



*Figure 1 Lecture Curlingouders Radboud Reflects. Foto: Alexander Currie*

## **Radboud Reflects as a Public Space?**

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Master Thesis Human Geography: Urban and Cultural Geography

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## **Preface**

Doing my thesis about a topic I am passionate about has always been my goal, so doing it about the role that my workplace, Radboud Reflects, could play in society was perfect. Not only did I come to understand more about the function of the organisation, but also about the possibilities in which way it can still grow. In order for this thesis to come to life, multiple people gave me the needed support and guidance. Foremostly I would like to thank my partner, Mark. Not only did he listen to me endlessly while I was brainstorming, also did he help me organize my thoughts and provided a lot of emotional support. He kept me from swaying away of the course I had set for myself. Next I would like to thank Rianne van Melik. She helped me back on track after a rocky start and checked in regularly, which I appreciate, knowing that her own schedule must have been swamped. Her feedback was always helpful and very constructive. I would like to thank my mother and sisters as well, who provided moral support whenever needed. Lastly, I would like to thank my colleagues. They form the heart of Radboud Reflects, a place where I enjoy being and working.

## **Abstract**

Seeing cultural organisations of aspects of public space, emphasize their importance to society. This could influence policy making in times of crisis, in which the cultural sector often faces cutbacks. Different forms of cultural organisations have already been researched, such as the library, but there are also other forms which might be a bit harder to put a finger on, such as public lectures. Radboud Reflects organizes public lectures in Nijmegen on the university campus and in the city centre. In this research different aspects of the organisation were analysed, through the use of a survey (N=525), for which T-tests and regression analyses were used, and observations at five different lectures. It is found that the public lectures of Radboud Reflects perform the best regarding the dimensions of accessibility and activity, while sociality and inclusiveness still need further improvement. This could be done through programming more lectures in English and adding time during the lectures for discussion between the visitors.



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## 1. Introduction

The cultural sector in the Netherlands had to deal with big cut-backs in the time of the Rutte I administration in 2010 till 2012, but the current administration, Rutte III, promised to spend eighty million euros more on the cultural sector in 2020 (Volkskrant, 2019). However, this is not enough according to the Council for Culture [CfC]. They argue that the cultural sector also serves a societal function, through their ability to connect people (Council for Culture, 2019). In the same light of this societal function, the CfC stated in April 2019, that cultural organisations that are funded by the government, should make more effort to gain a more diverse audience, while also achieving higher accessibility (Volkskrant, 2019). They should thus contribute more to the social aspects of society, in order to become more public. While this statement might seem to only address the cultural sector which receives subsidies, it is an important indicator of what society seems to desire from cultural organisations in general. Since only ninety cultural organisations receive budget from the national government at this moment, it is important not to overlook the ones that do not, since these are the majority. The CfC (2019) earlier on already stated that it is important that the cultural organisations themselves also contribute to their own funding and have to find the means themselves as well (NOS, 2017). Being able to do so, it is important to understand the role that these cultural organisations play within society. If it is purely artistic, then other people might be willing to fund an organisation than when it also serves a social function.

One of the many cultural organisations that is now dealing with cutbacks and finding funds is Radboud Reflects. Radboud Reflects is an organisation in Nijmegen that organises lectures and discussion on philosophy, ethics, religion, society and culture. It is part of the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies of the Radboud University (Radboud Reflects, 2019). Although they are stationed at the university, their budget does not come directly from the university; instead they are paid from another fund, which cannot guarantee them the same funding as before. This is why Radboud Reflects needs to find other means. A critical analysis of an organisation and the functions it fulfils can help them in these searches, for it helps them focus on what they are already achieving, and what they want to achieve. This makes it clear which steps should be taken next, but also which ones should not be considered.

Due to the current corona crisis, this matter seems to become even more urgent than it already was. Due to the crisis, daily life as we know it took a rather unexpected turn, resulting in the minimalization of social activities within society (AD, 2020; Dutch government, 2020a). In an attempt to fight the crisis and stop the spreading of it as much as possible, different countries provided different measures. In the Netherlands people are not allowed to gather in large groups anymore and are to keep 1,5 meter distance between themselves and others at all times, with the only exception being

the people within the own household. People are expected to stay home as much as possible and work from home, only those that cannot work from home are allowed to go to work (AD, 2020; Dutch government, 2020a). Museums, theatres and all kinds of cultural instances were closed until 1 June. However, the 1,5 meter rule is still in place, so less people can be together in one hall at a time. Bigger events are not allowed until 1 September (Dutch government, 2020b). Some moved their business temporarily online, in order to still provide some content to all those at home (Avrotros, 2020). However, with an expected financial crisis to follow this corona crisis to come soon, many temporary workers and small scaled entrepreneurs now fear for their jobs and maybe rightly so, for many people already face the reality of losing their job due to organisations and shops closing down (CBS, 2020). The CfC (2020) already expressed its worry about the consequences this pandemic will have on the cultural sector and everybody working in it.

## 1.2 Research question

“Academic public lectures on the campus and in the city on philosophy, religion, ethics, society and culture.” This is the first thing one reads when entering the site of Radboud Reflects. Above it is the title “verdiepende lezingen voor iedereen”, which translates to “in-depth lectures for everyone”. Whether the activities of Radboud Reflects are indeed for everyone remains to be determined. Is the audience diverse and is it accessible for everyone? Is it attractive and inviting? What hurdles might there be for someone in order to attend a program? Moreover, maybe it also fulfils other functions. Is it also a meeting place, a place to go with friends, a place to get inspired for new ideas or maybe even a place where to meet new people from other kinds of backgrounds? With the lectures being public, it could mean that these questions above could be answered positively. If so, that could mean that these public lectures function as a public space, for these question’s asked above, are also important when analysing a public space. This leads to the following research question:

*‘To what extent does Radboud Reflects fulfil the function of a public space?’*

In order to answer this question, two sub-questions were formulated. The first one tries to answer the question what different dimensions there are to a public space. While the questions mentioned above might give some ideas, this is of course not yet elaborate enough to analyse a place. There might still be many aspects of public spaces, that are yet to be included in this research. In order to know whether or not something can be called a public space, one must know what a public space actually consists of. Figuring out what different dimensions there are to a place, allows for a more critical analysis and better understanding of what actually makes a place a public space. This results in the following subquestion:

1. *What different dimensions can be distinguished that make a place a public space?*

### 1.3 Societal Relevance

In the last decade, the cultural sector in the Netherlands has faced many austerity measures. The organisations were expected to find new funds from the private sector. However, for cultural organisations, whose focus generally is not profit, it might be a challenge to find enough funding without help. Especially for small and specialised organisations the loss of government funding makes it hard to keep their heads afloat. For many cultural organisations in the Netherlands it is unclear whether they will keep their funding by the government within the new policy that is being written and which will go into effect in 2021, the 'Basisinfrastructuur 2021-2024'.

There are also still cultural organisations that did not receive any funding to begin with. Having insights if cultural organisations attract a specific audience or whether they are more inclusive is therefore necessary. In times of cut backs it is important to know ones perks and downsides in order to make a compelling argument for funds. Why go through all the trouble to find funding, if the government does not want to provide anymore? Because culture holds important functions in our society. While talking about finance, it is sometimes easy to forget the important functions that culture, and the cultural organisations in the cultural sector, can fulfil. Culture has more functions than only an artistic one (Council of Culture, 2019). Another function of culture in our society is a social one, it connects people within society with other people and other groups. At the same time it also gives people a sense of belonging to a certain group, which is paradoxically differentiating people and groups within society while mediating connections at the same time (Gauntlett, 2011; Hegeman, 2012). All the while culture also has the power to romanticize and appreciate the past, while also playing the opposing part in the way it can facilitate modern ideas (Hegeman, 2012). And even if one only wants to talk money, culture can still be of interest. Although not necessarily a prime function of culture, it can also cause economic benefits. Cerisola (2019, p.46) argues that cultural heritage has a mediating effect on local economy and helps artistic and scientific development, for it "pushes our capacity to doubt, to innovate and to think critically."

Moreover, this research argues that certain organisations can also perform the function of a third space, a space which is different from the first and second space, home and work/school, but not less important. Oldenburg (1991) argues that a third space can perform as a neutral place, a leveler, in which people from different background come together and can converse or partake in activities that spark conversations. It is a place people can frequent, Oldenburg (1991) would even like it to be open as much as possible, so people can go there on a whim to meet with others. It is understandable then, that a third place should be in close proximity to one's home.

Radboud Reflects is also a cultural organization in Nijmegen that needs to look for new funding. However, it is not a typical cultural organisation. They organise lectures on religion, culture, ethics and

society, in which researchers, mostly of the Radboud University in Nijmegen, can present their findings or thoughts to a broader audience. This organisation is, in contrary to the situation above, not funded by the government, but by a private group which is connected to the Radboud University. This group does however, finance it with their own money and not with the money of the Radboud University, so no public money is spent. However, this group has had to cut back on the funding for Radboud Reflects and other means of income are now necessary, in order to keep this non-profit organization up and going.

This is important, because culture is an important aspect of our everyday lives and it would be a shame if the sector lost its diversity and richness. The CfC also warned against tearing down the cultural sector (Council for Culture, 2019). Moreover, if a cultural organisation also seems to fulfil the important function of a third space, it can be even more in the interest of everyone to keep these organisations, including as much people as possible, while bursting the bubbles in which people live and connecting them to others in society (Kohn, 2004; Madanipour, 1999; Peters, Elands and Buijs, 2010; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner & Christ, 2011). If this study finds that the activities of Radboud Reflects, namely the lectures, can be seen as a public space, this could help them in finding funding. It might mean that the funding could be sought in different places than one would think of right away, when only thinking about groups that are related to lectures. But it does not stop there. Other activities by cultural organisation could serve this same function as well, so the outcomes of this research is interesting for more organisations than Radboud Reflects alone. If certain activities indeed function as a public space, it could be more interesting for other groups to fund them, because of the benefits a public space can bring to the city. Even if not interested in the activity itself, the consequences of the activity could be of interest to financiers.

#### **1.4 Scientific Relevance**

This research shall further add to the ongoing debate about which spaces can be seen as a public space and what this exactly entails. The idea that places can be either public or private, is already contested by many researchers (Kohn, 2004; Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013; Madanipour, 2019; Orum and Neal, 2010; Oldenburg 1991). It is not as dichotomous as one would think, but should be seen as a continuum. For instance, a coffee house is a private enterprise, but still many people use it as a public space (Oldenburg, 1991; Orum and Neal, 2010). On the other hand, there are entire neighbourhoods that are gated, making a place which would normally seem to be a public space, with sidewalks and parks, to be highly privatized (Kohn, 2004). But the many forms which public space can take on, is still debated. While there is already research on arts and theatre as public space (Orum & Neal, 2010), this cultural form is, to the knowledge of the writer, still not touched upon. Moreover, while other researches might look at activities within public spaces, this research will look at the activity as a public

space on itself, namely the lectures that are held by Radboud Reflects.

The studies which focus and describe the blurring of private and public spaces, have formed the base on which this study further elaborates upon. For, while a lot of forms of public space have already been studied, there are cultural activities which have not yet been researched in regard to the function of public space and for which the results cannot simply be generalized, like for public lectures. However, gaining knowledge about the diversity of public spaces, could help us in finding what makes different places, different public spaces. The uniqueness of the situation can help broaden our view on the subject of public space altogether. For instance, a well-known subject in this field of research, is the idea of a library as a public space, which has been found to enhance community building and social capital (Aabø and Audunson, 2012).

Would a cultural event or a public lecture could not serve these functions as well? In Nijmegen, Radboud Reflects organizes lectures in order to spread the knowledge that is gained by researchers at the Radboud University. These lectures form an interesting subject, for it is yet unknown whether they also serve a social function or not. It could be argued that they form a third space, through providing topics for conversation (Oldenburg, 1991). They might also provide places where people can break from their patterns and gain new ideas and understanding (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 201). Results of this research will be interesting for other sorts of cultural activities as well, which are not yet covered by earlier research either, for they might have the same conditions that the public lectures described in this research have, even if the form of organization is comparable or not. Other forms of cultural activities might also potentially be a form of public space on their own, not only activities within a space.

## **1.5 Structure of this Research**

In order to answer the research questions posed above, different methods have been used. In order to ask people their vision on the lectures of Radboud Reflects and in order to gain descriptive data and help look for differences between groups, a survey has been used. Next to the survey, observations have been conducted at multiple lectures of Radboud Reflects. Before diving into this further, this research shall begin with a theoretical framework in the second chapter regarding these public lectures, in order to understand whether these can be understood as a public space in theory. The third chapter shall discuss the case study of the lectures of Radboud Reflects and provide background information on this organisation. The methods shall then be further elaborated upon in the fourth chapter. This is followed by the analysis of the data and the results in the fifth chapter. Lastly, the sixth chapter is used to conclude this research and discuss upon the findings. All the used literature for this research can be found in chapter seven.

## 2. Public Lectures as Public Space

Public space enables encounters between people of different walks of life, which can break their bubble and lessen prejudice against others (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). It enables social cohesion to become stronger (Madanipour, 1999; Peters, Elands and Buijs, 2010). This is important, because, in worst case scenario, distrust and feelings of unsafety can ultimately grow into violence against entire groups, which undermines our personal and societal safety and wellbeing (Dalal, 2015; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011; Sen, 2011).

Moreover, Richard Sennett (1992) believes public space to be important for the functioning of the politics and thus one's freedom. He states that society is becoming more individualistic and people themselves tend to be less engaged in political discourse. Public space should then counter this effect by enabling people to talk about politics and thus participate in the democratic system. Public space can be a playing field for power struggles, in which the powerless can confront the powerful, which otherwise may not cross each other's paths (Madanipour, 1999; Sennett, 1992, Orum and Neal, 2010). Habermas (1989) also talks about the political involvement and discussion and describes these activities to take place in a public sphere, which is not a physical place, but an abstract one which can be present in a physical place: a public place can house a public sphere. There is also an economical aspect to public spaces. In 1999, Madanipour was already talking about the declining city centre and stated this could cause segregation within cities. Public space can serve as a way to keep the inner-city lively, which will also help the economy within the city centre.

Even though many reasons were given why a public space could play an important function in our society, the question what a public space exactly is, remains unanswered. Where people used to think there is a clear division between public and private space, the notion that it is blurred has become more accepted nowadays (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013; Madanipour, 2019; Oldenburg, 1991). There are examples of places owned by the government, which do not function as a public space and places that are privatised that seem to do. Such as the municipal swimming pool, which is a public good, but people can still be removed from it easily, and cafés that are privately owned, but used by people as a public space to catch up with one another and interact freely (Glover, as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015; Orum & Neal, 2010).

Because it is yet unclear what functions as a public space for whom, it is understandable that not every possible form has yet been researched upon. For instance, there is research on parks, coffee houses and libraries as public spaces (Aabø & Audunson, 2012; Atkinson, 2003; Low, Taplin & Scheld, 2009), but a form that has yet to be looked into are public lectures. Public lectures are programs that are organised, as the name would suggest, for the public. These lectures can vary widely in topics and organization, but the general idea is often to provide knowledge or food for thought to those attending

the lectures. Could these lectures form a public sphere just like other cultural activities, such as the theatre? And if so, what makes them able to be classified as a public space? Are public lectures really that public? In order to find out, this research shall delve deeper into the different aspects of public lectures and how they might perform as a public space.

In section 3.1 public space shall be elaborated upon, in order to gain a better understanding of this concept. Section 3.2 shall then continue to explore the ways that public lectures could be seen as certain forms of public spaces, focussing on the microlevels and animation. Lastly, in the third section of this chapter, it is discussed how these theories can be translated to the assessment of a certain space and what conceptual model can be used in order to conduct this research.

## **2.1 Public Space**

We all come across different forms of public space on a daily basis, without perhaps spending too much thought on them. Everyone knows the classic examples such as parks and squares (Orum & Neal, 2010). Orum and Neal (p.1, 2010) mention that the most used definition is *“all areas that are open and accessible to all members of the public in a society, in principle though not necessarily in practice”*. With ‘all spaces’ they explain that they mean all places that can lead to communication between people. Open and accessible means that everybody should be able to use the space and should be able to reach the space. Who these members of society are is a bit trickier. It depends on formal and informal notions within society and can thus differ. As an example Orum and Neal (2010) mention that homeless people are sometimes removed from public parks and thus apparently are not seen as members of the public in this situation. Glover (as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015) also mentions that parks are not always as public as they seem for this exact reason. Lastly, Orum and Neal (2010) mention that all these conditions are ideals. A place can be open and accessible for everyone in theory, while restrictions can still occur in real life.

They warn to not use this definition as a fixed one, but rather as guidelines, for public space is a complex concept. A rather convincing example that can be given is the one of the Agora in the ancient Greek times. The Agora was a marketplace, but at the same time also functioned as the stage for politics and law, religion and social interaction between people (Van Melik, 2015; Orum & Neal, 2010; Touaf & Boutkhil, 2008), just as public space nowadays provides a place for the political, the legal, the economic and the social (Habermas, 1989; Madanipour, 1999; Orum & Neal, 2019; Sennett, 1992). While this place is used by some as a prime example of a public space, one can question whether it really was that public. In ancient Greece, they might have founded democracy, but women and slaves were left out of politics altogether (Van Melik, 2015; Orum & Neal, 2010; Touaf & Boutkhil, 2008).

The question what is a public space and what is not is still ever so relevant nowadays, with different kinds of ownership of places which are generally perceived as public spaces. Public spaces in

the classic view are places that are owned and managed by the government. But when taking a look at real life, one can see examples of places that are privately owned, such as bars and cafés (Glover, as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015; Orum & Neal, 2010; ). The distinction of public space does not necessarily have to be made purely based on ownership anymore, for these lines get blurred (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013; Madanipour, 2019; Oldenburg, 1991). Glover (as cited in Gammon, & Elkington, 2015) shows this by dividing public space in four categories: quasi-public space, club space, commons and outwardly public space. He states that, while all four forms are indeed still public spaces, they do differ from each other in ownership and accessibility. Quasi-public space is privately owned and people can easily be refused from entering the space, such as a pub. In a club space people can also be easily denied access, but this form is publicly owned, which is the case in a swimming pool. Commons is privately owned, but even so, people cannot easily be denied access, an example would be community gardens. Within outwardly public space it is also difficult to deny access, but is publicly owned, a well-known example is an urban park. (Glover, as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015).

Another way in which different forms of public space can be distinguished, is the way that social interaction is incorporated. Orum and Neal (2010) distinct three different forms in which public space can serve the social. They mention it can work a way to maintain civil order, as a place in which power struggles can be played out and as a place for expression (Orum & Neal, 2010). Interacting with people in a place, can help people form a bond with that place, and help them better understand their position in society and how to act in public. Power struggles between those who claim a space and those who feel to be left out, can be played out within this place, resulting in a site for power struggles. A public place can be a place to express oneself through attending cultural activities or performing in them. It helps to show the world who you are and likewise see how other people present themselves (Orum & Neal, 2010). Different spaces can then function as a public space in different ways.

## **2.2 Micro Levels of Public Space**

According to Amin (2002) public spaces can function as micropublics of the city, which could work well for getting into contact with each other These spaces could be described by, as what Glover (as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015) called, club spaces or quasi-public space, in which access can easily be denied, which makes it possible to keep the group size smaller. Valentine (2008) describes micropublics of the city as follows:

*“They represent sites of purposeful organized group activity where people from different backgrounds are brought together in ways that provide them with the opportunity to break out of fixed patterns of interaction and learn new ways of being and relating” (Valentine, 2008, p.10).*

The micropublics can play a big role within society, because it is where microcultures are enacted, for instance through interaction with others (Amin, 2002; Ho, 2011; McCallum, 2011). Back (as cited in Amin, 2002) names the workplace, college and (sport) clubs as examples of micropublic. The focus here does not lie on the individuals, but on the interaction with each other during a group activity. People should have the opportunity to engage with one another in a public space and these activities helps them do so. It can provide a place to meet with friends and establish one's own identity and discuss the differences with other cultures regarding one's own, it can provide a place of ethnical interaction (Amin, 2002). This is a function of public space that is endorsed in more research (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011; Watson, 2009).

This idea also resonates with the idea of third places of the city. In order to gain a better understanding the third place, one must understand the first and second place, as formulated by Oldenburg (1991). The first place is the home and the second place is work or school environment. He describes the third place as a neutral zone. A place where people can come regularly and in which the people are seen as equal. The third place is a 'leveler', an inclusive place where people can meet up with one another. It is a place where people can step out of their roles, be themselves and socialize with those they like to socialize with, without having to think about proper societal etiquette. Examples of a third space are pubs, cafés and taverns (Oldenburg, 1991). In the third space, conversing is the main activity, but it can also house activities that encourage conversations. Oldenburg also states that third spaces should ideally be open almost all the time, so people can go here alone on a whim in order to meet others, when they might feel like it or when they might feel lonely. Moreover, a third space should also be close to where one lives. It should be in close proximity for those who use it.

This is not to say that public space automatically enables these encounters. The public space within cities does not necessarily meet the ideal of being a place where different kinds of people come in contact with one another, forming a perfect multicultural society (Valentine, 2008). Most of the time, certain places are used by certain people at certain hours, so that the groups that are present in a space are still rather homogenous, instead of diverse (Valentine, 2008). This makes it harder for others to join within this place. And even when encounters do occur, this does not necessarily mean these are positive. Encounters can be negative as well and there is no way of knowing whether if they will be positive or negative, because encounters are unpredictable (Wilson, 2017). Valentine (2008) mentions that not every encounter is a meaningful one, for some do not change behaviour or alter people's ideas and beliefs. They do not change prejudice. Goffman (1963) also differentiates in encounters. He splits them in focused and unfocused interactions. Unfocused interactions, are encounters in which people are present in the same location, but do not participate in a joined activity or direct communication. This seems to correspond with Valentines (2008) idea of a meaningless interaction. A meaningful interaction would then align with what Goffman (1963) calls a focused

interaction. A focused interaction people directly communicate face-to-face or are indeed joined in an activity.

However, it is not to say that no form of communication takes place within unfocused interaction, it is still an interaction after all. The key here is presentation. Even when not in direct contact with one another, people still present themselves in a certain way to others (Goffman, 1963). Furthermore, Goffman argues that many interactions might seem unfocused, while they are actually focused. An example he gives is that of two people crossing each other on the road. First one may look at one another, to look away afterwards and while passing each other. This might seem unfocused, but actually shows the awareness of both people of each other. The first glance shows recognition of the presence of the other, while the averting of eyes afterwards is giving each other space and not seeming to inquisitive (Goffman, 1963). In this example it shows that people might look as if not in direct contact with each other, while actually participating in the same activity.

Wilson (2017) agrees with Valentine (2008) that encounters that are based on social etiquettes, do not tell us anything about prejudice, for one can still be prejudiced while behaving respectably in an encounter. It is then difficult to see whether an encounter changed someone's ideas and beliefs and whether they are meaningful. But Wilson does not agree with the conclusion of Valentine (2008) that encounters are meaningless when they do not lessen someone's prejudice. The sum of these encounters together can still change someone's view in the long run. Norms and values are not pre-given, but are shaped by encounters. Moreover, Wilson (2017) argues that defining an encounter as meaningful or not, is to add value to these yourself, which is also subjective. With doing so, there is a risk of missing out on information that an encounter can produce, because this information is not seen as a desirable outcome. Saying an encounter is only meaningful when it lessens prejudice, keeps one from seeing other consequences of these encounters. Even when this means that it fuelled one's prejudice, it is not to say that the encounter was meaningless. Wilson (2017) warns not to dismiss encounters as meaningless that easily.

Watson (2009) also emphasizes the importance of casual interaction, or rubbing along. The interaction within this form of sociality can be superficial or very intense, but either way it jerks people out of their inner bubble. She does think that minimal interaction can help against prejudice (Watson, 2009). Within this notion of sociality by Watson (2009), the verbal and nonverbal communications are taken into account and it is recognized that, even by only sharing a space with someone else, this is still a form of social interaction. On her research on a market she notes that there are very little people making their way across the market without any form of communication, however small it may be (2009).

Even though contact is important, it is not the only important factor when trying to promote diversity in public space. A reason why public space does not necessarily encourage a diverse crowd to

interact with one another, is for that some are simply not as inviting and serve primarily as a place to cross, instead of a place to be (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Even in a space that is designed perfectly according to theory and which should promote interaction between people with different backgrounds, this is not guaranteed. People are not always as predictable as one hopes and self-selection could mean that people who were already more open to the idea of interaction, are more likely to come to public spaces than people who are not, but are maybe exactly the people you wanted to reach when designing a space (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Another case can be that the people that already used the space, continue using it, while the people who one wants to reach as well, continue to stay away, such as people from other ethnicities. Both scenarios do not encourage multiculturalism. This does not mean that all efforts are futile, but the limitations should not be ignored (Amin, 2002). According to Back (1996), the places that provide more than just contact, are the places that have 'prosaic negotiations'. These are places at which one needs to interact with one another, such as is the case of clubs. Here the categories quasi-public space and club spaces by Glover (as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015) come back again.

Amin (2002) argues that an important factor is the familiarity of the place. Places that provide new settings are best when trying to pull people out of their usual bubble, in order to make them try to understand what is beyond this bubble. A public space should be neutral, in the sense that there is not a dominant idea according to the norms and values of a certain cultural group within society, so people are free to think about what is beyond their own ideas, while trying to comprehend the different backgrounds of others and establishing new ideas about society and about others within society, as well as in regard to themselves (Amin, 2002; Back, 1996; Oldenburg, 1991).

College is named as an example of such a place, which can provide a new situation for many (Amin, 2002; Back, 1996). A lot of people come alone, away from their old homes and neighbourhoods and meet many different people with all kinds of backgrounds. People who one would usually perhaps not meet in the situations they used to live in, now all come to the same school, maybe following the same curriculum or joining the same clubs. The personal interest could dictate more who you meet than the place you come from, making it easier to meet new people and expanding your horizon. Moreover, since most people come to college alone or only with a few connections, it is easier to break out of the fixed patterns they used to live in. College could provide a place for many to reach out of their bubble to experience whole new social contacts and activities, which they would otherwise have not engaged in.

Other places that could fulfil this function are the ones that people tend to go in their free time, so most likely in the evenings and weekends, says Amin (2002). He does also stress the need of these places to actively and consciously step away from keeping an underlying culture within their activities, which often results in the enlargement of the perceived differences between groups and the

exclusion of others, by focussing on traditions of a certain group. The places need to provide an atmosphere where discussion can take place, without the discussion having to result in an outcome. A place where people can share thoughts and react to the thoughts of others.

However, in all public spaces there are always people that are included or excluded from the space (Glover, 2019). There are for instance still people who do go to a certain colleges where they have lots of connections already, or only participate in social activities in which they meet people from the same kind of background. There are of course also people not attending college at all. Moreover, in every space that is made into a public space, there are people that are included and excluded at the same time (Glover, 2019). While college is a public good, it is not per se accessible for everyone. Amin (2002) stated that familiarity with a place is important, but in this case, it would also mean that this would affect the accessibility to activities on campus grounds for everyone that does not study there. How public is then this activity? Glover (2019) also states that no public space is free of a dominating underlying culture, it is always influenced by those in power in the public space. This could of course in itself already keep people with other ideas from entering or participating in a certain public space.

While Amin (2002) mostly talks about culture in the sense of ethnical culture and while this is indeed interesting and shall be looked at in this research as well, it is important to understand that culture does not only differ between ethnical cultures. Next to intergroup differences, which are differences between different groups in society, one can also distinguish intragroup differences. Intragroup differences are the differences within a certain group in society. It is important to take these differences into account as well when researching the micropublics, for this is also a form of diversity. An example of this is the difference between generations. Different generations can be acknowledged by society as belonging to one ethnical group, while their norms and values can vastly differ between people from different generations.

Coming back to public space, this could of course also mean that different generations use public space in a different way. Van Melik and Pijpers (2017) looked into the way older people use public space, by looking which places they go to and what they mean to them. In their research they found out that older people tend to make less use of services that are made in order to get people to interact with each other, such as meeting spaces in a certain building. They rather go to spaces which they can choose themselves and that become familiar places where to interact with others, by regulating them (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017).

Reasons why organized activities intended to get people to meet up do not work, are the fact they do not feel the need for them, because of the timing, familiarity with the buildings and the image of the buildings. Older people in the research stated that they could still find enough opportunities to have contact in their life without the programmed activities. For instance through club activities or going to public spaces. The timing of the organised activities is off, for most of these are programmed

during daytime, while the evening hours would be more preferable, for there are less alternatives available during this time. The familiarity plays a part, for newer buildings are less well-known to older people. Lastly the image of the buildings in which the activities are mostly organised, such as nursing homes, do not spark the feeling of relaxation and leisure with the older people. (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017).

Within the public space they encounter other older people while doing the things they like to do regularly, often meeting the same people while doing this every day, while keeping the contact superficial. Encounters with younger people and people from a different ethnical background still seems to be an issue for some older people. They do not always experience this as positive. However, for some it is and older people do not necessarily only enjoy the company of other older people. They like diverse places, but not too diverse and they like to meet new faces, but these can also cause feelings of anxiety. (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017).

The attempts to construct a public space should be done at a local level, so Amin (2002) suggests, because every space is local specific and the different contexts make or break certain efforts and should be taken into considerations while thinking of ideas in order to create a well-functioning public space. One that can form a bridge between groups within society. While the overall ideas concerning public space are important in the way they shape our ideas about what it should entail, it is not the only thing we should take into consideration, localities should be taken into account as well. One place can be more than one space, depending on the time, activity and people. One place that always attracts everyone, however ideal that may sound, is rather a farfetched dream when confronted with the reality. People like to stick within their groups within certain spaces (Valentine, 2008).

Amin (2002) and Back (1996) argue that it is better to construct an overlap between the different publics that one space can hold, in order to stimulate interaction. If one space functions as a public space for different groups according to time of day, for example, people could be brought into contact with one another, through an activity that might engage members of the different groups. Glover (2019) argues that these activities can be short termed, instead of regular or ongoing. While being flexible, short termed activities can still help community building and changing a place. National policies, however good they might work at a national level, can therefore not be copied to local situations just as they are. These national policies should work as guidelines for the local initiatives instead (Amin, 2002). So while there are concepts of what a public space should entail, such as the four themes of the Project for Public Space [PPS] (2020), the uniqueness of the local space should also be taken into account. The four themes of PPS (2020), which are sociability, comfort, accessibility and activities, can still be filled in with the local information of a certain space.

### 2.3 How to Research?

In order to assess how much certain places function as a public space, multiple indicators have been thought of as measurements. Van Melik, Van Aalst and Van Weesep (2007) distinguished there to be two kinds of places, themed and secured public space, which could then be assessed. Németh and Schmidt (2011) thought of other indicators: ownership, management and users. Varna and Tiesdell (2010), in their research, came up with five indicators, which are ownership, control, civility, physical configuration and animation. Later on, In the OMAI model, four dimension to public space are recognised: ownership, management, accessibility and inclusiveness (Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013). While the methods mentioned earlier are used to compare different kinds of spaces to one another, the OMAI model is built upon a versatile understanding of public space. It takes the consequences of management into account, for a privately owned space could be less accessible, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Moreover, this model makes it easier to compare different spaces, due to the scales that are formulated.

However, why should general models be used to compare the different urban spaces that could serve as public spheres? Does not every space in itself have unique characteristics, determined by different actors? Comparing different places to one another in order to determine which one is a better public space than another, might not do these places justice. One place can have different points linked to public spaces. Neither one space is the same as another. One space can even be used in different ways by different people depending on the time of day. How should one then proceed to research these places?

Even though places in itself are indeed unique, this does not mean that successful public spaces do not adhere to the same logic. While the places might differ in the way they are used and by whom, they could still share certain aspects which make it work. So even though spaces in itself are unique, there could be underlying principles which help to translate these unique places to the public, which results in the active usage of these places by the public. According to Whyte (1980) there are some characteristics which can be found within every successful public space, namely: accessibility, activities that are held, the attractiveness and comfort of a place, and the social quality it holds. These terms however are still rather broad and different actors can view these aspects differently. How should these themes be taken into account, when different people may perceive these themes differently at the exact same time? For example, when spotting surveillance, some people feel more safe because of it, while others might view it as a hidden threat. Why would there be surveillance if everything is safe? (Van Melik, 2015).

These four themes that Whyte (1980) names, also come back in PPS (2020). PPS (2020) recognizes four pointers which could help in identifying whether a space is a successful public space.

These are how accessible a place is, if there are activities, how comfortable a space is and if the place is a sociable one. While these are just as broad as the terms of Whyte (1980), PPS (2020) deconstructed these terms further on a more detailed level. It describes what to look for in a place per aspect and also provides some questions which one could ask themselves when assessing a public space.

For accessibility they stress the connectivity of the place. Is the place easy to reach and with which means of transport? Is it easy to spot? Are there parking facilities? This can be different for different people. Someone with a disability might find the place harder to reach, for example. Regarding comfort, PPS (2020) focusses on image. It asks whether there are enough sitting options and whether the place feels safe. When talking about activities, it is not surprising that it looks at the opportunities to join in an activity. It also asks whether different people use the place, for example people from different generations, and whether the activity can be done the whole day. For sociability it looks at the interaction of people with strangers and friends. This can be compared to the sociality (Watson, 2009) earlier discusses in this chapter. This means it can be both casual and intense, so from holding a door to having a conversation with someone. PPS (2020) formulated the following questions for observation. Do people meet up with others or do they know others there? Is the public in the space diverse? Do they show the place off to someone they brought along and do they interact with others there? These four aspects and the questions that are formulated by the PPS (2020) to accompany these aspects, form a basis for assessing a space. It gives enough guidelines to know what to look for, but it also still gives the freedom to take everything within a place into consideration when observing. Places are still unique and different things can be observed in different spaces.

In this model of PPS (2020), inclusiveness seems to lack emphasize. While they do look for inclusiveness by asking questions about gender and ethnical representation in their questions regarding the assessment of comfort and activities, it is not a theme on itself. This is odd, while many describe public space to be a place where people from different backgrounds meet others, which bursts the bubble they live in (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). That is why inclusiveness will be included in this research as one of the main aspects to assess a public space by. Moreover, in PPS (2020) comfort is seen as a separate dimension to a space, while it can be argued that it is a part of accessibility. Would someone visit a place if it did not feel safe? One would expect these chances to be slimmer. Safety would then contribute to the lessening of the accessibility of a place. PPS (2020) also mentions the seating area. It could be argued that sitting space can be observed before actually entering a space. When someone sees the seats and does not like it, so decides to move on, the accessibility was lessened. The place was less inviting. On the other hand a space that looks inviting has a higher accessibility, because it lessens the barriers to enter the space.

Management and ownership are not included in this conceptual model. Glover (as cited in

Gammon & Elkington, 2015) already showed that differences in ownership do not matter, but the management style does. There are different management styles in both publicly as privately owned public spaces. However, the consequences and outcomes of management will show itself in the way the lectures themselves are organised and set up. Consequences of management seep through the lectures into the observations, so in this way, it is taken into account.

The conceptual model for this study is found in figure 2. It shows the variables that play a role and also indicates what they are expected to affect, following the theory.

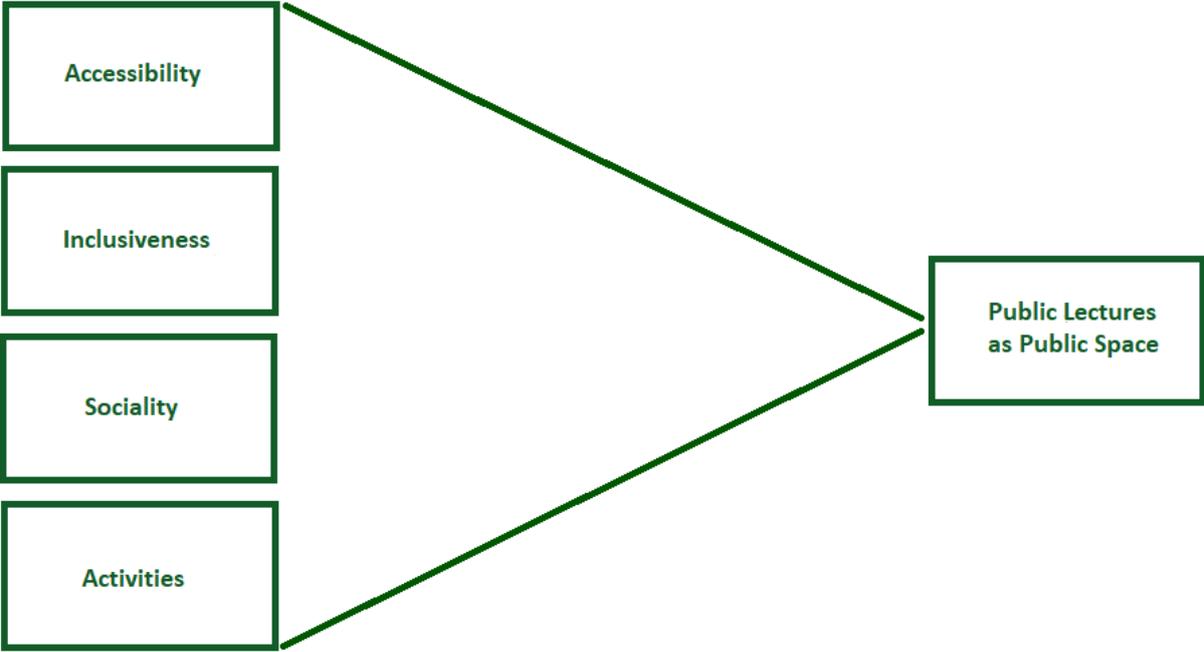


Figure 2 Conceptual Model

**2.4 Public Lectures as Public Space**

For public lectures to be able to be seen as a public space, they should also function in certain aspects as what Amin calls micro-publics or as what Oldenburg describes as the third space. In both these terms, inclusiveness and accessibility are important in order to make a place a successful public space. Providing a new setting, or a leveler, in which people have the opportunity to meet others outside of their own social circle and come into contact with ideas that differ from their own. Is there a possibility to break their bubble? The lectures should ideally be accessible for a diverse audience and provide them with information that might make them see things differently, which they can later on discuss with one another. However, are these public lectures not resembling the club spaces or quasi-public spaces (Glover as cited in Gammon & Elkington, 2015)? Even though they are public, access to lectures can still easily be denied. How public are these lectures then?

There are also other dimensions that are important for a public space. The place at which the lectures are held should be attractive and welcoming. People should find the place to be safe. Public lectures are indeed activities, which is one of the dimensions which is said to make for a better public space. However, how is the sociality at a public lecture? Can a public lecture be seen as a joined activity? It could be the rubbing along, which Watson (2009) discussed or what Goffman (1963) calls unfocused interaction. People are still in the same space and listening to the same lecture. While there may be not much talking involved, body language is still interpreted by those around someone. People still notice each other in the room, even without showing interest in others. Moreover, before a lecture begins there might be all kinds of openings for different levels of sociality. Before entering the lecture, or after the lecture has finished, there might be opportunities to interact with one another, even engage in conversation.

### **3. Radboud Reflects**

Radboud Reflects is an organisation that organizes lectures in different forms. They organise lectures in Dutch as well as in English. Annually they attract over 17.000 visitors to their programs. They are part of the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies of Radboud University. It did not originate from within this faculty however. It became the organisation it is today after multiple mergers. Radboud Reflects nowadays is a merger of Soeterbeeck Programma and Centrum voor Ethiek, which happened in 2015. In turn, Soeterbeeck Programma used to be a merger of Katholiek Studiecentrum and de Thomas More Academie. This merger happened in 2001. (Radboud Reflects, 2020)

Originally it was established to help preserve the catholic values and norms of the Radboud University within society and in order to form a bridge between the academic world and society. The mission of Radboud Reflects nowadays has shifted its focus to helping people understand complex situations and help them think further about these topics. So bridging the gap between research and society. It serves as a platform for scientists at Radboud University to explain what they are working on and why it is helpful to society, to those who are interested. This way, academic thoughts are spread outside of the university campus and could reach people that are not, or have never been, connected to the university. This should help spread the information that is gathered at the university, among a big audience. The organisation also says that big international thinkers are holding their lectures regularly at Radboud Reflects. The lectures organised by the organisation are meant to be for the broader public, whether they are connected to the university or not. They state that their lectures are public lectures and for everyone to attend. (Radboud Reflects, 2020)

#### **3.1 The Organisation**

Radboud Reflects is connected to the Radboud University in structural organisation and content. In the lectures they organise, they give a stage to scientists from the Radboud University, who can then talk about their research field in regard to contemporary situations in society and different themes. It helps to show the society what is being done at the university and how this could help society. The organisation is located on the campus of the Radboud University, namely in the Erasmusbuilding. There office is on the same floor as part of the Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies. This makes it easier to keep in contact with the researchers and keep up to date on what they are working on and could be used for a program.

The team consists of thirteen people. Three are part of the management team, namely the director of science, which keeps an eye on the scientific field, the head of programming and the head of human resources. There is also an advisor in ethics, which helps with the ethical discussion within programs and gives advice on how this can be incorporated in the programs that are being planned.

Next to that there are four program managers. They think of ideas for programs and discuss with each other which are going to be taken place and what is most interesting to address within these programs. In order to produce these lectures which are being planned, the production teams comes in. It consists of six people: two facility managers, an office managers, an administrative worker, a communication advisor and a student which helps with the communication tasks. Because it is a small team, it happens that people step in where necessary to help out.

### **3.2 The Programs**

The different programs they organise are: Lectures in the evening, Academic Affairs Lectures, Current Affairs Lectures, Film and Discussion, big lectures in de Vereeniging or Stadsschouwburg and the Executive Lunch. De Vereeniging and de Stadsschouwburg are larger theatres in the city centre of Nijmegen. These halls can hold more people, but are also more expensive. That is why only the big lectures are organised here, of which it is a possibility that they would attract 1000 or more people.

Most of the time, there are two lectures a week in the evenings. These are planned on beforehand and the programs are announced and put online in advance. These lectures are normally the evening lectures, but can also be the Film and Discussion or a big lecture in de Vereeniging or Stadsschouwburg, however, the last two are way less frequent. The Film and Discussion are organised around six times a year, while the big lectures are once or twice per year. Moreover, the Film and Discussion are a collaboration with the art filmhouse LUX, which is located in the city. The organisation also partakes in multiple other collaborations across the year, of which some are yearly. Among these programs are lectures on the Kaaij and Festival Op 't Eiland (Festival on the Island), which are both cultural events that are held during the Four Days Marches festivities in Nijmegen. Another collaboration they did this year was with Stukafest. This is a festival in which people can visit different student housings in which all sorts of activities are planned.

The regular fee for a normal lecture entails €7,50. One can also get a subscription? for €30,- per calendar year. The regular lectures are free for students. No distinction is made between the University, University of Applied Sciences and high school students. Alumni of the Radboud University and employees of the Radboud University can get a discount and pay €5,- for a regular lecture. . The programs in LUX are charged as regular lectures, as described above, except for the Film and Discussions. These programs, in cooperation with LUX, costs more, namely regular tickets €10,- and everyone who gets discounted or free tickets at regular lectures pay €7,50. In these programs, a film is being watched in total and is introduced shortly by a speaker that know more about the topic of the film. Afterwards there is a discussion on the film with the speaker as well. For example, last time the film 'Dark Waters' was shown, which is based on real life, in which an attorney finds out that a company has been ditching toxic waste in the drinking water of an entire city for years already. The film was

introduced and discussed by two experts in this field; a lawyer and an industrial engineer. The programs at de Vereeniging and at de Stadsschouwburg are a bit more expensive, these costs €15,- without discount and €10,- with discount, which is again for students, alumni, employees at Radboud University and people with an annual abonnement.

The organisation is non-profit and asks entrance fee in order to keep being able to organise these lectures. While most of the lectures are on the university, renting a hall still costs money and so does renting a hall at another location, such as de Vereeniging, Stadsschouwburg and LUX. Other costs of a program are of course the salary of the team, the technicians that record the lecture, the students that help set up the stage for a lecture and the speakers themselves sometimes. Next to that, the appliances that are necessary to record sometimes need to be renewed and so do the things like the beamer, chairs and tables. There is also a budget for communication, for instance for posters.

There are also some programs that are free to everybody, these are the Current Affairs Lectures. These are held during lunchtime on the university campus, mostly in the hall of the Erasmusbuilding at the staircase. People can come and go as they please while this program is being held. These programs are not planned on beforehand, but when something big happens in the news, which could do with some more in-depth explanations and reflections by researchers of the Radboud University, that are experts in these fields. An example is the assassination of Soleimani or the recent spread of the coronavirus. Other programs that are free of charge are the programs in the summer at De Kaaij and Festival Op 't Eiland. The programs that are organised within festivals, such as Stukafest or Kunstnacht, do not ask for entrance by itself, but are part of festivals, for which passe-partouts have to be bought through the organisation of the festivals. Most of the lectures are recorded and the footage is later on shared on their website for free in the form of podcasts and videos. Podcasts are recorded for almost every lecture, except for the ones that are really small and intimate, because of privacy reasons. Videos are made for all the lectures, except for the Current Affairs Lectures. When a speaker objects, no recording is being made of the lecture at all.

### **3.3 Radboud Reflects as a Public Space?**

Knowing now that Radboud Reflects asks an entrance fee to most people at most programs it might seem a bit strange to research the publicness of these programs. But even though there is an entrance fee most of the time, this does not mean that the other aspects of Radboud Reflects cannot function as a public space anymore. True, it raises the inaccessibility of a space, but for some the prices might not be seen as that high and might not restrict their accessibility. So while it should of course be kept in mind that Radboud Reflects has an entrance fee, that should not stop anyone from looking further to the other potential this space can have. This is to be said for cultural organisations in general. Most cultural organisations ask a fee for their programs or services, such as the museums, arthouses and

libraries (de Bibliotheek Gelderland Zuid, 2020; LUX, 2020; Museum het Valkhof, 2020). These cultural organisations often are non-profit. With the cutbacks of government funds in the cultural sector, more organisations might have to ask money, or more money, for their programming, in order to keep existing (CBS, 2014). All the while there are certain functions expected of them, such as accessibility and inclusiveness (Council for Culture, 2019). This is very similar to Radboud Reflects. In order to research if these kinds of cultural organisations can indeed fulfil a function of a public space, one must look beyond the entrance fee. The outcomes might even be a stimulus for the government and other authorities to reflect on the funding these cultural organisations are getting and whether it might be worth to make these entrance fees unnecessary. For if they do function as public spaces, they could play an important role for the inclusiveness and sociality of our society. To look beyond the entrance fee, is to look at the possibilities that Radboud Reflects enables for the visitors. Do people socialize at the programs? Do they learn new things? What else could influence the accessibility and inclusiveness of the programs?

Radboud Reflects offers temporary activities, which can help transform a space and help with community building (Glover, 2019). The programs of Radboud Reflects could perhaps function as a new ground for many people, helping them break from their fixed ideas. The programs are mostly held on evenings on weekdays and offer a place to gain new insights of other cultures and philosophy's, which people might not yet have heard of. It could provide a place where to break away from fixed patterns, while it can also provide information that can help form new ideas about society and culture. Some of the programs are held on the campus ground, which could help attract students of all kinds of backgrounds to partake in these programs and perhaps also people that work at the university. Other lectures are held in the city centre, which maybe could help in attracting people that do not find their ways to the university campus that easily. Moreover, the lectures should be welcoming an invite people to join in, while giving a safe feeling (PPS, 2020)

While the biggest part of the program consists of a lecture that is given by a speaker, they also include a discussion part at the end in which people can ask questions to the speaker, on which the speaker, and others, can react. These could perhaps function as the open ended discussions that Amin (2002) talks about in his work and the discussions that Habermas (1989) mentions. In this way, the programs of Radboud Reflects could offer a new setting. While there is not much time for active contact during the lecture itself, there is still passive contact and even sitting with other people in one place means that passive contact takes place (Van Leeuwen, 2010). Even though casual, there is still sociality, which could possibly help overcome prejudice (Watson, 2009).

However, critique can also be raised to the programs of Radboud Reflects as a public space. The organisation does not provide an overlap in spaces as suggested by Amin (2002) and Back (1996) Another criteria that is raised, is that of a dominant underlying culture being present or not. Do the

lectures of Radboud Reflects try to stay away from a certain underlying idea? No (public) space can be value free, so do these lectures not only attract likeminded? The themes of the programs, the programmers and the speakers that are asked to present could mirror this and should be taken into account.

## 4. Methodology

To answer the research question, the sub questions shall be looked into, through quantitative research methods, namely the use of surveys (N=525), as well as qualitative research methods, such as observation at 5 lectures.

### 4.1 Surveys

In order to answer the first sub question about accessibility, inclusiveness, sociality and activities, different methods shall be used, which have the potential to complement one another. Accessibility and inclusiveness can both be split into perceived and non-perceived. Perceived accessibility and inclusiveness is about what people think of the accessibility and inclusiveness. So in this case, if they find the different programs of Radboud Reflects to be accessible and inclusive or not. Also the perceptions on sociality by the people can differ from what can be observed in real life. To find out about the perceptions of people, surveys were conducted among the visitors of Radboud Reflects.

Surveys are a relatively quick and inexpensive way of gathering a lot of data, especially the computer-assisted web interviewing (CASI) ones, making it a logical choice to gather data about the perceived accessibility and inclusiveness. The survey was distributed via e-mail and were self-completion questionnaires. The surveys via the computer are preferable, for there seems to be fewer mistakes made with these types of surveys and they are quick for the people to fill in (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009), which lowers the barrier to participate. When people see the questions on screen, it is less likely for them to fill in the wrong answers to the wrong questions and by visualising the questions, multiple methods can be chosen in order to make it quicker for people to fill out the questions, for example by writing out the multiple response options or by adding scales to the answer possibilities, such as 'on a scale from one to five, with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree. This has been done for certain questions in this survey as well (Appendix A). The possibility of skipping a question is also slimmer. Through routing it is prevented that people have to see questions that are irrelevant to their own situation (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009).

While conducting a survey can thus be beneficiary, it is important that it is done right, in order to gain good data. If there are too many questions or if the questions are too complicated, it is likely for people to stop midway through the survey (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009). They might also decide not to start the survey at all. People also tend to be more engaged in surveys regarding topics they themselves find interesting. Furthermore, how obvious it may sound, it must be made sure that the questions that are asked are indeed generating the wanted data. It is also important to make sure that the right people are included in the survey, that one reaches the right population (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009; Singh, 2007).

When people are not prepared to participate to the research or if people cannot be reached,

it is called unit non-response. Even if people do participate, non-response can still be an issue, namely item non-response (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009; Singh, 2007). This means that people forget or refuse to fill in certain questions, so the answer to these is not given and cannot be used in analysis. While CASI surveys are the quickest and cheapest possibility, the unit non-response is also the biggest. That is why one can consider convincing people to fill out the survey by offering them a (chance on) an incentive, a small token of appreciation in the form of a gift card or the sorts.

In this research, people got the chance to win one of three gift cards if they wanted to. When the survey was closed, three people were chosen at random as winners of the gift cards. The item non-response in CASI can also be fought by making the important questions compulsory to be filled out (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009). This has also been done in the survey of this research. Some questions were mandatory, while others, such as all the remarks that people could fill in, were optional.

Lastly, if the subjects of the survey are considered to be sensitive topics, people might answer in the way they think is socially acceptable (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009; Singh 2007). The survey that was conducted for this research, however, does not touch upon sensitive questions. Some topics which might have been considered as more sensitive, such as personal information as sex, were kept as general as possible. For sex, people could choose from man, female and other.

In the survey that was conducted for this study, closed and open questions were asked and people were given the chance to write their thoughts down as well if they felt they were relevant, but were not asked of in the questionnaire. The survey that was used can be found in Appendix A. The risk with a survey is that the pre given answers are not comprehensive and people cannot identify themselves with any of the given options. Therefore the option was given to give their own answer if none of the pre-selected options capture the respondents opinion.

Via these questionnaires, descriptive data has been gathered. Furthermore, to research whether there are differences in perceived accessibility and inclusiveness and sociality within different subgroups of Radboud Reflects participants, statistical tests were used to find out whether there are significant differences and relations. While digital surveying forms a barrier to those without access to internet, it is expected in this research that this will not pose any threats to the validity or reliability of this research, for participants in the activities of Radboud Reflects need to sign in for a lecture through a digital form in most of the cases and the people that are reached out to are signed in for the digital newspaper of Radboud Reflects. Also for the lectures that are free, registration is most of the times obligatory, because of the size of the spaces that are used and the amount in people that are allowed to enter at the same time, regarding the fire safety. There are only a few exceptions in which lectures are free and registration beforehand is not needed.

## 4.2 Operationalisation

In order to assess the different dimensions of the Radboud Reflects programs, a survey was conducted among the people within the database of Radboud Reflects, who signed in for the newsletter. This way, more people could be reached than if the survey was conducted among the people that came to the lectures. This pool consists of everyone that has signed up for the newsletter of Radboud Reflects, among which people are present that used to come, but no longer do. This group also entails people that do not come on the regular and of course also people that might come on the regular, but not to the lectures at which the form would have been handed out. Moreover, at the lectures there is a maximum of people that can attend, due to the size of the hall. With surveys through the internet, more people could be reached. The total group that got an invitation to fill in the survey contains 10.790 people. Of this group, 5.440 actually opened the mail and 713 people filled in the survey. The descriptive characteristics of the group of people that filled in the survey can be seen in table 4.1.

### Did not attend a program

Not everyone went to a program of Radboud Reflects, namely 109 people did not. These people could give their reason why they did not come. Most people said that distance was the reason they did not come. A few of them mention that they live in the Randstad, so the time it takes to travel to a program would be longer than the actual program itself. They do say that they appreciate the information that is send to them and one of them said that they frequent the YouTube-channel and podcast channel of Radboud Reflects instead. These people were filtered out of the dataset and are not further used in the analysis for this research. The amount of respondents that did attend a program was 571.

### Variables

To measure the dependent variables thirteen questions were asked. For the survey and these questions, please see appendix A. Respondents were asked to give their opinions on statements about the lectures of Radboud Reflects on a 5 points scale from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. These questions were then combined into a scale, a Likertscale. This is the same five point scale that is used for all the individual question's. This way of processing data increases the validity, for it takes away certain external factors. When filling in a survey, a number of things can happen that can distract someone, which can result in a wrong answer on one of the questions. By combining the questions in a scale, the odds of this happening are lessened, because it calculates an average (Segers, 2002).

To make certain we are measuring what we want to measure factor analysis was used to distinguish between the dimensions that these questions measure. So the factor analysis tells if the questions are really about the same theme and can be combined in one scale and with that, checks for reliability of the scale. After the analysis we found that there were 4 concepts that can be distinguished with these

thirteen questions. One of them only existed of 2 variables and was therefore removed from the further analyses. Out of the other eleven questions three concepts were created.

*Table 4.1: Population by characteristics, visitors Radboud Reflects that filled in the survey compared to the population in the Netherlands.*

<b>Characteristics of the population</b>	<b>Population (in %)</b>	
	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Radboud Reflects survey</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
% Man	49,7	47,7
% Woman	50,3	49,9
% Other	0	1
<b>Age</b>		
< 15 years	14,9	0,0
15 to 25 years	12,3	10,8
25 to 45 years	24,6	21,6
45 to 65 years	28,0	29,1
65 years or older	19,2	38,5
<b>Migrant background</b>		
% persons with a migrant background	23,6	10,0
% persons without a migrant background	76,4	90,0
<b>Level of education</b>		
Primary school	8,6	0,0
High school	19,3	6,5
Intermediate Vocational Education	38,1	1,8
Higher vocational education, university bachelor	20,6	22,8
Higher vocational educational master, university master, doctor	11,9	68,8
<b>Daily occupation</b>		
In search for employment	3,6	2,9
Working	68,7	38,7
Unfit for work	4,7	2,6
Not working (study+household)	4,9	17,1
Retired	18	30,1

*Source: CBS-statline, population per 01-01-2019 and survey visitors Radboud Reflects February 2020.*

T-tests have been used to test whether there were differences between groups of visitors of the lectures of Radboud Reflects on how they score on the different concepts. With a T-test it can be seen if there is significant difference between the means of scores between groups for a specific variable. In this case the three concepts. The results of these tests will be discussed in chapter 5. To go beyond just looking at the different means and see if there is statistical relation between peoples' characteristics and the different concepts, linear regression analyses have been conducted for the

different concepts. With a linear regression analysis it is possible to look at the influence of different factors on a dependent variable.

Eventually, a statistical analysis is performed to see if there is a relation between the different locations that are visited and peoples' characteristics. Since the dependant variable in this case is dichotomous (did you, or did you not visit a location) a linear regression analysis was not possible. Instead a logistic regression analyses was performed.

### Openness

The first concept that came out of the factor analysis, is that of 'openness' of the lectures of Radboud Reflects. Four questions were used to create a scale that measures the perceived openness<sup>1</sup>. This was done by calculating the mean of the four items into a Likertscale. The used items can be seen below.

*Items used for the perceived openness.*

- I felt save during this program
- The program is inviting
- This program of Radboud Reflects was easily accessible
- I felt at ease during this program

Table 4.2 Perceived Openness

	N	Percent (%)	Percent of Cases
Strongly disagree	1	0,2	0,2
Disagree	1	0,2	0,2
Neutral	16	2,8	3,0
Agree	337	59,0	64,2
Strongly agree	170	29,8	32,4
Total	525	100	

To make sure that the created scale is reliable, a test of reliability was performed. To measure the level of reliability the Cronbach's Alpha was used. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .764 on a scale from 0 to 1, which makes it a reliable scale. There are 46 missings on this scale. The frequencies of this scale can be seen in table 4.2.

<sup>1</sup> At first, five items were used to construct this scale but one was discarded after the reliability test.

### Diversity

The second concept that was chosen is 'Diversity'. Three questions were used to create a scale that measures the perceived diversity. This was again done by calculating the mean of the three items into a Likertscale.

#### *Items used for the perceived diversity.*

- There are people that I normally would not meet in day to day life
- The program is accessible for everybody
- The programs attract a diverse audience

The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .641 on a scale from 0 to 1, which makes it a questionable scale regarding reliability. A scale of .700 or higher is considered a reliable scale. Given the content of the three questions it is still chosen to use this scale as it could be argued that these are three questions that logically would measure an aspect of diversity. This is, however, something to be considered when discussing the results. There are 46 missing on this scale. The frequencies of this scale can be seen in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Perceived Diversity

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Strongly disagree	4	0,7	0,8
Disagree	66	11,6	12,6
Neutral	269	47,1	51,2
Agree	178	31,2	33,9
Strongly agree	8	1,4	1,5
Total	525	100	

### Insights

The third concept that was chosen is 'insights'. Three questions were used to create a scale that measures the perceived gained insights. This was again done by calculating the mean of the three items into a Likertscale. The used items can be seen below.

#### *Items used for the perceived gained insights.*

- During this program I gained new insights
- The programs helps me understand current affairs better
- The program helps me understand politics better

The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .741 on a scale from 0 to 1, which makes it a reliable scale. There are 46 missings on this scale. The frequencies of this scale can be seen in table 4.4

Table 4.4 Insights

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Strongly disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	15	2,6	2,9
Neutral	137	24,0	26,1
Agree	327	57,3	62,3
Strongly agree	46	8,1	8,8
Total	525	100	

So while the survey was composed in order to research the four dimensions that were established with the theory, the factor analysis show that these four dimensions are brought back to three different latent concepts in the minds of people. People seem to perceive these dimensions in a more blurred way. The dimensions are not strict dimensions, but interact with one another and are strongly connected. The dimensions come back in the concepts, but are not restricted to one concept. One dimension can be seen in multiple concepts, showing that there is not a clear division of these dimensions in the heads of people.

### 4.3 Observations

Next to the survey, observations were conducted at four different kind of lectures of Radboud Reflects. They are a vital part to this research, for this way it can be found out whether the perceived accessibility, inclusiveness and sociality overlap or differ from the observed accessibility, inclusiveness and sociality and what the activities of Radboud Reflects entail. The things people perceive does not always align with what can be seen. It might be that someone perceives a place to be highly accessible, while in reality it is not accessible or only accessible to certain groups. Through observations, more accurate data can be collected, for the observant writes down the notes herself on the spot. Moreover, when conducting an observation things might be seen that are normally overlooked, because people might take them for granted or are accustomed to it. (Sapsford and Yupp, 2006).

Multiple observations have been done at lectures of Radboud Reflects, five to be exact. An overview can be seen in table 4.4. Different kind of program formats and different kind of topics were chosen, in order to establish whether or not this caused any differences in attendance and how the program proceeded. Observations have been held during a Current Affair Lecture, two lectures in

Dutch, a special event at which Radboud Reflects provided a speaker for one of the time slots, and during a lecture in English. The themes varied from politics and law, to parenting and society, to theology, philosophy and gender studies. The observation protocol can be found in appendix B.

Table 4.5 Overview of observations

Program	Date	Time	Topic	Attendees
Current Affairs Lecture	18 Feb 2020	12.30 - 13.15 hrs	Politics and Law	116
Lecture in Dutch	18 Feb 2020	19.30 - 21.00 hrs	Parenting	256
Lecture in Dutch	02 March 2020	19.30 – 21.15 hrs	Theology	98
Special Event	07 March 2020	21.40 – 22.00 hrs	Philosophy	206
Lecture in English	09 March 2020	19.30 – 21.00 hrs	Gender Studies	184

The Current Affairs Lecture was about the trade treaty between Canada and Europe and touched upon the political issues and the issues within the law, regarding this treaty. One of the lectures that was held in Dutch elaborated upon the way we nowadays raise our children and how this effects their ability to cope with negative turns in life and life in general. The other Dutch lecture was about the similarities and differences of refugees nowadays, compared with the exodus as described in the Bible and what we historically now about it. At the special event, a short lecture was given about the philosophical aspects of having to sell oneself, in order to get noticed, so about certain aspects of the society we live in and how it is difficult to stay true to one's own ideals, while also wanting to be successful and be heard by others. Lastly, the lecture in English was about our ideas on the hormone testosterone, and why it is wrong to think of it as a manly hormone, so this lecture touched upon gender studies. It is important to know what these lectures were about, because one then realises that these topics are on a rather broad spectrum and could attract a different audience, generate a different sphere, provoke different discussions and could thus have dissimilarities, while the way they are programmed does not alter all that much.

The Current Affairs Lecture is programmed during lunch hour on the campus and consists of a conversation between the speakers on the topic, followed by questions from the audience. The lecture, whether they are in Dutch or English, begin with a lecture by the speaker, or multiple shorter lectures by two or more speakers, followed by a discussion between the speakers. After the discussion, the audience can pose questions. The special event has a different planning, just a short lecture, but is still interesting, because it shows in which scene the organisation is represented and with what kind or organisation they work together.

Radboud Reflects has several other program forms that were not included in the observations.

Among these are the lectures that are given at deKaaij of Festival op 't Eiland, during the four days marches and the summer months June and July. These lectures are only given within a few weeks in the summer, when the university is deserted, because of the summer holidays and courses have ended. This research however, was conducted before these lectures took place, so these could not be taken into account. This was known from the beginning of the research and the decision of not observing these lectures, meant that more of the other lectures could be observed in the busier weeks in February and March.

Due to the coronavirus, a lot of lectures were cancelled, which really restricted the observation opportunities for this research. Ideally, observations were done at all the different locations at which the lectures of Radboud Reflects were held. Moreover, more program forms were intended to be observed, which now could not be included, such as the 'film and discussion'. Another observation that is missing in this research that was actually intended to take into account, is the one of the 'big lecture' in de Vereeniging. Earlier this year it was announced that Frans de Waal would come to Nijmegen to give a lecture about his last book "Mama's last hug". This lecture would take place on 24 March 2020. Because of the corona virus, the organisation had to decide to postpone this event for safety reasons. In this time during the coronavirus, people were asked to isolate themselves and, if it was necessary to go outside, to distance themselves from one another with at least 1,5 meter. The new date for the big lecture of Frans de Waal is now set on 21 September, but was later on cancelled altogether. The organisation hopes to be able to organise a lecture with Frans de Waal in 2021.

The observations within this research were less structured, opposed to more structured. More structured observations are able to produce a high amount of data, when multiple people use a certain observation protocol, in which the different behaviours and responses are thought out. It is mostly used within controlled experiments and in certain situations, which can be elaborately be thought through beforehand by the researchers. The observation can then be done by ticking the right boxes on the form. This makes the observation validity a lot stronger, for there is less room for interpretation. However, less structured can, as Sapsford and Jupp (2006) say it: "produce far more detailed data on the behaviour of particular individuals or groups in particular settings." This is exactly the kind of data which can further complement the surveys that will be conducted in order to find out about the perceived accessibility and inclusiveness by the participants of Radboud Reflects. Moreover, a less structured observation method keeps the researcher flexible and able to change the focus mid-observation if deemed necessary. It also allows the researcher to look deeper into the interactions within the observational group and find out the underlying meanings. This is the best way for observing the different programs of Radboud Reflects which differ in set up and touch upon many different kinds of topics. It is useful to keep an open mind and stay flexible to change one's focus when something interesting happens which was not thought of beforehand.

This does not mean there is no structure in the observations at all. Beforehand, a list has been made with the different situations that might be interesting, as well as some aspects which needed to be observed. For instance, at every lecture it is important to observe the visible diversity at the program and notes should be taken on age, gender and ethnicity. Moreover, some important situations could already be established. For example, when people arrive, it is interesting to see if people arrived together, or met each other on the location. Did they have a drink together before the program? And during the program, did they interact with one another? The full observation protocol can be found in appendix B.

The observations were conducted through participation observation, meaning the observant went to the evenings as if one of the audience, in order to experience the same things as the audience to gain a better understanding of the experience (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009; Jorgensen 1989).

Of course, there are also some downsides to observations. First of all it must be acknowledged that every researcher that conducts observations is biased (Ellis & Bochner, 2017; Jorgensen, 1989). Every interpretation is still an interpretation and it could be that a researcher sees something in a different way than someone else would see it, this research can be of no exception to that. The researcher must try to stay as factual and thorough as possible, without losing information that can be recovered through interpretation. It is not enough to describe that someone did a certain thing, but it should also be described how that this is done (Jorgensen, 1989). In order to write down as much as possible, the observations were done with the help of a laptop. This did not strike as odd, for multiple people brought their laptops to different lectures. When describing the details, it is important not to lose track of the bigger questions that were posed as guidelines. That is why the observation protocol (Appendix B) was open next to the notepad at all times.

Still the issue remains that someone cannot see everything that happens all at ones and things might go unseen, while they might be interesting for the research. What someone does notice is again a selective part of the bigger picture. The bias can never be fully nullified, for conducting observations, or analysing observations is still a human job and humans are fallible. Unfortunately, this has been the case for this research as well. There was interaction within and outside of the place in which the lecture took place at the same time, with people already entering the space, while others still waited outside or still had to arrive. The observant sought to observe both, by taking a seat that was the most close to the door. Moreover, the observant came to the lectures at least 30 minutes before they began, in order to start the observation outside, in case people were early as well. When the registration opened, a seat was chosen, but before getting seated, the observant would still wait by the door, in order to see people that were outside and inside the hall. When it became busier, and both sides could no longer be observed simultaneously, the observant took it's seat and observed within the hall.

After the lectures there were again moments in which interactions were happening inside and

outside the hall. There were people that still talked to each other in their seats or people that went up to the speakers, but there were also people that left the place immediately, of which some would still talk to each other outside of the hall, some would directly go home and some would still go for a drink in the adjacent vicinity. The observant's strategy has been to stay seated while people left, in order to observe the ones that stayed behind, while keeping an eye on the hall through the open doors. When not many people were left in the hall, the observant would go outside and observe there. When people left this place as well, the observant went in the adjacent bar or café as well and tried to recognize people that were at the lecture from sight and topic of conversation. So while an effort is done to gather as much information as possible, these situations show that it is impossible for one person to be at several places at once, which means that data has been lost nonetheless.

Another weakness of observations, is that it takes a lot of time to conduct and process. In order to keep it manageable, it is often opted to take a certain timeframe or a small sampling group. This could mean that observations are not representative. That is why surveys are often chosen instead, for they are less time consuming while they guarantee a higher representability (Boeije, 't Hart & Hox, 2009). In this research it means that not all lectures could be visited, however it would have been interesting to visit all different forms of the lectures, and lectures with different kind of topics as well. With Radboud Reflects organizing two lectures per week, which all differ in topic, a selection had to be made which could be observed and which not. Moreover, some of the lectures are held during certain times a year, also during months in which this research was not yet started or was already busy with analysing the data. One cannot go on to observe forever. What is more, is that the observant learned the hard way that observations are not as pandemic proof, depending on the subject of observation. In this case, as mentioned, a lot of lectures were cancelled, cutting the time in which observations could be performed short of what was planned. Because of these reasons the choice is made to use both methods to answer the question about the different dimensions of a public space

# 5. Concepts and Dimensions

In this chapter the results of the survey and observations shall be discussed. First, results shall be discussed by looking at the way people perceive the dimensions in section 5.1. This will be followed by looking at the objective dimensions in sections 5.2 to 5.5. Lastly, the internet presence of Radboud Reflects, and how the different concepts are represented in it, shall be discussed in section 5.6. A conclusion to this chapter is given in section 5.7

## 5.1 The perceived dimensions

A distinction can be made between objective diversity and perceived diversity, accessibility, sociality and activity. People can think a certain way and even think they behave in a certain way and tell this in the survey, while observations may show a different outcome. It is interesting to know whether this perceived and objective sides of the dimensions corresponds with one another. For instance, if people perceive something to be diverse, but in fact it is not, different solutions might be enacted in order to rise the diversity, if one wishes to.

As described in chapter 4, a survey was used with questions regarding the four dimensions: accessibility, inclusiveness, sociality and activities. However, through factor analysis it could be seen that these dimensions could be brought back to three different latent concepts when perceived by people, namely openness, diversity and insights. When talking of the perceived dimensions, these three concepts will be the guidelines, for, as we shall see later in this chapter, the perceived dimensions cut across these concepts.

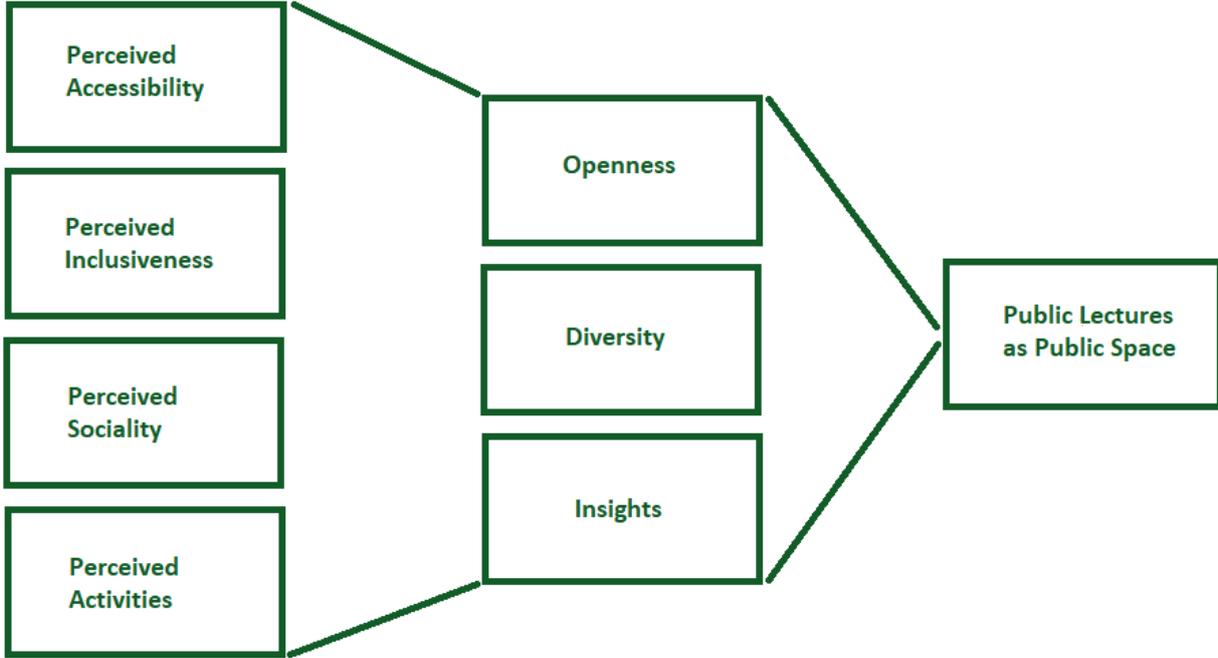


Figure 3 Dimensions and Concepts

### 5.1.1 Perceived Diversity

The perceived diversity is measured with the scale that is made of the score of different statements as is described earlier in chapter 4. The items that were used for perceived diversity can be seen in down below. When asked about their opinion about the diversity of the lectures of Radboud Reflects, the average score on a 1-5 scale is 3.24. A score of 3.0 on this scale means that people are neutral (don't agree, don't disagree) about the statements about diversity. The respondents of the survey are moderately positive about the diversity of Radboud Reflects.

In the concept of perceived diversity, inclusiveness is represented in the statement 'The programs attract a diverse audience'. The concept of perceived diversity also connects with two other dimensions, namely accessibility and sociality. Accessibility is related through the statement "The program is accessible for everyone". Sociality can be seen in the statement "There are people that I normally would not meet in day to day life." For these three dimensions to all be related to this one concept might seem odd, but shows that the dimensions themselves might not be as strict in the minds of people. Seeing new people that one normally would not meet in day to day life can also be linked to inclusiveness in the way people think. If people normally live within a bubble and this bubble is popped when going to a public space, it is not that difficult to believe that this serves sociality, inclusiveness and diversity at the same time.

*The items that were used for the perceived diversity:*

- There are people that I normally would not meet in day to day life
- The program is accessible for everybody
- The programs attract a diverse audience

However, this does not necessarily mean that all statements score the same, it means that all these three statements can be used in one scale to measure perceived diversity. When zooming in on the scores of the statements, a difference can be seen. While the respondents are most positive about the statement 'The program is accessible for everyone' with an average of 3.59, they are the least positive about the statement 'There are people I would not otherwise see in everyday life' with an average of 2.92. People seem to share the idea that the lectures are accessible for everyone, but do state that they do not often meet people they would otherwise not have met in daily life. This would suggest that, even though the lectures are perceived to be accessible for everyone, they do not attract everyone. Perhaps, since the visitors of Radboud Reflects form a rather homogenous group, it can be said that they do not see certain aspects regarding accessibility, for these do not apply to them. It can

be hard to see barriers, if you never had to deal with them yourself. People that already visited the lectures of Radboud Reflects might find these lectures to be open, while people that do not find it open, do not attend the lectures.

Accessibility and inclusiveness interact with each other in the question about diversity of the audience. If not accessible for different groups, one cannot expect an audience to be diverse. This way, accessibility and inclusiveness are also linked in the first question, because people of different backgrounds can only meet each other in a public space, when they all can access this public space. Last but not least, this also shows that sociality and accessibility are linked. One can only meet new people in a public space, if others have access to the space as well. As strongly linked as these dimensions are, it is not surprising they fit into this same concept of perceived diversity.

To find out whether there are significant differences in this concept among different groups of visitors, the means of different categories were compared. This was done using a T-test. The means between man and women were tested, as well as the means between people with or without a Dutch background and between younger people (15-25 years old and 26-45 years old) and older people (65 years or older). The only significance difference ( $\alpha= 0.05$ ) that was found was that between the age groups.

Table 5.1 Perceived Diversity

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Strongly disagree	4	0,7	0,8
Disagree	66	11,6	12,6
Neutral	269	47,1	51,2
Agree	178	31,2	33,9
Strongly agree	8	1,4	1,5
Total	525	100	

So in this case, the difference in perceived diversity can be seen between different generations. People from 15 to 45 years old perceive the lectures of Radboud Reflects significantly less diverse than older visitors of 65+ years old. The older generation holds a more positive view on diversity and perceive the lectures significantly more diverse than the younger visitors. Perhaps the younger people are already more used to an international community than most older people. For them it might then be more evident that certain groups in society are not represented at the lectures. Furthermore, older people might be in less contact with young people in their day to day life (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017). Seeing more people from different generations than their own might already be a breath of fresh air for them.

On the other hand, too much diversity can also be intimidating for older people (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017). So even though they want some diversity, and like to see younger people, too much diversity could make them feel less safe. This could then result in a more positive evaluation of diversity at the lectures, because it is not too little and not too much for them.

A linear regression was done in order to see whether a statistical relation could be found between characteristics of the visitors of the lectures and the concepts. In this chapter only the significant results will be discussed. For the concept diversity a significant relation could be found with age ( $\alpha=0,01$ ), but not for sex, education and ethnicity. A small part of one's perception of diversity can be explained by age. The regression analysis showed that with every year of becoming older, the chance of perceiving the lectures as diverse, rises slightly (B.006 with every year) .

### 5.1.2 Perceived Openness

The second concept that is measured with survey was that of openness. The perceived openness is also measured with a scale composed of different statements. For perceived openness the following statements have been used:

- I felt safe during this program
- The program is inviting
- This program of Radboud Reflects was easily accessible
- I felt at ease during this program

When asked about their opinion of the openness of the lectures of Radboud Reflects, the average score on a 1-5 scale is 4.17. The respondents of the survey are remarkably positive about the openness of Radboud Reflects lectures.

Table 5.2 Perceived Openness

	N	Percent (%)	Percent of Cases
Strongly disagree	1	0,2	0,2
Disagree	1	0,2	0,2
Neutral	16	2,8	3,0
Agree	337	59,0	64,2
Strongly agree	170	29,8	32,4
Total	525	100	

Accessibility is represented in the concept of perceived openness in all of the questions that were used to construct this concept. We see that the respondents are most positive about the statement 'It is an inviting program' with an average of 4.23 and the statement.

Apparently accessibility is not thought of as one dimensions by people themselves, for a distinction is made between the concept of accessibility of oneself and the accessibility of others. The statement 'the program is accessible for everybody' belongs to the concept of perceived diversity, while the statement 'the program of Radboud Reflects was easily accessible' connects to the concept of perceived openness. This would suggest that people can find a place to be accessible and not at the same time, depending to and about whom the accessibility questions is asked. For instance, a place that has a stairs without a ramp is inaccessible for people in a wheelchair. People that can walk can recognize this and can agree that the place is inaccessible for them, while still deeming the place accessible for themselves. Both statements indeed score differently. The statement 'This Radboud Reflects program was easily accessible' scores an average of 4.22. This is higher than the score of 3.59 that the statement 'This program is accessible for everyone' scores.

Again it is tested if we can see differences among different groups of visitors in their perceived openness of Radboud Reflects. For openness there were also T-tests performed for the different groups to see if they significantly differ from other groups in their opinion about the openness. Again the means between man and women were tested, as well as the means between people with or without a Dutch background and between younger people (15-25 years old) and older people (65 years or older). No significant differences were found.

In the regression analysis that was done for the concept openness, a significant relation was found with age as well ( $\alpha=0,01$ ). There were no significant relations with sex, education and ethnicity. For age it was found that it could explain the perceived openness for a small part. With every year of getting older, the chance of perceiving the lectures to be open would decline slightly (B-.004 with every year.) This might be explained by the decreased mobility of some older people, as well as feelings of unsafety, which might grow when becoming older (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017).

### 5.1.3. Perceived Insights

The scale for insights was constructed with the items that can be seen right below.

- During this program I gained new insights
- The programs helps me understand current affairs better
- The program helps me understand politics better

The average score on a 1-5 scale is 3.76. The respondents of the survey are fairly positive about the new insights gained by Radboud Reflects lectures.

Table 5.3 Insights

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Strongly disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	15	2,6	2,9
Neutral	137	24,0	26,1
Agree	327	57,3	62,3
Strongly agree	46	8,1	8,8
Total	525	100	

The respondents are most positive about the statement 'I gained new ideas during this program' with an average of 4.00 and least positive about the statement 'It makes me understand politics better' with an average of 3.43, which is still moderately positive.

This concept is linked with the dimension activities. The statements all concern the activity itself, namely the lectures. The programs are able to provide new information and ideas to the people visiting them. This helps in gaining a better understanding of the world around them and help people burst their bubble in which they live. More information and insights means that people were able to break their thought patterns with something new. This is important when trying to understand others who do not think the same as you do. So the programs of Radboud Reflects are activities that provide the means to break one's patterns, which corresponds to the idea of a third space and the micropublic.

Also for the concept 'Insights' T-tests were used to see if there were significant differences between groups in their opinion about gaining new insights. Again the means between man and women were tested, as well as the means between people with or without a Dutch background and between younger people (15-25 years old) and older people (65 years or older). There were no significant differences found in the perception of gaining new insights among the different groups.

The regression analysis regarding the concept insights showed no significant relations.

**5.2 Inclusiveness**

One of the dimensions that was established for public space is that of inclusiveness. Inclusiveness reflects on the diversity in ethnicity, gender and culture in a space. Is it well balanced or is some group better represented than others? One of the objects of the survey is to establish if Radboud Reflects reaches a diverse audience with their lectures and can fulfil this function of a public space where

people from different walks of life come together.

In the audience, there was very little diversity regarding ethnicity. This was found in the survey as well as in the observations. Compared to Dutch society the visitors of Radboud Reflects are generally older, high-educated people that come from a Dutch background, meaning they have parents that were both born in the Netherlands. Regarding gender, the people taking the survey were rather well balanced, and rather similar to the Dutch population, as can be seen in table 4.1. At the observations one could see that the diversity in gender differed at several lectures. In the Current Affairs Lecture about CETA and the lecture about refugees and the Bible, there were more men than women. In the lectures on parenting and the one on testosterone there were more women than men. At the special event, the gender diversity seemed to be rather well balanced. So while in average, gender might be well balanced, this does depend per lecture. It could be that topic of the lectures provide an explanation in this. Law and politics could be seen as traditional fields of interests and the same is for parenting for women. The lecture on testosterone was about the ways this hormone is misperceived by society and why it should not be linked to manhood. This might be seen as a more controversial and empowering topic, which is why it might have attracted more women, as well as more younger people in general.

From the surveys the results tell us that the audience of Radboud Reflects is not a very diverse one. When we look at the educational level one can see that 91,6% of the visitors of Radboud Reflect can be qualified as higher educated, making it a homogenous group considering educational level. Although the percentage of higher educated people among the visitors of Radboud Reflects is high, it is not that surprising given that 81% of the respondents have visited a lecture at the 'Collegezalencentplex' which is on the University Campus and familiarity with the location is given as the second most important facility to influence a visit to Radboud Reflects. Students, or former students, are more familiar with the university campus than people who did not attend the university. It can also be argued that university grounds are less daunting for students and alumni of other universities as well, for they are familiar with the surroundings and atmosphere. This is rather contradictory to idea of college as a new setting (Amin, 2002) or a leveler (Oldenburg, 1991).

So while university can provide a new setting, or be a leveler and bring people of different backgrounds into contact with one another (Amin, 2002; Oldenburg, 1991) it can also provide a familiar space for the people that go here, which can again territorialize the space (Amin and Thrift, 2002). As Glover (2019) already mentioned, there is no such thing as a value free space and every space can be including and excluding at the same time. This could keep people with other ideas than the dominant one from entering (2019). People that did not study might find a campus ground to be more daunting and excluding than someone who knows its way around or shares the same values as the one dominating on campus. Without further research however, this remains speculation.

This familiarity might also explain why the visitors of Radboud Reflects consists for a large part of older, high educated people, namely 38,5% (Table 2,5). They prefer familiar places over less-known newer places (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017). This is also shown by the survey. The familiarity with the location also seems to play a relatively large factor. In one-fifth of the cases this is said to play a role in the consideration of visiting. 41% that stated that familiarity of a place is an important reason for them to go to a lecture is older than 65 years. This is even higher when also taking everyone from 45 years and older into account, namely 66%.

When looking at main daily activity we see diversity among the visitors of Radboud Reflects. When one takes a look at the daily activities of the visitors, it can be seen that 30% is retired, 17% is student or in charge of the household and almost 40% works for a salary (Table 2.5). This however, does not necessarily mean that Radboud Reflects cannot fulfil the function of a space where people from different backgrounds come together. We still see that 10% of the visitors have a background other than Dutch (Table 2,5). Moreover, it can be argued that students and working people have a higher chance of meeting someone who is retired at one of the lectures than in the Dutch society as a whole. At the same time people who are retired have a bigger chance of seeing students at one of the lectures of Radboud Reflects than they do at other places.

From the observations one can see that language and topic seem to be important factors that can lead to more diversity. Out of the five lectures that were observed, the most obvious diverse crowd was to be found at a lecture that distinguished itself from the others by main spoken languages and also by the topic of the evening. It was an English spoken lecture about the research into testosterone, or even more specific, the wrong idea people have about testosterone, posed by many years of subjective research and which is now tried to be made clear to the general public. The lecture was provoking in the sense that it contested very deep embedded ideas people in our western society hold about testosterone. For instance, that it makes young man more prone to aggressive behaviour. At this lecture there were more people of different backgrounds to be seen in the public. Not only could one hear different accents of English and different languages besides English and Dutch, there were also people from more different kind of subgroups of society, as far one can observe. People with coloured hair and dressed different from the mainstream. The lecture attracted a more diverse crowd in terms of ethnicity and subgroups than any other of the lectures seemed to do. So there is an opportunity, even though for now, the people attending the visitors are not yet as diverse as society itself.

### **5.3 Accessibility**

When researching accessibility, two aspects come to mind, namely location and how well this location can be accessed. How are the facilities surrounding the public space? But one can also think of feelings

of safety and the attractiveness of the lectures. According to the results of the survey, people do indeed find the lectures of Radboud Reflects to be accessible and inviting. This was the same for people from all ages.

Focussing on location, it can be seen that most respondents visited a lecture on the campus grounds of Radboud University. Close second are the locations in the city centre of Nijmegen. A 52.2% of the answers were about a location on the campus. The activities and lectures that are organized in stages in the city centre of Nijmegen make up for a combined 40.7% of the answers, as can be seen in table 5.4. This consisted with the amount of lectures that are given in the different places. Most activities are organized on the campus itself. In the city centre, Arthouse LUX is most often used as the location for the lectures. This is reflected in the fact that it is the second most visited location. The annual activities that are only organized as part of a special location, namely 'De Kaaij' and 'Festival op 't Eiland' are among the least mentioned locations. An argument could be that location does not seem to matter that much after all, given that the amount of people visiting a location corresponds with the amount of lectures given at that location.

Table 5.4 Location

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Het Collegezalencentrum, RU	453	29,8	81,2
LUX, Nijmegen	317	20,9	56,8
Theaterzaal C, RU	198	13,0	35,5
De Vereeniging, Nijmegen	164	10,8	29,4
Hal Erasmusgebouw, RU	142	9,4	25,4
De Stadsschouwburg, Nijmegen	94	6,2	16,8
Festival op 't Eiland, Nijmegen	43	2,8	7,7
De Lindenberg, Nijmegen	43	2,8	7,7
De Kaaij, Nijmegen	40	2,6	7,2
Other, namely	24	1,6	4,3
Total	1518	100,0	272,0

However, when looking at the people that make up the crowd at these lectures, according to the logistical regression analyses, a few small differences can be established. Regarding Theatre Hall C, a significant relation can be found between visiting this location and age. The chance for older people to go to a lecture in Theatre Hall C is lower than for people that are younger. The oddsratio (Exp(B)) here is 0,988. If there was no difference for visiting this place, the oddsratio would have been one. This relation is significant with an alpha of 0,05.

The logistical regression model for the location De Vereeniging showed two significant

outcomes ( $\alpha=0,05$ ). First, when looking at age, it can be seen that the chance of visiting De Vereeniging is smaller for older people than for younger people. The oddsratio for this is 0,983. The other significant result concerns education. Higher educated people have more chance of visiting a public lecture in De Vereeniging than lower educated people. the oddsratio here is 1,161.

At the location deKaaij a significant relation between age and this location was found as well ( $\alpha=0,05$ ). The logistical regression model shows that the chance of visiting a lecture at deKaaij is lower for older people than it is for your people. The accompanying oddsratio is 0,969.

So even though the amount of people visiting a location corresponds with the amount of lectures given there, the composition of the groups is different for certain locations. At three different locations it could be seen that the chance for younger people to visit there was higher than for older people.

When looking at how people go to a certain location, it can be seen that by far most people go by bike, namely 42,8%. The second most popular option is the car with 24,3%. What is interesting, is that walking is a more popular mode of transport than the bus or train. According to Oldenburg (1991) it is important for a third place to be in close proximity to work and home of a person. If this many people came by bike or by foot, it means that they perceive the distance to a program to be within a biking or walking distance and is not worth using other methods of transportations for. This would mean that the programs are perceived as close by to the people that take the bike or walk, which is a majority of the visitors.

Table 5.5 Transport

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Bike	344	42,8	61,6
Car	195	24,3	34,9
Walking	100	12,5	17,9
Bus	80	10,0	14,3
Train	79	9,8	14,2
Other, namely:	5	0,6	0,9
Total	803	100,0	143,9

When asked about the facilities that play a role in the consideration of attending a lecture of Radboud Reflects, it can be seen that the most important factor is the language in which the lecture is given. Of the people that find language to be important, 75% was 45 years or older. This shows that the Dutch language is preferred for the lectures of Radboud Reflects, by this age group. However, English lectures might again attract a more diverse and younger crowd.

This poses a dilemma for the choices on accessibility of the lectures of Radboud Reflects. There is a maximum of lectures that can be programmed within a year, without overworking everyone in the team. Programming more lectures in Dutch, would lead to programming less lectures in English. While people over the age of 45 seem to find it important for the lectures to be in Dutch, people under this age do not make a point out of this. This seems to be a generational issue. When looking at some descriptive results, it becomes clear that the majority of the people who filled in the survey for this research is over the age of 50, namely 38,5%, as can be seen in table 2.1. Because this survey was conducted among the people that received the free newsletter, it is very reasonable to assume that this also means that the people that are interested in the programs of Radboud Reflects tend to be older than 50. Even more so, for it also can be seen in the observations that a lot of older people attend the programs that were observed. While it is important to listen to the people that already attend the program, this could also explain a bit more why there is no ethnical diversity within the audience of Radboud Reflects. With every Dutch lecture, the international students are already excluded from the program, as well as expats or people that are not yet fluent in the difficult Dutch language.

Here, the programming of English lectures affects the accessibility for those that made clear to prefer Dutch lectures, the people over 45 years old. On the other hand, the observations show that English lectures attract a more diverse crowd, so programming in Dutch would then again affect the accessibility of those people. The rise in accessibility for one group, would mean the reducing the accessibility for the other group. The organisation tries to find balance in this by programming lectures that are on obvious international subjects in English. However, also the preferences of the speakers come into play. Some prefer to do their lecture in Dutch, while other speakers are not from the Netherlands and do not speak Dutch, so they hold their lecture in English. Moreover, the fluency of the English of the speaker is taken into account as well. If someone does not speak English in a well-pronounced way which can be understood easily by a larger audience, it is easier to hold the lecture in Dutch. For every lecture it is determined whether it should be in Dutch or English, especially for Current Affairs Lectures this can sometimes be a difficult choice to make. What counts as international and who is expected to come to the Current Affairs Lecture? Overall, more Dutch lectures are organised than English lectures.

Other facilities that were deemed important are parking facilities and the accessibility to public transport. That people look at parking facilities is of no surprise, given that the car was chosen as the second most popular mode of transportation. What is a bit odd, is that there are less people that declare to find accessibility to public transport important, than those who state to use the public transport. A Combined 28,5% uses the public transport to visit Radboud Reflects. While only 17,7% found the accessibility by public transport an important facility for the lectures.

Table 5.6 Facilities

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Language of the lecture	175	21,0	31,4
Familiarity location	120	14,4	21,5
Accessibility parking spots	111	13,3	19,9
Accessibility public transport	99	11,9	17,7
Weather conditions	81	9,7	14,5
How well lit the area and route surrounding the venues are	40	4,8	7,2
A restaurant in proximity	12	1,4	2,2
Other, namely	195	23,4	34,9
Total	833	100,0	149,3

Of the people that filled in 'other, namely', 44% of the people mentioned subject and 18% of the people mentioned timing of the lectures to be of an important factor when deciding to attend the program or not. Some stated that they would like more programs during the weekend and office hours. One respondent mentioned that the timing in the evening was rather off, because they have children, while they could easier make it to a program during the weekend. For a lecture to be programmed on other timings, would raise the accessibility. Oldenburg (1991) already stated that the third place should be open all the time and people should be able to go there in their free time. While it would be rather ambitious to program lectures all day around the clock, they could perhaps be organised during different days and different hours to attract different people as well.

However, in their research, Van Melik and Pijpers (2017) argue that some older people do prefer activities to be held in the evening, for there are less alternatives available during this time: "Second, according to several respondents, the timing of activities offered is problematic. Most activities take place during daytime, when alternative outings are available, but not in the long evening hours." (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017, p. 294). So, for this group, the timing of the programs is perfect. The same dilemma then arises that was also discussed with the language of the lecture. There is a definitive amount of lectures that can be organised and organising lectures during daytime and weekends, might again conflict with the accessibility of this older generation. However, it would again increase the accessibility of others that are not able to attend the lectures in the evening. How then to find balance in these dilemmas?

As for now, most lectures are organised during the evenings, with the exception of some forms of programs, such as the Current Affairs Lecture, which is organised during lunch-hour. This way the organisation hopes to be accessible to the largest group as possible. Less people used to be free during the afternoons and if one combines that with the fact that different topics attract different people, it might result in an half empty hall. However, lately, some talk of trying different times again, for

instance during the weekend, did come up again. This shows that, even if nothing changes, the timing of the lectures is still reflected upon and not just a mere given, because it always has been like that.

Lastly, when talking of accessibility, there could be a debate on whether these lectures are easy to join spontaneously. It is true that one has to buy a ticket for most of the lectures, but this can also be done at the door. However, registration beforehand ensures you of a space and when a lecture is sold out you might miss the lecture. On the other hand, when seats remain empty on the evening itself, these will be sold again at those that come to the lecture and have no ticket yet. This is done if the seats remain empty fifteen minutes after the lecture started. After this time, the registration desk will be shut down completely and it is no longer possible to enter the lecture, in order for the rest not to be disturbed by people still entering late. There are also people that have an abonnement at the lecture of Radboud Reflects. Some of them do use it to go to lectures spontaneously. Only if a lecture is sold out and there are no seats left empty, they cannot join the lecture. However, having to buy a subscription might on its own turn again lessen the accessibility. It is an extra step one has to make and an extra investment, for it is only beneficial if you plan to go to at least four lectures.

#### **5.4 Sociality**

In the survey, people were asked what their motivation was to come to a lecture of Radboud Reflects. This way, it could be researched whether social interaction was one of the main reasons to visit the lectures or if it was something else. People could choose from six answers, but could also provide their own answer, if the right one was not listed. People could choose multiple answers, so were not restricted to one motivation. The results can be seen in table 5.7 shown below. The most given motivations for attending a lecture of Radboud Reflects were the answers regarding the contents of the program. The reason people gave of their visit to a lecture of Radboud Reflects is gaining insight and information. A cumulative of 91.2% of the answers concerns the contents of the activity. After the content the reason to visit Radboud Reflects is to meet people, friends or new people. A cumulative of 6,1% mentions this as a motivation for their visit. Even though this was not chosen a lot, there were still some people that chose 'meeting new people' as a reason to visit the programs of Radboud Reflects. This could mean that at least a small portion of the visitors does seem to recognize its social value.

These findings are partly backed up by the observations that were done. Most people did indeed concentrate on the lecture and quite a few were taking notes, mostly on paper, but also some on their laptops. Even though people tended to shift more in their chair later on and some could not resist the temptation of their mobile phone by the end, the majority was still focussing on the speakers and the discussion. The part where in general most people lost interest, was at the end when the audience themselves could ask questions at the speakers.

Table 5.7 Motivation visit

	N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Gaining new insights	470	37,1	84,2
Gaining information	413	32,6	74,0
A night out with content	272	21,5	48,7
Meeting friends	55	4,3	9,9
Meeting new people	23	1,8	4,1
Others recommended it to me	22	1,7	3,9
Other, namely	13	1,0	2,3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1268</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>227,2</b>

This means that people use the programs as a way to broaden their horizon and try to gain information that was not yet known to them, as was suggested by the results of the survey. This is one of the functions that public space should provide (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011; Kohn, 2004).

However, while the main objective of the people attending the programs might be gaining information and insights, it does seem that the 6,1% of people that have social interaction as their motivation seems to be lower, than what can be observed during these lectures.

Indeed, at every program there were people that came alone, however the majority did come with someone else. People came mostly in groups of two, but a very few times also three, four or five. There were also a few people that waited for someone at the location, before heading in the hall of the lecture. So it does seem to hold a social aspect as well. A reason for this difference in result could be that people are maybe not perceiving meeting up with their friends or meeting new people as the main goal for visiting the program. Another reason, which is very likely to be true, is that people visit the programs with their partner and not with their friends and thus chose for the option of a “night out with content”. This was also given in the feedback on the survey by a few people. This is of course a different kind of socializing than meeting a friend or new people, but also a social activity nonetheless. Combining these two reasons to come to a program would resonate with the idea of a third space from Oldenburg (1991), which stated that people could come to a place to meet with friends, come there alone or meet strangers. This social function of a public space is also mentioned by Whyte (1980). If the answer ‘a night out with content’ would be added to the other answers regarding sociality for motivation, the cumulative percent would then rise to 29,3.

Moreover, the observations show more forms of social behaviour during and after the lecture as well. During each program there were people that whispered to each other during the lecture. Whenever

there was a moment in which a person would clear the stage for someone else or when a setup was changed, people took that time to talk to each other. The moment when the lectures were finished and the discussion was about to begin, was the time this happened the most. After the programs, there were some people, in all the observations, that stayed at the café or lounge next to the hall where the lecture was. After the Current Affairs Lecture, some people went to the café and got coffee, while after the lectures in the evening, some went to the bar on campus next to the hall to have a drink. The people leaving together, do not tend to linger around, if they do not go for a drink. Others still talk a bit afterwards while putting on their coats, but do not stay in the café or bar and go home after five to ten minutes of talking together. These are mostly people that did come together, but are going in different directions afterwards.

However, this does not mean that this benefits the sociality of a place. The people that go to a lecture together know each other, so this does not concern meeting new people. Here it can be seen that, even though Radboud Reflects does hold a social function, it does not mean that their sociality benefits from it. These forms of contact are not about breaking one's bubble and meeting other people from different backgrounds.

But, for the people attending the lectures, these programs could still function as a leveler (Oldenburg, 1991) or as a new setting (Amin, 2002) in which interactions between people can take place from different backgrounds, which can lead to meeting new people. One specific moment while observing popped to mind while seeing these results come out of the survey as well. It was at the Current Affairs Lecture in theatre Hall C. This series of lectures is held within the official lunchtime for the university and always on campus. It is to make people understand the very current affairs that are going on in the world. More in the back of the hall, a few female students were seated. The fact that they were students could be distilled from their conversation about the courses they would be attending after this lecture during lunch hour. Behind them there was an old white haired man. During the lecture there was no connection between these people. At the end of the lecture, however, the program manager concluded the program with a call to attend the lecture of that evening as well, which would be about curling parents. The older men looked quizzical upon hearing this word and figured to ask the meaning of it to the girls in front of him. While all of them were collecting their things and walking outside, the girls gave the man an elaborate explanation of what they thought the term to entail. In the hallway they split ways and the girls made their way into another hallway, while the man headed outside. Although maybe a bit superficial, there was contact between people that might have been rather unlikely, if not for this lecture.

Moreover, after a lecture, the interaction does not only take place between people attending the lecture, but also between them and the speakers. After a few programs, the Current Affairs Lecture and the lecture about refugees and the bible, people went up to the speakers after the program. While

they were still on stage, they would engage in a conversation on the topic and ask their questions, for not everyone can get a turn during the question part in the program. Both times the speakers went into the conversation, not holding it off. However, because there is a time that the hall has to be checked out again, due to rental costs, the staff of Radboud Reflects would begin cleaning up immediately as well. They would hint the people and the speakers that there is an adjacent café or bar where the conversation could take place. Both times, the people in the conversation left after being told to a few times. Also in both cases, the conversation actually did continue outside of the hall in the café or bar next to the hall.

According to Watson (2009) this form of superficial interaction, or what he calls rubbing along, should not be easily dismissed as meaningless interaction. It still gets people out of their bubble. Goffman (1963) also states that, even if only unfocused, there is still interaction between people when in the same space. People will still present themselves to one another. Moreover, he also argues that certain interactions might not seem as focused interactions, but can in fact be just that. When people are aware of one another, there is focused interaction, even if it might seem like they are just passing each other (Goffman, 1963). When translated to the public lectures, this means that people could have focused interaction when sitting next to each other, listening to the same lecture, while being aware of sitting in the same space with one another. So while contact is important, one must not forget that contact can be unobvious as well and can take place between people without them knowing each other, without them talking, just by being present in the same time and space. According to this, sociality can still be seen at the lectures of Radboud Reflects, for people that do not know each other share a space for a certain amount of time.

So while there is a lot of social activity taking place during the lectures of Radboud Reflects, not all of them contribute to the sociality of the programs. Sociality however, can still take place, as could be seen in the observations and discussed above. However, focused interaction does not seem to be facilitated during the activities actively. There are no scenarios within the lectures which forces people to talk to others, for instance, while this might add to the focused interaction that is already there, because people are in the same space and listening to the same lecture.

## **5.5 Activities**

The lectures of Radboud Reflects are temporary activities, that are mostly held in the evening. Even when flexible like this, they can still help with changing a certain place (Glover, 2019). So even if temporary, these lectures can still have an effect on the space. The lectures are programmed in different locations, and some of these locations do not only potentially function as a new setting, but also use a space for something different than it is normally used during other hours. This way, the space can function as a public space for different groups according to Amin (2002) and Back (1996).

This can be seen at the locations on the campus. During the programs of Radboud Reflects, it functions as the public lectures, while during the day it is used as a lecture hall for students. Through the lectures people from different groups then can come into contact with one another (Amin, 2002). It is true that the lectures do attract students as well as people from outside the university. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter as well, most people that visit these lectures are higher educated people with a Dutch background. Glover (2019) already warned that in every place, people are included and excluded. With this information in hand, one can wonder whether these activities really bring together people from different walks of life, or maybe people that walk the same path, but are at different stages within this path.

The behaviour of the audience during the programs was rather the same in all observations. Some people took notes, most of them used pen and paper, but a few also brought their laptops. Others would listen, while sometimes leaning forward or backwards, looking concentrated. Overall, the lectures went on quite calmly. A few times someone left before the end of the program. People sometimes also left after the discussion between the speakers, during the part where the audience could ask questions. The people that asked the questions were mostly older men. The concentration of the visitors during the lecture corresponds with the fact that people stated that they gained new ideas and insights during the lectures and that it helped them understand politics better. There was no significance difference in gender or age in this.

The programs are able to provide new information and ideas to the people visiting them. This helps in gaining a better understanding of the world around them and help people burst their bubble in which they live. More information and insights means that people were able to break their thought patterns with something new. This is important when trying to understand others who do not think the same as you do. So the programs of Radboud Reflects are activities that provide the means to break one's patterns, which corresponds to the idea of a third space and the micropublic.

## **5.6 Radboud Reflects on the Internet**

Radboud Reflects already has a YouTube channel and a Soundcloud channel. The Soundcloud and YouTube channel of Radboud Reflects attracted 22.300 visitors on Soundcloud and 312.300 on YouTube last year and a total of 48.500 visitors on Soundcloud and 574.100 on YouTube in since the start of the channels, with the soundcloud being started in 2017 and the YouTube channel being started in 2016. There used to be another YouTube channel, but with the last merger, a new channel with a new name was created.

The physical lectures that are held, are recorded if possible. Whether or not the lecture can be recorded, depends on the willingness of the speakers to share their lecture and the possibility to set things up for recording. For most lectures, however, at least a podcast is recorded. Video recording is

a bit more complex than an audio recording. That is why sometimes only a podcast becomes available afterwards. People that attended the lecture cannot be recognized later on, on either form of recording. When recorded, the podcast and/or video are placed online on Soundcloud and YouTube for free and are spread actively on the site of Radboud Reflects and their Facebook account.

The internet is a great way to raise the accessibility of the organisation. By putting the videos and podcasts up for free, everyone with internet access is able to view and listen to these. Nowadays, most people have internet at home and for the ones who do not, there is the availability to use the internet at a library. The hurdle of having to pay for a program is taken away by uploading it for free. Moreover, internet takes away borders. While people have to travel to Nijmegen for the physical lectures, this is of course not the case for the digital content. People from all around the world are able to watch and listen to the programs they find interesting, which might be a reason to broaden the target group for online content. The English spoken programs get views from all around the world, such as Belgium, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany and India.

However, inclusiveness might still be an issue, because the lectures are still the same as the physical lectures, such as the ones observed. In the observations it could be seen, that more diversity could be achieved with English lectures about more contemporary subjects, such was the case with the lecture on Testosterone. While it is impossible to determine the diversity of the online viewers, without conducting further research, which would be an entire study on its own again, it is difficult to tell how diverse the online public of Radboud Reflects is. However, it is likely that this corresponds with the analysis of the observations of the physical lecture, because accessibility is mostly raised through the internet, while there is no reason to believe that inclusiveness is. Even if the hurdles might be taken away for certain people, which poses the possibility that the audience could be more diverse, the subjects and amount of lectures in English still have not changed, making a big difference in diversity quite unlikely. But, as said before, this could only be known for certain through conducting further research.

This online space of Radboud Reflects, could function as a leveler, for it is a new setting for everyone. Moreover, an activity takes place, namely the lecture which is being watched, which can be accessed in someone's free time. A big problem, however, is the lack of possibility for interaction. The discussion part was cut off of the recordings, due to privacy issues, and without that, there is not even a slightest bit of interaction, not even the possibility to listen to this interaction, by the audience. The videos do not serve as a meeting place. The only possibility for people to get in contact with one another, is through the comment section underneath the video, but this is not used, except for a few comments here and there among all the videos. People do not actively use it to ask questions or talk with others. The online space does not provide much social quality. So while the recordings still provide information, they do not provide social interaction.

Should the digital component of Radboud Reflects then be seen as a public space? While there is free, borderless information, which is highly accessible, there is still the possibility that the inclusiveness did not raise. Next to that, the social interaction is almost nihil, with the only option being the comment section below the videos, which is hardly ever used. It would be surprising to call it a public space, even with such high accessibility. This does not mean it could not become a public space. Internet itself can provide a lot of opportunity for interaction, as can be seen in fora and social media, but for the videos and podcasts this is not the case.

## **5.7 The Take Away**

When looking at the different dimensions of a public space and how these connect with the concepts that were found through factor analysis, it becomes clear that these dimensions should not be seen as mere islands that all influence public space in their own way. Different dimensions can be used to measure one concept, for there seems to be overlap between different aspects of the dimensions, as can be seen with the concept of diversity. Perceived accessibility, perceived inclusiveness and perceived sociality are interwoven in such a way in the minds of people, it might be better not to see them as different dimensions at all when researching the experienced public space, but rather approach it with the three concepts.

This does not mean that this is the same for the objective sides of accessibility, inclusiveness, sociality and activities. While it should be noted that these dimensions do interact with each other, one can still try to examine these while holding on to the dimensions. That the distinguish in the heads of people is blurred, does not mean it is not there in real life, but it does indicate a high level of interaction between the dimensions. However, empirical data can still be collected with the dimensions in mind. For example, a survey or observation about the amount of people that reach a certain public space by bike can still be used for researching the objective accessibility of a space. However, the interaction between accessibility and, for example, inclusiveness, should not be ignored. Even in the example of the bike, one could ask oneself who in society owns a bike and whether people without a bike can also still reach a certain space.

All three concepts were rated positively by the visitors of Radboud Reflects. The concept of diversity was scored the least high, with a 3.24 out of five, meaning that people were moderately positive about this concept. The concept of insights scored 3,76 of a scale of five, meaning were fairly positive about this aspect of the lectures. The highest scoring concept was openness, which scored 4.17 out of five, meaning people were remarkably positive about this concept. It is interesting to see that openness scores this high, while diversity scores lower. People that do visit the lectures apparently deem them to be accessible for everyone, while also seeing not everyone does come to these lectures.

When looking at the different groups that visit the lectures of Radboud Reflects, almost no

significant differences can be found. An explanation for this can be found in the composition of the visitors. There is not a lot of diversity in people that visit the lectures. Most of the visitors are high educated Dutch people. This shows that in terms of inclusiveness the diversity can still be improved in order to regard the lectures as a public space. One interesting difference that was significant, is the fact that older people, 65+ years old, deemed the lectures to be more diverse than younger people of 15-25 years old. Moreover, regression analysis showed that the chance of perceiving the lectures as diverse becomes a bit higher for every year someone becomes older. An explanation could be that younger people already experience more diversity in their day to day life than older people. another outcome of regression analysis shows that for openness this is the other way around. With each year someone ages, the chance of perceiving the lectures as open declines. Perhaps this could have something to do with the decreased mobility of older people (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017).

The domain activity seem to do rather well. There is an activity in which everyone attending is included, namely a public lecture and listening to this lecture. However, the way people are included might still be rather passive, while people could also be included more actively, for instance at the end of the lecture, through an open discussion.

When looking at accessibility, it can be seen that there is a dilemma regarding the language of the lectures and the timing of the lectures. These are dilemma's, because choosing a certain language or time could be raising the accessibility for some, while reducing the accessibility for others. Moreover, logistic regression analyses show that three specific locations have a higher chance of attracting younger people instead of older people. The accessibility for these locations is different for different groups.

Lastly, sociality could still be actively encouraged. People that come to the lectures do not seem to talk to people they do not know a lot. Even though being in the same space can also already contribute to sociality (Goffman 1963; Watson, 2009), this domain could still be further developed by facilitating focused interaction between the different visitors of Radboud Reflects.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1 Conclusion

In this research the main question was to whether the public lectures of Radboud Reflects could function as public space. Radboud Reflects themselves state that their lectures are for everyone. They want to form a bridge between the university, and the research that is done there, and society.

In order for the lectures of Radboud Reflects to be seen as a public space, some work is still cut out for the organisation. The two dimensions that seem to do the best now are accessibility and activities. The most progress could be gained in the dimensions of sociality and inclusiveness. However, it is important to notice that these different dimensions are all interacting with one another. Positively, this means that improving one, can also improve another. For instance, improvements in accessibility can lead to improved inclusiveness and improvements in activity can improve the sociality. Programming lectures in English and providing time for discussion with the visitors of Radboud Reflects seem to be two of the best changes to organisation could apply in order to become public space.

All the dimensions, also when looking at the perceived dimensions, can be found back in the public lectures of Radboud Reflects, although some are better represented than others. This means that the base for cultural activities to be public spaces is there. With every activity being different, it of course depends per case to what extend these dimensions are already present and can be present, but this does look positive for those valuing public space in the city. It can be found back in more spaces than perhaps first thought of, even in activities themselves.

In this day and age it is becoming more and more evident that places that are privately owned can also function as a public space (Langstraat & Van Melik, 2013; Madanipour, 2019; Oldenburg, 1991). Glover established four categories based on ownership and accessibility: quasi-public space, club space, commons and outwardly public space. The quasi-public space and commons are privately owned and club spaces and outwardly public spaces are publicly owned. However, in both commons as in outwardly public spaces access cannot easily be denied, while in quasi-public spaces and club spaces it can. Orum and Neal (2010) also categorise public space, but then based on its social character. According to them a public space can be a field for power struggles, a space where one can express itself or a way to maintain civil order. In the case of Radboud Reflects as a public space it would mean that it could be a quasi-public space that provides the social opportunity for expression and power struggles. Moreover, it could also potentially function as a micropublic. Micropublics are forms of public spaces in which group activities pull people out of their own bubble (Valentine, 2008). Goffman (1963) calls this a focused interaction and also states that even interactions that might not seem like it, they could be focused interaction.

In order to research these dimensions named above, a survey, as well as observations were conducted. From the survey it became clear that the four dimensions were not seen as four different dimensions by the people who took the survey. Instead, three latent concepts could be composed with the statements regarding the perceived dimensions. The three concepts are diversity, openness and insights.

When looking at the concepts it can be seen that people were very positive about the openness of the lectures. For lectures to be seen as open does stroke with the idea that public space should be inviting and should feel safe, by Amin (2002) . On the other hand, people were the least positive about the diversity at the lectures. This means that in general people do think everyone could attend to these lectures, but also see that this is not the case.

An explanation for this thought pattern can be found in the composition of the group that goes to the lectures of Radboud Reflects. The group is a rather homogenous one, with most people being high educated and Dutch. They might perceive the lectures to be open, for they are open to them, although this does not have to be the same for other groups in society.

However, when zooming in on the different ages within the group of visitors, a significant difference can be found. Older people, 65 years and older, find the public lectures to be more diverse than younger people, 15-45 years old. Perhaps because younger people already encounter more diversity in their daily lives than older people, while older people see more younger people at these lectures than in their daily lives. Furthermore, too much diversity can cause anxiety for older people (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017), which can further explain why they are more positive about the diversity at the lectures, for it is not too little and not too much for them.

Next to the T-tests, the regression analysis showed that there were two significant relations between age and the concepts diversity and openness. While the chance of perceiving the lectures to be more diverse rises with every year of becoming older, the chance of perceiving the lectures as open declines slightly every year. Perhaps this could be because the older one becomes, the less diverse their surroundings, especially regarding young people, resulting in a positive evaluation of the diversity at the lectures. However, mobility could go down with the years and the feelings of unsafety might grow (Van Melik & Pijpers, 2017). This could offer an explanation for this relation. In order to find out whether this is indeed true, further research must be conducted among the older visitors of Radboud Reflects. In focus groups they could tell what is the reason they might find the lectures to be less open.

So diversity and inclusiveness are still aspects that need further improvement. In regards to being seen as public space, the lectures can gain a lot from further developing these aspects.

Most of the lectures are held on the university campus. While Amin (2002) and Back (1996) argue this to be a great new setting and a good place for people to break out of their fixed patterns and ideas, this idea is proven wrong when looking at the visitors of the lectures. They form a

homogenous group of high-educated and Dutch people. When performing T-tests in order to establish differences, only one significant difference could be found, namely in different generations regarding the perceived diversity, which is discussed earlier in this chapter. No space is indeed neutral and people can be included, while others are excluded at the same time, confirming Glover (2019). This is backed up by the results of the logistic regression analysis that show that certain locations attract more young people and less old people than others, namely deKaaij, Theatre Hall C and De Vereeniging.

The proximity of the lectures seems to be fine, with the majority of the people going to them by bike or on foot. This is one of Oldenburgs' (1991) requirement for a leveler, a new setting where people can meet others and expand their horizon.

People also stated that the timing and subject of the lectures are important and this can be confirmed by the observations. Certain lectures attracted a more diverse crowd, with the one in English on controversial subject attracting the most diverse crowd. It would then seem that programming in English is a solution in order to raise the accessibility of the lectures as a public space.

However, most of the visitors of the lectures are older people and they clearly let know in the survey that they prefer lectures in Dutch. This is backed up by the fact that there were less older people at the English lecture. So programming in English raises the accessibility of a certain group, while reducing it for another group at the same time. How should one then proceed? Serve the crowd that is already coming to the lectures of Radboud Reflects? But this could be a different crowd if the lectures were in English. However, everything in English would again exclude the older people that already come to these lectures. Instead of trying to maximize the accessibility for one group, it might be better to maximize the accessibility in total and find a balance in Dutch and English programs. While this might reduce the accessibility of older people, it raises that of non-Dutch speaking people. This way both groups have a certain minimum accessibility and the difference in accessibility becomes smaller.

The lectures themselves are activities already, one of the important aspects that public spaces should have according to Amin (2002), Back (as cited in Amin, 2002) and Valentine (2008). Most visitors of the lectures state that they gain new insights and information at the lectures. This should help to broaden their ideas and views and step outside of their own bubble, just as what is expected of a public space by multiple researchers (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011).

This also strokes with the idea of micropublics, in which people partake in joined activities (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011; Watson, 2009). At the lectures of Radboud Reflects, people are indeed all partaking in one activity, namely listening to the lecture. So in a way, the idea of the public lectures being micropublics fits. However, Valentine (2008) and Amin (2002) also emphasise the ethnical interaction that can take place, something which does not seem to be happening at the these lectures, that are visited by a homogenous group. In this sense the lectures could not be seen as a micropublic. Perhaps, when the inclusiveness can be raised, the lectures could

function as a micropublic, even more so, when a discussion part between people in the audience can be added in the program.

However, the activities of Radboud Reflects are temporary activities that are programmed during evening hours. This is not in line with Oldenburgs' (1991) idea of a third space, which ideally should be open all the time. This already poses a restriction for some people, while it is ideal for others, such as older people. This poses another dilemma for the organisation, for a decision in timing of the programming could positively and negatively affect the accessibility of certain groups at the same time, just as language could do.

To be able to join a lecture, people have to get a ticket. Most people have to pay for a ticket and this could pose a barrier to going there spontaneously. A way to overcome this is by getting a subscription, but this is only beneficial if four lectures or more are attended and it does again pose an extra barrier, because it asks more commitment to the lectures than a regular ticket to one lecture does. In this way the lectures of Radboud Reflects cannot be seen as a third space (Oldenburg, 1991).

During the lectures there was social activity. At the observations it was established that most people did attend the lecture with someone else, even though people did not give this as a motivation in the survey. The people that were together, interacted during the program and afterwards some people discussed the lecture, some moving their discussion to the adjacent bar or café. This is in line with the idea of a third space by Oldenburg (1991), which is a place where people meet up and can converse with one another. A third space, according to Oldenburg (1991) can also have activities, next to conversing, that stimulate the conversing. The biggest problem here is that the conversation were not really possible during the lectures, but mainly afterwards.

Given that the lectures also do not meet the requirement of being open all the time and the fact that the conversations are not really held during the lectures, it can be understood that the lectures of Radboud Reflects do not fulfil the requirements in order to be a third space. However, it does seem to help other spaces that can perform as third spaces, for it forms a base which is used for conversation later on and some people do go to a third space directly after the lecture in order to discuss it. The lectures seem to be a catalyst for third spaces, which might be a whole new kind of space, not yet discussed by Oldenburg (1991).

Social interaction is not the same as the dimension sociality. Sociality is about meeting new places in order to break fixed patterns and ideas. When looking at sociality, it was found that people themselves did not see this as a reason to visit the lectures. At the observations, contact between people who did not know each other could be seen, but this was not very common.

Still, even without these forms of focused contact, there is still interaction between people. Sitting with each other in one room, all joined in the same activity of visiting a lecture, can already help people break their fixed patterns (Goffman, 1963; Watson, 2009). Goffman also describes that, what

may seem unfocused interactions, could actually be focused, for instance people sitting in a hall together and acknowledging the presence of the others. Maybe not in just one time, but all these moments together could make a change. Wilson (2017) also says that one should not be hasty to call a certain interaction meaningless, because this is a subjective judgement and could potentially lead to loss of information. This strokes with the idea of Watson (2009) who states that minimal interaction could also lessen prejudice.

This makes it difficult to judge the extent to which sociality is taking place at the public lectures of Radboud Reflects. One thing that can be looked at, however, is the fact that all the sociality that might be acting at the lectures now, are not the result of active encouragement within the programming. However good the sociality might now already be, there is still a lot to gain by trying to actively stimulate the interaction between different people that visit the lectures.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

The domain activity seems to do rather well. There is an activity in which everyone attending is included, namely listening to a public lecture. However, the way people are included is rather passive, while people could also be included more actively. Concluding the lecture with a discussion or organising a discussion based on the lecture afterwards in an adjacent bar or café might be a great way to get people to interact with new people. This might also be a good way to include a more diverse audience, given that the audience at the adjacent facility is more diverse. If people that normally do not come to the lectures witness one of the discussions and find them interesting, they might want to consider visiting a lecture themselves as well.

When looking at accessibility, it can be seen that there is a dilemma regarding the language of the lectures and the timing of the lectures. These are dilemma's, because choosing a certain language or time could be raising the accessibility for some, while reducing the accessibility for others. However, not only the accessibility and inclusiveness of the lectures could be improved by programming more English programs. The dimensions of activities and sociality are also affected by it. Language seems to play a role in all the concepts and dimensions. Programming in English raises the openness for a new group, could better diversity and make room for more diverse speakers, that do not speak Dutch, but can give people new insights. So it might be of interest for the organisation to program more lectures in English. Of course, language could also form a barrier for those that do not speak it. The older Dutch people that did prefer Dutch programs, might not be able to follow the programs in English, resulting in them being excluded from these lectures.

Furthermore, diversity can also be implemented in the organisation itself. This could be done by hiring program managers of different backgrounds. More diversity within the team itself, might bring along changes from within, which can help diversity. While the public lectures might break people

out of their bubble, maybe the organisation itself also needs to break out of a bubble. This is the case for a lot of cultural organisations and has resulted in a lot of them trying to create more balance in diversity by hiring people from different backgrounds. This was one of the main topics, for example, at the first gathering of the Culture Academy in Nijmegen (Cultuur Academy, 2020).

It would be interesting for the organisation to form focus groups with people that did and did not attend lectures of Radboud Reflects, in order to get a better understanding of what would attract different kinds of people and what people now think of as strong and weak points of the programs. New ideas could also be talked over with these focus groups and perhaps people within these focus groups have some ideas themselves on new formats or changes, which might be worthwhile for the organisation to hear. People who do not attend the lectures should be included, for who better to tell the organisation what is keeping them from visiting a lecture?

Moreover, in this research it could be seen that there were some differences between younger and older generation regarding perceived diversity and some of the locations that were visited, but in general older people visited the lectures more than younger people. Could this be changed by certain adjustments in the lectures or are lectures something that younger people have less interest in generally speaking? The regression analysis showed that the perceived openness declines ever so slightly with each year of getting older. Asking older people of their experiences with the openness of Radboud Reflects could perhaps further explain this finding. These would be helpful topics for the focus groups to discuss as well.

Right now, the real effect of people sharing one space with others they do not know, is still not evident. This means that sociality can still not be fully determined, which leaves a certain gap when analysing the different dimensions of a public space. According to Watson (2009) being together in one place can already change the way people think about others. In order to find out whether this is true, a longitudinal research must be conducted. People should be asked questions at different moments in time.

For Radboud Reflects on the internet, further research could be conducted in order to find out more about the opportunities that the internet could provide for public lectures in general and for the public lectures of Radboud Reflects. In this research, the internet is only spoken of in regards to the dimensions that also work for physical lectures, but more literature on the internet as public space is already available and could bring along new insights. A more general research on internet as a public space combined with public lectures as a public space could provide more information about what available options are already at hand and could be implemented and what options could still be developed.

### 6.3 Discussion

One of the most important things that should be discussed here, is that the researcher works at Radboud Reflects, which is how she gains access to the know-how within the organisation and has a deeper understanding of the structure of the organisation. While these are helpful benefits, it should be noted that this of course could also bias the researcher. When working at an organisation, things that already seem normal might be overlooked when analysing the situation. It is important to stay as objective in the research as possible. However, realising that a fair research on the organisation is more beneficial to the continuation and growth of it, the researcher felt the need to be honest when conducting the research, following the theoretical framework and data, instead of sugar-coating anything.

When viewing the data it should be noticed that this research focussed less on the political function of public space, which looks at public space as a space through which discussions and political awareness and forming takes place. This is a function of public space which is important for our democracy (Sennett, 1992). This is a choice that has been made when collecting data and focussing on the social aspects of public lectures as a public space. However, this does not mean that this is function of public space should not be researched. Results of such a research could of course further weaken or strengthen the idea of public lectures as a public space. These outcomes could then also lead to other recommendation concerning the programs and how they are set up.

However, the used methods for this research have proven to be the right ones. The survey made it able to extract a lot of data from a big group of people in a fast way, while the observations added to the reliability by proving or disproving the outcomes of the survey. Through questionnaires the attitudes of a big group of people could be asked of, giving an idea on how people themselves perceive the different dimensions of the public lectures. The observations provided empirical data, with which some answers of the survey could be compared. This showed that people not always consciously do certain things, but have other motivations, while also showing other behaviour. The survey complemented the observations, for there were only a certain amount of observations, namely five, that could be done and the survey helps with the generalization of the data.

In the literature concerning public space, a lot of times it is said that public space helps breaks fixed patterns and makes people come out of their bubble (Amir, 1969; Hofland, 1998; Kohn, 2004; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2011). It is, however, rather difficult to establish when this has in fact happened. How does one research such a statement? As earlier discussed in recommendations, a longitudinal research might be the best choice for this matter. Over a period of time, people could be contacted multiple times. Questions could then be asked regarding whether they attended more public lectures. Other questions could concern attitudes and thoughts regarding some subjects, such as politics,

neighbours and the contacts they keep.

Lastly, in this research the impact of language on the public lectures and the debate this brings along, has already been touched upon. However, this debate is not unique to this organisation. When looking at universities, for example, discussions on the main language of education has already been a subject of discussion for several years now. In 2017, there was a whole commotion about a master student at the Radboud University that heard she had to write her thesis on the Dutch writer Vondel in English (De Volkskrant, 2017). A year later, a judge decided that the University of Twente and the University Maastricht were allowed to teach in English, when this was better for the quality of the education and did not harm any Dutch students. These universities have more and more international students (NOS, 2018). TU Eindhoven even announced to change everything to English during this year (Eindhovens Dagblad, 2018). Not everyone is happy with these changes though. There have been people that advocate against the 'Englishification' of the Dutch universities (NOS, 2019). Internationalisation remains a point of discussion among different organisations.

#### **6.4 Radboud Reflects in times of Corona**

While Radboud Reflects already placed video's and podcast online before the corona crisis, things have changed since this pandemic. At first, the digital component of the organisation was more an extra service provided after certain programs, in order for people to watch it again or for those who missed the lecture, because they could not make it or because it was sold out. The videos that were placed on the YouTube-channel were of lectures that already had been given, or short announcements of only a few minutes about upcoming lectures. Occasionally the program managers shared a reading tip in short videos, that were spread via Facebook as well. However, no new programs were recorded for videos and podcast. There were no special series that could only be seen on YouTube or heard on Soundcloud, for instance. There were already some ideas on making such content, but this raised multiple questions about form and production and it was still brainstormed upon. With the outbreak of corona, however, physical lectures are no longer possible and when it is allowed again, it is highly probable that the 1,5 meter rule has to be respected, meaning that there should always be 1,5 meter between people at all times, also at the programs. Scenario's in which this is possible can include letting way less people into a hall and keeping three free chairs between the audience members. Where lectures frequently used to attract more than a hundred visitors, this will not be possible in this new setting. Another solution is to go digital. This is certainly the case for now, as physical lectures are not allowed at all. In order to keep providing content and food for thought, Radboud Reflects @Home was brought to live.

Radboud Reflects @Home is a new branch of Radboud Reflects. At first short articles with links to lectures that were held earlier were shared through this section of the site, as well as new videos.

Now that the production of videos has found a bit more structure, only the videos are still shared. The articles are no longer necessary. The whole arrangement with the technical set-up and reaching out for speakers is all done from a distance, from home. The videos consist of interviews and conversations, in which the speakers and the program managers address certain topics that are now relevant. Most of them of course have to do with the impact of the pandemic on different aspects of society, culture, religion and politics. How have things changed in these couple of weeks and how does this affect life as we knew it? The programs are done through videocalls that are being recorded by the technician, that also works from home. Before the actual recording, a test is done in order to check the quality of the sound and image of the recording. Afterwards, the recording is further processed and placed online for free. Up until now, most of the videos are in Dutch. In order to still provide content to the English speaking audience as well, at first English subtitles were added to the videos. Because of the large amount of work this costs, it was decided to stop with this, for it could easily take up more than two days per video. However, right now, this new way of working is still being tested while it is being produced. It is likely that, once this gets even more streamlined and people get used to the new way of working, that more programs will be in English as well .

This is what Radboud Reflects @Home now entails. This does not mean it ends here. Knowing all too well that the situation might not return back to normal for a long time, it was decided to establish a taskforce within the team which looks at the possibility of livestreaming. This could perhaps be a solution for the physical lectures which cannot take place, or can only take place with a very small audience later this year in the fall. People that cannot be present in the hall itself, can then tune in on the livestream, or the livestream could be the alternative for a physical lecture altogether. Livestreams could also be a way to let lectures with international speakers go on, even if travelling is still not recommended. This would of course be good for the accessibility and inclusiveness, because it caters to those who do not speak Dutch, or do not speak it fluently, but are interested in the lectures.

The first livestreams has taken place on 9 June and attracted about 600 viewers, that watched till the end. A very interesting aspect that deserves attention is the use of the chatroom that is available with a livestream on YouTube. People did actually use this chatroom and asked each other questions ranging from the code that was necessary for mentimeter to questions on the content. Some people apparently even arranged to meet in the chatroom and were calling out to one another to see if the other one was already there. The social aspect which was lacking in the normal videos of Radboud Reflects, is a bit better with the livestreams because of this chatroom.

This first livestreams, as well as the few that are already planned for the coming weeks, will be for free. Whether or not these livestreams will remain for free, is still debated upon. Management finds itself in a dilemma in which it needs to choose between earning money for their existence or providing as much people as possible with the lectures. For now, it seems like the main idea is to keep

these livestreams free, that is the ideal the organisation has, providing as much people with their information as possible, 'public lectures for everyone'. Whether or not this is possible for the organisation is still the question. After all, it was not long ago, namely in 2018, that they had chosen to raise the entrance fee for the physical programs due to cutbacks.

Since this process is still ongoing, it is still too early to see what effects it will have on Radboud Reflects' possibility to function as a public space. If the digital programming would be free, this would of course be very good for the accessibility of this online space. Everyone could then access the same information, provided they have an internet connection. And with it being online, it might attract more people internationally, which would be good for the inclusiveness as well. This way the programs are also accessible 24/7, just like Oldenburg (1991) would recommend for a third space. However, for this to happen, there should be sincere efforts of making English programs as well. Right now, only one English program is planned to being recorded. The internet could be a great way to attract people from all kinds of backgrounds, because it is borderless, but language should then not impose a problem instead of these borders.

When looking at the broader picture, Radboud Reflects on the internet could add to the function of the public lectures as a public space. The dimensions now are already all represented at the lectures, even though not all as strong as would be ideal. In order for the public lectures of Radboud Reflects to truly be public, accessibility and inclusiveness could still use a boost. And while change can be difficult to achieve, the mission of the organisation could benefit from it: the knowledge of the researchers in the Radboud University could be spread further. And it would show how cultural organisations fulfil an even bigger function in society than purely a cultural one. They have the potential to form the glue between people.

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