's veroorloven. Als bij ons een project mislukt is dat jammer, maar wij hoeven geen verantwoording af te leggen aan donateurs of kiezers."

This process of capital conversion is also visible in the interaction between Droom en Daad and the municipality of Rotterdam. By positioning themselves as a “we”, the foundation aims to underline their autonomy from democratic or political processes while simultaneously framing “voters and donors” as non-important in their processes, creating an in-group/out-group dynamic. Unlike public agencies, their actions are free from unwanted consequences, which they highlight by stating that they can afford “greater risks”. Droom en Daad does not need to “succeed” in all of their projects, because they are (financially) stable enough to make losses. This underlines their autonomy and financial stability. In this case, the foundation converts its financial capital into social capital, that is to say their connections with the municipality and the position they enjoy as sole independent actor needed by Rotterdam to implement urban redevelopment. By using financial wealth in a socially desirable way, Droom en Daad converts its social and financial capital into political and symbolic power, a position of influence within democratic agencies.

The challenge then is to ask what needs to be funded and why is the municipality turning to Droom en Daad to finance these projects. FENIX loods, the migration museum inaugurated recently on Katendrecht, is one of these projects which should be critically examined. Although the museum and its building are considered a success, critiques say that the content of the museum is not “political” enough when broaching the subject of migration (Liukku, 2025). At the start of the project, the museum was supposed to be centered on “individual migration stories”, but it evolved into a highbrow art museum when it finally opened. Migration is turned into a visually pleasing, not too confrontational and most importantly “politically neutral” concept (Jaeger, 2025, Siegal, 2018).

“FENIX’s main aim is to make migration a less confrontational topic.”⁴ - (Jaeger, 2025).

Making migration a safe subject and depoliticizing it in the process is problematic, because migration as a concept is a political matter.

As Wim Pijbes was at the head of high art museums in the past, the content of FENIX museum was expected to follow the same “Wim Pijbes” influence (Siegal, 2018). Anne Kremers, who is active as “project leader” at Droom en Daad, used to work at a philanthropic foundation focused on cultural projects located in Hong

⁴Original text translated by author: FENIX wil migratie vooral tot een weinig confronterend onderwerp maken.

Kong (Anne Kremers, z.d.). She also made headlines in 2013, when she became, at 24 years, the museum director of Villa Mondriaan (Dekker & Kremers, 2013). Interestingly, as Toisuta denotes,

*“At the head of the museum are two white individuals without a migration background. The power to make decisions is therefore not with those about which the museum is about. By doing this however unintentional colonial history is being perpetuated.”*⁵ - (Toisuta, 2025)

At the core, the museum serves as symbolic reminder that even when legitimacy concerning cultural projects has been established, the output of actors is essential.

Droom en Daad turns “migration” into heritage and takes hold and credit for the revitalization of the migration history of Rotterdam, but also for the restoration of the historic building housing the museum.

*“In Rotterdam, there is history, but you can’t see it physically. Everything that is built in the city center was built after 1950. There’s a lack of history. There’s a gap in the memory.”[...] “Our goal is to fill that gap, or refill that gap, by focusing on culture and heritage.”*⁶ - Wim Pijbes (Siegal, 2018)

This quote makes it clear that the foundation has a specific vision for Rotterdam: rebuilding it and implementing changes to “fill the gap” to their perceived “lack of history and memory”. Furthermore, the foundation positions itself as an active, and necessary actor in this process. This exemplifies how financial capital is used and converted into symbolic and cultural capital.

This analysis has shown how Droom en Daad has used their extensive financial capital to convert it into all other forms of capital: social, political, symbolic and cultural. This gives the foundation the opportunity to shape Rotterdam’s urban and cultural landscape according to their vision, to decide which projects will be completed and at what pace, putting them de facto in the position of “philantro-policymaker”.

⁵ Original text translated by author: Aan het stuur van migratiemuseum Fenix in Rotterdam staan twee witte mensen zonder migratieachtergrond. De zeggenschap ligt dus niet bij degenen over wie het gaat. Daarmee wordt, hoe onbedoeld ook, een koloniale geschiedenis voortgezet.

⁶ Said by Wim Pijbes in article New York Times

5.1.2 Urban planning influence and symbolic culture

The analysis reveals that Droom en Daad has a privileged position in the urban planning agenda of Rotterdam. This can also be derived from the fact that the foundation has monthly meetings named “steering committee philanthropy” with municipal officials, meetings in which they are the only philanthropic foundation present (Geluk, 2023). These meetings are only accessible to a select group of officials within the municipality and no records are made public. The name of the meetings, shows that they can “steer” certain outcomes as a philanthropic foundation. Furthermore, to forbid those meetings to the public underlines the powerful position Droom en Daad has acquired within the municipality, which is illustrated by the following quote from a confidential memo⁷ from former councilor Robert Simons (Geluk, 2023).

“Because both foundations [Droom en Daad & De Verre Bergen] have substantial resources. They have the power to give the city of Rotterdam wings.”⁸ - (Geluk, 2023)

Even when locations have already been decided for, like for the Danshuis project that will be rolled out in the next five years and which was originally imagined for Rotterdam Museum, Droom en Daad has the influence to change these plans without much pushback (Geluk, 2023, Ruud van Der Velden, 2024). Their way of negotiating is not usual for philanthropic foundations. They are not shy about stating their intentions and money is not the only thing that people accept when working with them (Kappelle, 2023). Within the context of philanthrocapitalism we can state that Droom en Daad is investing and expects a return on investment, be it social, symbolic and other. They don’t simply provide money, they want also to be involved extensively in the process, or as Pijbes states:

“If you want our money, you also get us”⁹-(Kappelle, 2023).

The process of real estate acquisition, and the privileged position of the foundation in general, is frowned upon within the municipality of Rotterdam. Ruud van Velden (PVdD), a member of the municipality

⁷ From a memo by Droom en Daad and De Verre Bergen, obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. In preparation for a working visit by then-alderman Robert Simons (Leefbaar Rotterdam) on November 23, 2017.

⁸ Original text translated by author: “Want de middelen van beide stichtingen zijn fors. Ze kunnen de stad Rotterdam als geheel vleugels geven”

⁹ Original text translated by author: “Als je ons geld wilt krijg je ons erbij”

officials of Rotterdam, states that there is no democratic control or even transparency in this matter (Persson & Misset, 2023). In relation to the Danshuis project, van Velden states

*“Pijbes suddenly seeks the spotlight and presents his plan as a done deal,” [...] “I think it’s problematic that his influence is so great.” Pijbes gives little room to alternative options. “You need a minimum of 50 million euros to implement something here. Others are free to submit their plans but we’ve already secured the funding.”*¹⁰ - (Persson & Misset, 2023)

This view is, however, not shared by everyone in the municipality of Rotterdam. Former mayor Aboutaleb who held this position for 16 years, has always publicly supported the foundation and its efforts. To the extent of stating that they, the mayor and the foundation, have a close relationship:

*“I’m dealing with a man I can call, a man who can call me, and when I need him, he’s there.”*¹¹ -

Former mayor Aboutaleb (Persson & Misset, 2023)

[Wim Pijbes in relation to former mayor Aboutaleb] *“Yes, I have his cell number. And yes, he always picks up.”*¹² - (Schoorl, 2024)

The former mayor even states, on the matter of the family Van der Vorm having too much influence, that it is often overstated and also that the municipality has no alternative when it comes to the acquisition of funds.

*“If Martijn [Van der Vorm] says he wants to build a migrants’ museum, and we think it’s a good idea, then following the rules we have to offer it to the market first. So we do. Do you know how many interested parties come forward? None. The market wants to earn money. Martijn comes here to spend it. We will always have space for good ideas.”*¹³ - Former mayor Aboutaleb (Persson & Misset, 2023)

¹⁰ Original text translated by author: ‘Pijbes zoekt dan ineens de schijnwerpers en presenteert zijn plan als een voldongen feit’, zegt Van der Velden. ‘Ik vind het bezwaarlijk dat die invloed zo groot is.’ Pijbes geeft de alternatieven weinig kans. ‘Je hebt minstens 50 miljoen euro nodig om daar iets te kunnen neerzetten. Laat anderen maar komen met hun plannen. Wij hebben de financiering al rond.’

¹¹ Original text translated by author: Ik heb te maken met een man die ik kan bellen, een man die mij kan bellen, en als ik hem nodig heb, is hij er.

¹² Original text translated by author: “Ja, ik heb zijn 06. En ja, hij neemt altijd op.”

¹³ ‘Original text translated by author: Als Martijn tegen mij zegt dat hij een landverhuizersmuseum wil bouwen, en wij vinden dat een goed idee, dan moeten we dat volgens de regels eerst aan de markt aanbieden. Dat doen we. Weet je hoeveel gegadigden daarop afkomen? Nul. De markt wil geld verdienen, Martijn komt hier om geld uit te geven. Wij zullen altijd ruimte bieden voor goede ideeën.’

By asserting this, Aboutaleb frames the foundation, and Martijn van der Vorm, as a crucial part of urban redevelopment within Rotterdam, giving him a powerful position. The fact there are no other options to fund these specific projects shows that the foundation has positioned itself as major player within the urban planning agenda. Furthermore, the fact that Aboutaleb and Wim Pijbes state that they have close contacts shows how normalized the practice of individual meetings is and the privileged position of the foundation within the municipality. This underlines the question of who has the power to decide which changes are implemented and at what pace.

The goals of Droom en Daad are clear and are constantly reiterated: the foundation aims to better the city by funding big cultural prestige projects, not only for those who reside in the city but also those who choose to travel to the city.

“The Droom en Daad Foundation is helping redefine Rotterdam for the 21st century – developing new kinds of arts and culture institutions and fostering new creative talent that reflects the city’s diversity, its spirit and its history.” - (Vandamm, 2025)

This goal is emphasized in – mostly international – newspapers and press releases about the efforts of the foundation. *“Redefining Rotterdam for the 21st century”*; this choice of words shows that the foundation tries not only to renew the image of Rotterdam as a high-culture hub, but would also like to reinvent and thus change the current identity of the city. Droom en Daad envisions themselves as an active contributor, or even the main actor, in this process.

“As part of a comprehensive long-term plan for investment in Rotterdam’s cultural infrastructure developed by Droom en Daad Foundation alongside the municipality, Rotterdam will undergo a transformation over the next decade recasting itself as a new centre for European culture.” - (Westall, 2024)

The foundation does not function like most philanthropic foundations. Not only do they decide which projects will be funded through their foundation, but individuals or cultural organizations cannot ask for grants. The projects that are decided on are selected by themselves and directly proposed to the municipality (Geluk, 2023). They are credited as developers of the cultural infrastructure of Rotterdam “alongside the municipality”, but in fact they tend to act as the main party in this process. Indeed, the foundation claims to have funded the “new wave” of Rotterdam’s success. The word “renaissance” used in the quote below, puts culture as a center piece to accredit this new found wealth.

*“Now we stand at the start of yet another wave. A Rotterdam renaissance.”*¹⁴ - Wim Pijbes (Van de Velde, 2025)

When one relates this to “venture philanthropy”, Droom en Daad seems to have a clear influence on the urban planning agenda. Though there are voices stating the practice as problematic, the foundation itself is framed as a necessary part of the urban development and revitalization. Due to the massive amounts of financial capital, they possess, Droom en Daad is the only foundation that could possibly fund big cultural projects, normalizing this relationship with the municipality and excluding other possible actors within the process.

*“We can do what we want. So that’s really nice.”*¹⁵ - Wim Pijbes (Dirks & Kruijt, 2018)

Framing the foundation as an independent actor, underlines the fact that the foundation needs neither to have accountability in regard to the projects they fund, nor to the results they reap.

However, democratic processes are negated and power can be used without public consent. The foundation is the sole actor in projects such as FENIX and “Moments contained”, which is problematic because it gives them the power to decide the narrative of the cultural identity of Rotterdam. This shows how cultural and historic heritage is used by the elite to attract different kinds of capital flows and form the city to their will.

¹⁴ Original text translated by author: “Nu staan we aan de vooravond van wéér zo’n golf. Van een Rotterdamse renaissance

¹⁵ Original text translated by author: ‘We kunnen doen wat we willen doen. Dus dat is heel fijn.

Droom en Daad's influence is not solely linked to the renovation of historic buildings, but also to public spaces such as "het Park", an important public park within the social infrastructure of the city, listed as a national monument. The foundation not only contributes to the maintenance of the park, their influence goes as far as having authority over the het Park's features (Dirks & Kruijt, 2018). Wim Pijbes refers to New York as an inspiration, a city where public-private partnerships have been instated to improve public spaces (Dirks & Kruijt, 2018).

FENIX, that opened its doors in May of 2025, is a fully private museum, which stresses how the foundation is completely independent of public funds and political processes. The foundation is responsible for the museum itself but it also acquired "Plein", a 2000 square meter plaza next to the museum (*Plein*, z.d.). The influence of the foundations does thus not end at the doors of the massive prestige projects, but also flows into the public spaces of the city.

Droom en Daad functions as a "soft power", a cultural hegemony within Rotterdam. Their projects reflect their vision of the city while stating that their efforts are improving Rotterdam's livability. Zukin states that philanthropic projects such as prestige museums are mostly aimed at improving city branding and are thus a way to attract 'capital' to the city. Furthermore, when a city's identity is primarily shaped by elite or private actors, urban spaces, be it private or public, become a tool to attract capital and prestige, at the expense of a democratic participation of the actual inhabitants of the city. Culture is thereby used as a way of adding to the economy of the city, commodifying private and public spaces; Droom en Daad fits into this context by framing their efforts as *"making the city better, stronger and more beautiful"* (Droom en Daad, 2025). By projecting their vision of key concepts such as "diversity" and "historic heritage", they universalize their point of view, while these projects are solely based on their ideas and input. Museums, and especially a migration museum, then act as a kind of vehicle of soft power influencing individuals on how to interpret the world around them. This is something Droom en Daad is aware of:

*"The role and responsibility of museums, specifically those that have a historical or thematic mission, is to act as guardians of intimate memory and historical truth."*¹⁶ - (Pijbes, 2023, p. 35)

¹⁶ Original text translated by author: Le rôle et la responsabilité des musées, en particulier ceux qui ont une vocation historique ou thématique, consistent à être les gardiens de la mémoire intime et de la vérité historique.

Especially in a city such as Rotterdam, a city that has lost a lot of cultural heritage because of the bombings during World War II, recreating its history and identity by emphasizing a certain selection of key historic locations makes the foundation responsible for rewriting the (visual) history of the city. As Pijbes is aware of, museums are guardians of intimate memory and historical truth. Thereby, leaving such an important task as museum conservation to private and elite serving organization, erases voices who do not possess the power to invest, and thereby conceals a possible other version of the “historical truth”.

5.2 *Meso-dimension*

There is a clear difference in how the foundation is represented across different media platforms. A returning pattern is the difference between the (news)articles and press releases published by the foundation and its affiliated organizations, and those issued by local and national newspapers.

The press releases of organizations affiliated to Droom en Daad all present the foundation as independent, ambitious and foremost as a goal-oriented foundation which can significantly improve the cultural infrastructure of Rotterdam. “*Making Rotterdam better and appealing*” is also reiterated in this thesis’ selection of international newspapers. The Observer and The New York Times underline the success of Droom en Daad and their new projects. The general consensus within these press releases state that these projects bring “new light” to Rotterdam, a city which “reinvents” itself by adding these projects to their cultural attractions.

Contradictorily, most of the national and local newspapers are critical of the foundation and their practice. These articles often depict the power relations between the municipality and the foundation, and the majority questions the depoliticization of processes concerning “public property and public spaces”.

Intertextuality

Most of the articles mention the same individuals and projects. Because Wim Pijbes is at the head of the foundation, it’s mostly his voice that is heard when something is related to the foundation. This gives Droom en Daad a certain narrative control. By using the renowned Pijbes as “main target” in the journalistic sense, the foundation not only makes his view central, but also lends symbolic and cultural legitimacy to Droom en Daad’s projects. The exclusive control that Wim Pijbes has in discussions about the foundation shows how

narrative control can be centralized by a single person. Members of the van der Vorm family, though they are always and often mentioned, do not appear in public or react in the press.

The same projects are often mentioned, FENIX, Moments Contained and the Nederlands Fotomuseum. But while national papers mostly mention them in relation to the powerful position and relations of the foundation, international papers mostly refer to them in context of international allure and city branding.

In general, the framing in the different articles can be categorized into 3 different categories:

- I. *Philanthropy as a “soft power” and influence:* This framework is mostly present in local and national newspapers. In these sources, a critical view is expressed, power relations and influence on local government and democratic processes are questioned. Opinions on the foundation are nuanced and aimed at informing the general Dutch public about the doings of Droom en Daad, which are unusual in the national cultural landscape.

“Philanthropic foundations typically decide at their own discretion which societal issues they want to solve.”¹⁷ – (Geluk, 2023)

- II. *Culture and heritage:* Most of the articles are framed within a context of culture and heritage, because most of the projects are located in public spaces or historic buildings of Rotterdam, and focused on cultural aspects. Local culture is influenced and reinvented through the eyes of Droom en Daad.

“The family Van der Vorm through the vehicle of philanthropy invests significantly in art and culture in Rotterdam.”¹⁸ – (Kappelle, 2023)

¹⁷ Original tekst translated by author: “Filantropen besluiten doorgaans volledig naar eigen inzicht welke maatschappelijke problemen ze willen verhelpen”

¹⁸ Original tekst translated by author: Het filantropische vehikel van de familie Van der Vorm investeert op serieuze schaal in kunst en cultuur in de Maasstad

- III. *Philanthropy as a means to urban renewal*: this framework is present in sources that are either international papers or publications affiliated to Droom en Daad. In this framework Droom en Daad is pictured as a foundation focused on improving Rotterdam's landscape through the means of culture, creativity and diversity.

*"A big part of philanthropy is currently focused on the acquisition and development of real estate formerly owned by the municipality."*¹⁹ - (Klerk, 2023)

Finally, as a researcher, I am aware that the selection of the documents may be biased. As this thesis is focused on the interpretation of power relations between philanthropic foundations and municipalities, this may imply that the documents that are selected may be more critical of Droom en Daad and its action and influence. The possibility for selection bias has been taken into account, by utilizing different media platforms. As a result of this, the selection for this thesis likely represents a diversity of perspectives.

5.3 Macro-dimension

Culture, in today's cities, is something that is increasingly used as a tool for economic growth, city branding and the improvement of public spaces. Rotterdam is a prime example for this and Droom en Daad takes a central position within this process. The relation between the foundation and the municipality of Rotterdam highlights a trend of increasingly neoliberal tendencies in local governments that undergo partnerships with private organizations to fund urban renewal projects, which undermines democratic processes within the urban planning agenda.

Zukin states that philanthropic urban planning is driven by private interests, that of the powerful elite, and not by the general wellbeing of the inhabitants. Big prestige projects can have a negative impact on the city dwellers, possibly accelerating processes of gentrification and social stratification and thus enhancing social inequality.

¹⁹ Original tekst translated by author: Een goed deel van de filantropie richt zich momenteel op de aankoop en ontwikkeling van voorheen gemeentelijk vastgoed.

This is specifically the case in relation to Katendrecht, the location of multiple projects by Droom en Daad such as Nederlands Fotomuseum, Danshuis and Fenix Museum. This former red-light district has experienced large transformations in the last years and seen the effects of gentrification first hand, including development of high-income housing and displacement of the original tenants. Droom en daad is accredited to going “full circle” and returning Katendrecht to its “former glory” while the demography of original residents is slowly diminishing (*Katendrecht, Rotterdam: Taking A Walk On The Gentrified Side*, z.d.). The foundation works creates a city that matches with their vision of “Rotterdam’s DNA”, legitimizing thereby their position by funding this with “conscious capital”.

“If a project has the potential to grow into something special that corresponds with Rotterdam’s DNA and engages people, we get on board.”²⁰ - (Kappelle, 2023, p. 8)

Renovating historic buildings and placing public art enables Droom en Daad to stamp their name on Rotterdam. This process also normalizes an elite centric vision of the city and the idea that this demographic has the power to define public interest. The foundation tries to position their efforts as upgrades for the greater good by using concepts like “improving Rotterdam”, while private interests may be the main driving force behind these actions. However, though elite driven urban renewal is problematic, there can be city-wide benefits from the addition of these cultural assets, such as battling stigmatization and improving international recognition. This could culminate in more capital being directed through the city, which can have positive effects for the city as a whole, creating jobs and increasing the tourism sector.

The prestige projects funded by Droom en Daad are cultural assets that add symbolic capital to the city. They do not only enhance the symbolic economy of Rotterdam, but are also aimed at attracting investments. This shows in headlines of international and Dutch newspapers “*Rotterdam back on New York Times travel list after 10 years: ‘Modern cultural capital’*” (OPEN Rotterdam, 2025). The cultural “hotspots” mentioned in this article are “FENIX” and “Nederlands Fotomuseum”, both projects funded by Droom en Daad.

²⁰ Original text translated by author: Heeft een project de potentie om uit te groeien tot iets bijzonders dat aansluit op het Rotterdamse DNA en dat mensen aan het werk zet, dan gaan we in zee.

6. *Discussion and conclusion*

In this thesis, the main focus has been to critically examine how the philanthropic foundation Droom en Daad uses their capital streams to implement change in the urban planning agenda, the symbolic economy and cultural identity of Rotterdam. By using both Bourdieu's and Zukin's theories on power and representation and implementing CDA this paper aimed of to analyse the power dynamics. To mitigate any possible biases, consideration was given to possible personal biases, and to the selection of differing articles that broach the subject in a multitude of ways. With the use of CDA, this thesis has demonstrated how the philanthropic foundation Droom en Daad uses differing streams of capital to strategically shape the urban landscape of Rotterdam.

At the micro level, we see how inclusive language, such as "improving diversity" and "shared history" is used to imply that actions taken by the foundation are for the greater good of the city. Using future oriented language, such as what they "will achieve" in their process of "making Rotterdam better and appealing", frames their projects as positive for the city and its inhabitants while obscuring the private interests and power dynamics at play. This is emphasized by using Wim Pijbes as sole spokesperson of the foundation; he controls the narrative of the foundation that of an elite centred vision of Rotterdam as "high culture hub". Using their financial capital, Droom en Daad strategically accumulates differing streams of capital: symbolic, cultural, social, and political. This is done with the help of individuals that enjoy legitimacy in both the cultural and political landscape. With the acquisition and renovation of historic buildings, the foundation re-invisions and shapes the cultural identity of Rotterdam.

At the meso level, the analysis showed a clear difference in how differing media platforms broach the subject of the foundation and its actions. While the foundation receives international acclaim for their efforts, local and national papers are more critical of their projects and on their influence on the urban planning agenda.

Finally, the macro analysis revealed that there is a general trend of public entities working alongside private organizations to realize urban renewal projects, even if this negates democratic processes. These philanthropic foundations may be problematic. Indeed, their projects are mostly implemented to attract

differing types of capital to the city which might accelerate processes of gentrification, social stratification and social inequality within city borders.

Droom en Daad functions as a cultural hegemony, defining what does and does not align with “Rotterdam’s DNA”. This raises questions about the legitimacy and intentions of initiatives that claim to aim for diversity and inclusion. In literature concerning philanthrocapitalism it is stated that this type of philanthropy inherently does not solve the problems caused by, more often than not, the same capitalist and hegemonic development (Moran, 2014). Furthermore, this development has been stated as problematic because investments concentrated in specific locations or aimed at specific demographics, may worsen social inequality and accelerate processes of social stratification (Puttick, 2023). Further research on the involvement of philanthropic foundations in the Dutch cultural landscape, both in and outside Rotterdam, is necessary to understand how these institutions shape cities. Especially in the case of Droom en Daad that has multiple projects “in the making” in the following years.

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8. Appendix

CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Philanthropic foundations and the city – Droom en daad

Name, email of student: Loulou Geerdes, 708009lg@eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Agni Kalfagianni, kalfagianni@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: January 20, two (2) semesters

Is the research study conducted within DPAS YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. NO

If 'NO': skip to part V.

If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? YES - **NO**

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMQ) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMQ).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). YES - **NO**

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? YES - NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? YES - NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? YES - NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? YES - NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? YES - NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)?
 YES
 S - NO
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent?
 YES - NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? YES - NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? YES - NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The data files will be stored on my personal laptop. The data will be stored until the finalised thesis is completed.

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

Loulou Geerdes

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

The data will be stored after each revision.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

I will not collect personal data.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Loulou Geerdes

Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date: 20-06- 2025

Date: