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Katharina Ciax

Flushing Down Hegemony

Public Toilet Infrastructure and the Politics of Accessibility

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Katharina Ciax *is a research assistant and Ph.D. candidate in social geography at the Friedrich-Schiller-University in Jena. Holding a degree in sociology her research interests focus on urban spaces and their sociospatial accessibility, everyday experiences of urban securitization, and feminist theory. Besides working as a researcher in the DFG-funded project "Atmospheres of (Counter)Terrorism in European Cities", Katharina is a member of the feminist research group Klo:lektiv that engages academically and socio-politically with urban sanitation and geographies of basic necessities.*

Abstract

While the public sphere should serve a broad audience of city users, there are multiple material as well as affective dimensions that are excluding bodies from having access or feeling affiliated to it. Using the city of Ghent's publicly available toilet infrastructure as a case study, this paper wants to investigate structures of (non-) material exclusion and inclusion within the public space. Dimensions of gender, class and bodily everyday experiences are going to be identified in connection to administrative policy, and the material constitution of toilet infrastructures. Additionally, this paper is examining affective dimensions and feelings of belonging to a city.

In a further step, technologies of protest and repair are going to be illuminated, that are understood as a powerful tool to regain accessibility, and by that reappropriate notions of belonging to a city and society.

With the use of ethnographic methods, this paper seeks to not only display multiple perspectives of the Ghent toilet infrastructure, but draw a holistic image of conflicts and emotions around the public toilet.

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1 The Toilet Paper: An Introduction

I guess we all know the situation of being in an urban space and desperately searching for a toilet to relieve ourselves, already scanning the surroundings for possible spots to hide behind. Depending on our physical and social constitution, finding a toilet or another space to answer natures call might be easier for the one than for the other reader of this (toilet) paper. While some individuals are compelled to plan ahead the next toilet visit, check toilet possibilities beforehand and prepare by drinking less or taking tissues for public urination, peeing and pooping are no issue for others.

The big necessity and its accessories do not appear as something that has a place in social discourses, even though everybody is doing "it". Although the first Covid-19 lockdown, happened to bring toilet paper on everyone's lips when people started hoarding huge amounts and the support chain performance was not able to accommodate for the sudden increase in demand, toilets and toilet use remain something invisible.

Talking about this research to others, mostly caused reactions of laughing with the topic or ridiculing it, since only a few saw the importance of toilet infrastructure as a subject of research. It became obvious at the latest, when after the first laughter everybody had at least one toilet story to tell once the taboo around urination and defecation was broken and toilets were discursively or rather symbolically made into something scientific. The same phenomenon could be observed in some interviews, where respondents kept adding "funny toilet stories" they wanted to share with me as a side note. The headline of the article about this study that was published in the local newspaper De Gentenaar cut it right to the chase of the matter: "Het klinkt grappig maar het is heel serieus" (Eng.: It sounds funny, but it is quite serious). Despite the fact that toilets seem to be hidden behind a cloak of invisibility, they are an infrastructure that is part of everyday life and therefore is bringing up a multitude of dimensions and emotions, made visible once the cloak is opened.

The following analysis tried to open this cloak, to unfold various structures surrounding the urban based and publicly accessible toilets. By this, the following will not only examine dimensions of the toilet by itself but will especially focus on material and affective notions of access and belonging to the urban space, since urban spaces are the center of neoliberal life and evolved into spaces that accommodate multiple shapes of (social) actions, necessities, and usage of diverse city users. The city therefore emerges into a multilayered space with diverse and contrasting elements that are going to be examined within the analysis of toilets, as the figuration of a city is based on the architecture, function, and potential usage of urban infrastructures. While the urban material functions as a tool that is shaping and guiding use and behavior of city user and in doing so, produces and reproduces social norms and orders (cf. Armstrong/Squires 2002; Bickford 2002; Clough 2010; Erlhoff 2012; Jarvis et al. 2009). Inhabiting the city day in, day out might not directly reveal social ordering practices and governing by infrastructures since their functions and orders appear to be something taken-for-granted

to citizens (Graham/Thrift 2007: 10). The existence and availability of certain infrastructures are to such an extent normalized that they become invisible for the city users. Only when infrastructure is failing, when it is not functioning the way it should operate or is not suiting the body that requires using it, the infrastructure and its flaws become perceptible. For example, in the moment when we desperately search for suiting toilet infrastructure that is accommodating our physical and social needs. Therefore, the analysis will focus on the potential of use and queer use of city infrastructure by city users to examine counter-hegemonic practices of appropriating and making space fit.

The following is going to theoretically examine this evolvement of the toilet visit as something tabooed and shameful, taking Elias' (1976, 1982) historical analysis of the evolution into account as well as focusing on contemporary theories of affect and emotion (Ahmed 2014[2004]; Probyn 2005; Clough 2010) into account. Besides the specific composition of urban space and infrastructure is going to be analyzed and put into a relation with feelings of belonging of city users. In doing so, I will undertake approximations towards the political dimensions of emotions in connection with urban infrastructure, and specifically urban toilet infrastructure. Lastly, counter hegemonic practices of space appropriation will be brough in the work's theoretical constellation, since infrastructure, that is often appearing as taken-for-granted does not accommodate every subject position equally. Therefore, informal ways of repairing the insufficiency are going to be examined. In the following, chapter three will situate the study methodological as well as in its current pandemic affected societal situation, that influenced and changed the research subject tremendously. The field's construction, strategies of field access, and contact with participants are going to be outlined as well as a presentation of the data corpus. The theoretical as well as methodological groundings will accumulate in chapter four where the urban toilet infrastructure is going to be illuminated regarding to its accessibility and exclusion. The chapter will pursue bodily, affective, and social differences by ethnographically analyzing the publicly accessible toilet infrastructure towards the following questions: For whom do toilets constitute a problematic and insufficient infrastructure and who is considered in the construction of urban toilets? How does this relate to feelings of belonging and the ability to engage in public live? The Belgian city Ghent is going to serve as a case study, inter alia because of its "pee activism" in the last decades that is going to be examined in the following. Infrastructural manifestations will in a further step be discussed in relation to notions of power, affects and belonging and strategies of resistance. In doing so, the theoretical approximations of the field data will be examined in connection with the conducted data. Chapter 5 will give a summary of the findings and offer concluding notes that pave the way for further research.

2 Sewer and Pipes: Theoretical Grounding

2.1 City Infrastrucutre, Power and Citizenship

2.1.1 The Urban

What makes a city a city? What is laying under its skin—making individuals not only house, live, and work in it, but as well feel a sense of belonging to it? As Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess (1970[1925]) already defined at the start of the 20th century, the city not only represents the material manifestation of human agglomeration, but also all institutional, discursive, and social components coming together and forming the literal and figurative assemblage of urban space. The city appears as a combination of multiple, vastly different dimensions of human life, interlocking between physical infrastructure on the one hand and signification and meaning making on the other.

> The city […] is something more than a congeries of individual men and of social conveniences – streets, buildings, electric lights, tramways and telephones, etc.; something more, also, than a mere constellation of institutions and administrative devices – courts, hospitals, schools, police and civil functionaries of various sorts. The city is, rather, a state of mind, a body of customs and traditions, and of the organized attitudes and sentiments that inhere in these customs and are transmitted with this tradition (Park 1970 [1925]: 1).

The city is not only the main arena of negotiation, where social habits, economic, cultural and political customs of the (post-)modern citoyen[1] are produced and reproduced. Furthermore, it is made of and shaped by those human-made patterns and its appearance and composition are strongly tied to historical and political circumstances. The city originated through the process of industrialization at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, when Western societies shifted from agricultural societies in rural areas towards industrial societies. In these new social organizations, the working class—due to employment conditions in factories—were often located at already existing agglomerations or geographical strategic locations and increasingly settled down in such environments. Industrialization helped to initiate the first wave of Western urbanization, which was accompanied by a refiguration of social conditions, political circumstances, and an enormous growth of populations. As Wirth describes it, the city as an institution came into being and functioned "not only [for] the local inhabitants, but also [for] a larger area which ha[d] become dependent upon what the city has to give" (1970[1925]: 169). Towns started expanding in size and importance, and the precursor of what we now know as cities emerged.

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1 Since the following chapter will reflect on the social practice of becoming a citizen/doing citizenship, the term citoyen (French for city inhabitant) is going to be used substitutional for city user, since not every city user/citoyen can necessarily be understood as being a citizen. As a matter that will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

From this point on, urbanity evolved into a set of social practices, institutions, habits and modi vivendi which offered a platform for economic exchange, cultural negotiation, and political decision-making. Without the social, the city would have merely been a material structure; it was and still is intrinsically dependent on the social interaction of its subjects with the physical and spatial conditions that define it (Müller 2012: 316). The social is what makes the city, and the city is what makes the social. Therefore, the city is holding a significant importance for sociological analysis and has to be understood as one of the main subjects when reflecting about the (re-)production of social practices and social reality. The Chicago School of Sociology already acknowledged this newfound importance of the urban reality in the late 19th and early 20th century (Park/Burgess 1970[1925], Mckenzie 1970[1925]). By focusing on interaction of people and environments and the creation of a symbolic, meaningful social reality through human interaction and socialization in US urban environments, social dynamics brought forward through city structure proved to be viable subject for scholarly analysis (Miller 1982; Blumer 1969).

Likewise, the US sociologist William Foot Whyte developed his famous study about Street Corner Society (1943) and the social structure of Italian workers' neighborhoods in Boston formed the traditions of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. The study is one of the most important long-term participant observations of urban sociology and has been established as a textbook example of in-depth field work in regard to social qualitative research methods. In a similar vein, Georg Simmel (2018[1903]) developed the foundation of the German urban sociology in the very beginning of the 20th century with his paper on the metropolis and mental life. Herein Simmel (2018[1903]: 11) analyzed the city both as an area of conflict amongst the individual and its peculiarities as well as a testament for the superiority of a collectively produced, external, cultural, historical, and social circumstances. In contrast to people who are living in rural environments, Simmel describes the autonomy and independence of individuals as the most significant component of the city's magnitude, which he understands as the power of gaining opportunity and meaningfulness in citoyens life (2018[1903]: 17). Being able to deal with the anonymizing compression and the stimuli of city life's sensations, the citoyen is being equipped with a very special personality as a blasé entity. By becoming blunt against the meaning of difference the citoyens protect themselves from the city's effects and against despair (Simmel 2018[1903]: 13f.).

As since 2007 more than 50% of the world population is already living in urban environments and with a linear increase of 0.5% every year, a prognosis of 68,4% in the year 2050 can be made the city will remain an important arena that continues to shape and being shaped by human practice (Worldbank 2018; Statista 2018). Facing societal changes such as the contemporary globalization, which causes an increasing exchange of knowledge and culture, migration, internationalization and tourism, the spatial turn in the 1980s developed through time an understanding of (urban) space as a "a social construction relevant to the understanding of the different histories of human subjects and to the production of cultural phenomena"

(Warf/Arias 2009: 1). Ultimately, this thinking became a new paradigm in social sciences and geography (Ruhne 2011, Moebius/Prinz 2012, Warf/Arias 2009, Thrift 2017). The social in relation to the spatial is therefore prominently featuring in analytical examinations of the city because, the interaction of its individuals with the material and spatial world decidedly shapes the urban. Undeniably, the city remains an interesting arena to conduct an analytical examination into how people get heard and how they struggle in order "to belong, to be safe, to earn a living, to represent own communities and so much more" (Kern 2020: 118).

2.1.2 The Power of Infrastructure

After the constitution of the city as the main scene of the social in the early 19th century, the French prefect and jurist Haussmann revolutionized the European city and its function in the second half of the 19th century by radically restructuring the city of Paris into a space of pleasure and consumption. As Park (1970[1925]: 4) explains "[t]he city plan, for example, establishes metes and bounds, fixes in a general way the location and character of the city's constructions, and imposes an orderly arrangement, within the city area, upon the buildings [...]". With these vast rearrangements of infrastructure and meaning, Haussmann established the groundwork of our contemporary understanding of the city (Erlhoff 2012: 302). This order is not only guiding urban planning but, by consequently structuring everyday life spatially, it is guiding the citoyen through the city on ordered and designed paths, since we accepted and got used to the fact that everything is almost naturally taken-for-granted (Berger/Luckmann 1991[1966]: 40). Erlhoff (2012: 302) demands the importance of recalling that everything is specifically designed.

City space and infrastructure are ubiquitously shaped as objects that are imparting information and orders to the citoyen on how to use the space. Because of their elegant and convincing design that appears as the natural and immutable, the citoyen accepts these spatial organizations subconsciously and interacts with its affordances (Erlhoff 2012: 304). Traffic signs guiding road traffic and bus stops indicating opportunities to hop on and off public transportations are only two of the several obvious examples of how the infrastructural succeeds in guiding the urban flaneur. Infrastructural information can not only influence the eye, but also acts through other sensorial sensations and social interaction. For instance, the placement of street lighting greatly influences the decision to take a certain way home at night. There is the obvious argument of improved visibility, which these lights offer, and further one can experience an increased feeling of security and protection because the light offers (imagined) social supervision and control (Ruhne 2011: 22). Social and material infrastructure therefore becomes a source of power, by which authorities can easily influence and manipulate the citoyens and guide their behavior (subconsciously) within and through the urban space.

The city's material representation becomes a portrayal of societal circumstances and political discourse, shaped by people in power and prevalent hegemonic dis-

courses[2]. "Hegemonic" here can be understood as Gramsci conceptualized it: as a stabile power relation which has to be internalized and reproduced not only by people in power but also by subalterns, who are potentially able to negotiate these structures of power (Gramsci 1999[1932)]. The cities' discourses are changing processual and bound to historical and cultural assumptions of what is best and most appropriate for citizens (Müller 2012: 317). (Infra-)structures and aesthetics of space are structuring the urban space and, further, define the shape of societal organization in a reciprocal manner (Müller 2012; Wagner 2018). As an extension of authorities' policies, infrastructures can therefore be considered deciding about hegemonic notions of societal citizenship[3].

For instance, Western cities in the 1950s planned the urban space within a car-friendly paradigm, evident in the design of streets and parking areas or the displacement of pedestrians to underground foot tunnels and limited sidewalks (Müller 2012: 318) and even exterior facade designs were based on the dynamic flow and horizontal logic of the street (Wagner 2018: 126). Even city service infrastructures such as snow-clearing schedules are till today following this car-based logic, by beginning with main highways and ending with pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes (Perez 2020[2019]: 29). This example is not only showing how far hegemonic assumptions and city planning is influencing dimensions of social life, but it also reveals other logics of hegemony, since the usage of cars excludes other citoyen-groups, such as pedestrians. This exhibits how city infrastructure can in itself have discriminatory effects[4].

By shaping the material world in a certain manner, urban space creates and shapes social orders and thereby highly influences the social. The affordances and limitations of city space usage are in a charged relationship with the city planning and design. They are correlatively connected and interdependent. Again, social practices of usage shape the city structure as the city structure shapes the possibilities and potentials of using city space. As such, political agendas, lobbyism, and economic interests can oppose necessities of citoyens and don't necessarily serve the needs of the majority of city users. Urban infrastructural planning becomes a process in which material objects, social actions, societal structures, and customs are intertwined (Müller 2012: 319). By designing formalizations with these variables, the needs and wishes of the citoyens are pre-formulated by politicians and urban planners (Erlhoff 2012: 305).

2.1 3 Inclusion and Exclusion

Having established that cities use infrastructure to transform the citoyens into subjects of city governance, the question arises whether the citoyens have agency in

2 As this analysis will later show, the acceptance and use of the citoyens is another important variable in the process of shaping infrastructure and can also resist the intended design of city planning.

3 See chapter 2.3 for a more in-depth analysis of belonging and exclusion.

4 Even though women do 75% of the worlds unpaid care work, which is affecting their daily needs of traveling to nurseries, schools, supermarkets, doctors, elderly homes, relatives etc. tremendous, they are representing up to 64% of public transportation passengers, while men are more likely to drive and dominate the access on households' cars (Perez 2020: 30).

their behaviors to resist or neglect these forms of social control. After all, public urban space is shared and contested by multiple players with very different notions of how it should be designed and used. City administrations, police, entrepreneurs, inhabitants, tourists, and other groups using the public space have vastly different understandings and demands towards urban composition and enter these spaces with expectations of their own. These expectations can run diametrically opposed to hegemonic notions of city organization and lead to other types of spatial engagement. For once, it can be asserted that the social construction of space is highly dependent on hegemonic assumptions of people's needs and necessities. City-planners and administrative discourses do not only shape and produce infrastructure based on those assumptions, but they simultaneously create notions of accessibility and inaccessibility, and thereby of belonging and not-belonging, too (Blickford 2000: 356). The city is built to serve particular necessities. City space and infrastructures reveal who was considered when constructing the space. It becomes a decision about belonging and not-belonging of city users as citizens to space.

Despite these efforts of the nation to replace the previously important sense of urban citizenship with national belonging, cities remained an important space and the catalysator for the strategic construction of citizenship (Holston/Appadurai 1996: 188). Cities are the space where citizenship practices and meaning come together, the space where negotiations of the modern society and meanings of citizenship are opened, where the material "streets conflate identities of territory and contract with those of race, religion, class, culture, and gender" (Holston/Appadurai 1996: 188). In the same way, Blickford (2000: 356) describes the importance of the city as a space of people, perspectives, and problems resulting in communication and interaction and, ultimately in the formation of opinions. Simultaneously, she emphasizes that the city's-built environment is in the same way constructed as it is forming how we relate to contemporary politics and whom we accept and recognize as members of the citizen group (Blickford 2000: 356). Therefore, questions of exclusion become evident in city space; Whose subject position was neglected, not kept in mind, or consciously excluded when thinking of the social composition of inhabitants and users of the city manifested in the spatial infrastructures? Those concerns of inclusion and exclusion, further, are resulting from the different mechanisms and discursive arrangements of the in-group. While some regards do not appear in reflections on the societal structure at all, others are made less visible and become discursively bound to the alleged private sphere (Kafer 2013: 154f.; Fraser 1990,; Barcan 2010: 25f). Infrastructures, materials, and architectures are constructions based on hegemonic notions of normality, blurring and neglecting the presence of variation, difference and inequality by creating, normalized and singular version of public space (Bickford 2000: 362).

Likewise, the spatial scholar Martina Löw connects the structural reproduction of social inequality and unequal opportunities of belonging to the available access to knowledge and symbolic culture of space (Löw 2016[2001]: 177f.). Löw understands space as the relational configuration of the social and individuals in spaces. To organize social goods relationally, access to these goods is needed. But

opportunities to constitute space and gain access to social goods are organized through hierarchical organization mechanisms instead (2016[2001]: 178). This hierarchical structure produces discrimination by setting standards in the available amount of knowledge needed to increase the possibility of accessing social space, social goods, and citizenship status. Going back to Hausmann's conception of the city as a place for pleasure and consumption, cities can be considered spaces subjected to capitalist logic. This leads to the commodification of public urban spaces and adds another cause of urban exclusion by way of class dimensions.

Additionally, Löw takes the patriarchic dimensions of discrimination into account, and other authors complete the picture by adding non-normatively abled, queer, non-white, and old bodies (Kern 2020, Perez 2020[2019], Kafer 2013, Haymes 1995). These are citoyens who do not comply with the normative hegemonic notions of identity and citizenship. Mele (2015) sees the responsibility for racial segregation of city space in large-scale gentrification processes and the takeover of the (especially) inner cities by private cooperation that evict and dislodge poor minorities. In a similar vein, Roulstone and Morgan elaborate on how the policy of commodification of social goods, the resulting privatization of the public and the reevaluation of what is a productive body, has led to the decreased spatial and social access for people with non-normative bodies (Roulstone/Morgan 2014). In terms of gender, Jarvis et al. (2009) examined the city as a space for women. Their argument cuts both ways; while the city provides a greater concentration of job opportunities, support networks, public services, and a more tolerant and liberal atmosphere, on the one hand, cities are also the spaces of danger and alienation for women (Jarvis et al. 2009: 41f.). In conclusion, contemporary mechanisms of exclusion are deeply interwoven with the space created for abled, white, male, and wealthy bodies. These bodies can consume, saunter, use public and social space without barriers and fears. Non-normative bodies, though, experience barriers to enter the same social goods. And as a consequence, these minorities and precarious identities are deprived of the privileges the city has to offer and are at risk of losing their sense of belonging in an increasingly unfavorable space of living.

2.2 Politics of Necessity

2.2.1 The Power of Shame

As semantically conveyed in the term 'sense of belonging', politics and policies of exclusion and inclusion, can impact the body and might cause a physical and emotional reaction (Knudsen/Stage 2014). Based on Foucault's (1978[1976]) assumption that power no longer is exercised upon life, but is deeply impinging in the living body, the biopolitical dimension in politics, history, and knowledge gained attention.

Biopolitics subsequently evolved into one of the most crucial concepts of the last decades. It can be summarized as a theoretical endeavor set to understand life and the body as the object and subject of (political) power (Campbell/Sitze 2013: 13 &

18). Within this theoretical approach the body can thus be considered as a political arena and can be simultaneously used to refer to the vehicle of law and regulations as well as the governed subject in its entirety. As one of the central scholars in this domain, Hannah Arendt understands biopolitics as the introduction of mortality and the resulting need for states to control and secure society "against its own potentialities of mortality and nativity (Campbell/Sitze 2013: 25). This is connected to the work of Giorgio Agamben, who recognizes the development of the body as the political subject tied to the birth of modern democracies and liberal notions of individual freedom. After all, democracy is "the assertation and presentation of the 'body'"(Agamben 2013: 149). Understanding how delicate the composition of the social and the recognition and denial of individuals is and seeing how it can lead to mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, reveals the vast potential and impact that biopolitical structures have in the governance of the political subject. In this manner, biopolitics help to draw relations between politics and life, or the politicization of life through power being exercised on the subject's body (Agamben 2013: 147f.).

Sara Ahmed examines the degree in which today's bodies are governed in relation to discourses of belonging (the "we") towards the national state and the creation of the "other" (Ahmed 2014). In this project, she departs from the constitutive power that lies in emotions as such cultural politics of emotions in sociology have been addressed long ago by the works of Elias. His theory of civilization detects a hierarchical structure of emotions, in which some emotions are elevated and understood as civilized and therefore acceptable. Those good emotions are predominantly characterized by a certain restraint of the self or the reflection about having too little restraint, such as embarrassment and shame. In contrast, the other emotions are framed as the result of human regression as they lack cultivation and control of self—bad emotions as Ahmed (2014: 3f) would term them. Framing of emotions hereby becomes an essential tool of organizing social hierarchy and a key instrument in governing behavior and bodies. The following will focus on shame as one of the primary emotions of governance in modern Western societies since it is one of the main good emotions, strongly tied to the individuals' realization of bad emotions.

Benjamin gives an excellent entry point to connect the emotional dimensions of shame with the body on the one hand and the biopolitical governing of bodies on the other: „Shame is an intimate human reaction, but at the same time, it has social pretensions" (Benjamin 2019[1955]. 76f). Ahmed's own definition of shame falls in line with Benjamin's as she describes shame as "an intense and painful sensation that is bound up with how the self feels about itself, a self-feeling that is felt by and on the body" (Ahmed 2014: 103). Shame-scholar Probyn (2005: 41) builds from Benjamin to stress the dual functionalities of shame. She clarifies that "[i]t is the most intimate of feelings; it makes ourselves intimate to our selves. Equally, it is social and impersonal, or at least, as Benjamin puts it, no more personal than the life and thought that carry it" (Probyn 2005: 42). But how can shame be at the same time the most intimate and the most impersonal feeling?

Elias (1982[1939]), who is elaborating on the "process of civilization" in Western societies through a decrease of external threats and external compulsions combined with an increase of inner fears and self-constrains, connects the increasing development of social stratification with feelings and regimes of shame. According to Elias (1982[1939]: 397), members of Western societies gradually cultivated an extended self-awareness of class affiliation and, as such, developed an awareness of potential social degradation. Therefore, emotions of shame allegedly helped to offer guidance and restraint to the individual, so said forms of degradation could be avoided. Shame thus obtains a social function, which helped stabilize and produce a state of societal constitution (Elias 1976[1939]: 184ff.). Elias continues by terming it a specific arousal that is linked to fear. Shame is automatically and habitually reproduced in individuals, such as a fear of unavoidable social degradation and superiority of others (Elias 1982[1939]: 397). It is located in the self and not in other subjects or objects and "hence, to expel the [experienced] badness I have to expel myself from myself" (Ahmed 2014: 104). And still, it needs another subject to be witnessed. Ahmed notes that "even if a subject feels shame when she or he is alone, it is the imagined view of the other that is taken on by a subject relation to herself or himself. [...] In shame I am the object as well as the subject of the feeling" (Ahmed 2014: 15f.).

In this manner, socially produced shame is embodied by individuals as a symptom of their efforts in self-constraint. Because individuals feel shame and act in accordance with these emotions, shame gets reproduced and transforms into a dimension of governance as more and more individuals get affected and restrained by it. This prevents them "from betraying 'ideals', while the lived experience of shame reminds the subject of the reason for those ideals in the first place" (Ahmed 2014: 106). Ahmed is introducing the concept of "affective economies", which is the process of reproducing emotions by feeling, performing and acting upon them. Shame for instance is passed by feeling ashamed and showing signs of shame on the body, such as a crouched body language and blushed cheeks (Ahmed 2014: 120). Similarly, Probyn (2005: 38) explains shame as "born of the desire to fit in [...] to avoid potential wrongdoing and bad consequences, and thus it seems to have more in common with fear than with guilt". Experienced in the body, it "becomes the living proof of all that we have experienced" (Probyn 2005: 49). In this manner, shame can be considered the internalization of social orders and norms in the body, which then gets intensified when being caught since "the bind of shame is that it is intensified by being seen by others as shame" (Ahmed 2014: 103). As the custom of hiding, one's blushing face illustrates how, emotions of shame function as a powerful form of self-control that attempts to hide any explicit referencing of bodily functions.

2.2.2 Emotional Regimes of Sanitary Infrastrucutres

Reflecting on infrastructural organization of public toilets as connected to hegemonic notions of necessity in city organization is leading to several questions. How far are architecture and design built into the socially constructed regime of shame?

Can infrastructures influence the sense of belonging? Since public toilet infrastructure counts as an overarching necessity for all, the following sub-chapter will focus on the infrastructural organization of toilets and its ideological and emotional ramifications. Architecture always has to be understood as a structure directly influencing the body and showing cultural separations (Barcan 2010: 29). Taking a look at the history of public toilets and toilet infrastructure at large shows how the development of today's (Western) restroom has evolved. Elias (1976[1939]), who examined the conversion of behavioral changes in the occidental upper class, recognized vast transformations of (toilet) habits within the last centuries. Up until the 16th century, societies wherein defecation habits were mainly located in public, i.e., outside the private household, and in front of people's eyes, considered the daily human necessity with unselfconsciousness and naturalness. Elias observed that "neither the execution itself, nor the speaking about it or associations were intimized, privatized and barred with feelings of shame and embarrassment thus far as later" (1976[1939]: 181). Defecation and urination appear as something taken for granted, natural and neither important nor unimportant. Over the next centuries, though, emotional regimes of shame (Reddy 2004: 124f.; Ahmed 2014) were established by way of the gradual implementation of sanitary infrastructure into the public discourse. It started with the adoption of toilet infrastructure in the houses of the rich, while the poor still had to defecate and urinate in the public or at some points existing public toilets, and ultimately led to contemporary times in which a toilet has become a Western standard in every private and public house. Public toilets separate the natural, private body function from the public and thus "actively constitute an idea of the natural and the social" (Barcan 2010: 32).

As a consequence, these emotional regimes of shame and embarrassment that manifested around the bathroom deeds became internalized and evolved into a powerful form of self-control that hides explicit references to bodily functions. As Elias states, the development of a toilet apparatus implied an infrastructural consolidation of the changed bathroom habit and helped stabilize and reproduce these social norms and practices. Toilet infrastructure design should therefore be considered the shame-driven result of social and habitual changes since toilet users as well as toilet designers are so tightly wrapped in regulations of social life that there is either the possibility to obey or to be excluded from the civilized society as abnormal (Elias 176[1939]: 197 & 1982[1939]: 398). Closely observing contemporary infrastructures helps us understand how regimes of shame and embarrassment structure architectural decisions and design questions even today. Following Elias, the vast majority of today's toilet infrastructure is designed so that any dimension of interaction with the toilet in itself, feces or other toilet tied actions, is framed as obscene or infantile, and consequently remains hidden.

Materially, the toilet bowl is in itself already designed in such a way that a mechanism flushes down the excrements in mere seconds after use. By simply pressing a button, the feces and urine disappear in an instant after leaving the body. The hygienic dimension can evidently not be neglected here, but there is also something to be said for our intense aversion to remaining in contact with our excrements.

Members of societies with general access to toilet infrastructure are seldomly confronted with their feces as these immediately disappear in the toilet bowl's water and seconds later in the sewage system's pipes. Barcan is understanding (human) dirt as a material that emerges into an offense against social categories, which can destabilize social order (2010: 25). Since the body is naturally producing dirt by digestion and feces and urine production, it emerges into a symbolic and literal "reliable constant source of pollution" (ibid.). She understands the toilet as a (almost democratic) space in which humans meet and interact with members of the public, even those they would not have met elsewhere since the toilet is needed and used by almost every societal group, but still under regulations of who has access how and where (Barcan 2010:26). Therefore, the toilet negotiates and reproduces specific ideas and social orders of the public. Žižek is even going one step further by stating that as soon as the researcher who just claimed "that we live in a post-ideological universe [...] visits the restroom after the heated discussion, he is again knee-deep in ideology" (Žižek 2017: 83), since "even the most intimate attitude towards one's body is used to make an ideological statement" (ibid.). By doing so, Žižek is referring, albeit humorously, to different toilet architectures in Germany, France, and the USA. These national design traditions to him resemble certain ideological attitudes of respective nations.

In a traditional German toilet, the hole in which shit disappears after we flush water is way up front, so that shit is first laid out for us to sniff at and inspect for traces of any illness; in the typical French toilet the hole is far to the back, so that shit may disappear as soon as possible; finally the American toilet presents a kind of synthesis, a mediation between these two opposed poles – the toilet basin is full of water, so that the shit floats in it, visible, but not to be inspected (Žižek 2007: 17).

Similarly, the architecture of toilet stalls falls in line with the logic of those Western society's "civilized" manners. Different than in the latrines of old Rome, Western toilet bowls are separated by walls and often are equipped with a lock to make sure that nobody can enter the toilet while it is in use. To Ahmed, this design helpfully "address[es] to potential users, telling them that the toilet is being used by somebody else" (Ahmed 2019: 27). As such, toilet occupants are sheltered by wall and lock infrastructure and hidden from and for others during their occupation of the toilet space. Moreover, by segregating toilet rooms in terms of male and female cubicles, toilet users are also hidden from the other sex when entering the entrance room of the toilet. This indicates another dimension of shame towards the other genders and a deeply rooted principle of gender division in the elimination of human waste (Barcan 2010: 39f.; Probyn 2005: 82f.).

While some societies are cleaning their posterior with water and the bare hand, others use toilet paper to wipe or hand douches to spray away the remains without touching their own body parts. Most notable is the Japanese toilet market, which invests in incorporated toilet showers and leveling up the toilet design by including automatic blood pressure checks, speakers, and smell sucking devices for the toilet stalls and heated toilet seats (George 2008: 47f.). In this manner, the toilet visit is transformed into a comfortable and pleasurable experience while simultaneously

hiding what exactly is happening inside the toilet stall. The emotional regime of shame represents the leading paradigm for design here and takes Elias's findings even further. Defecation and urination are not only unspeakable but almost evolved into something near un-experienceable. It is happening without really happening. This has to be understood in line with Western modernity's preoccupation with cleanliness and its fear of the "others" body. Barcan (2010: 37f.) states that toilets, especially public toilets, make us consume these signs of cleanliness by masking smells and sounds we identify as dirty with chemical air fresheners, music, and sterility to wash away traces of former users, other bodies.

Moreover, a similar form of discursive repackaging can be noticed in the linguistic infrastructure that helps cover the biological process of defecation, urination, and other medical and necessary actions related to toilets. Changing diapers of children, sanitary napkins, and tampons, or stoma pouches are put under a linguistic cloak of silence, which helps to actively negate the activity. It's ironic that this is also done in this study since the harsh lexicon of human waste seems obscene in the context of an academic work. However, this phenomenon is also applicable in everyday discourse since people choose to frame their toilet activities as "doing one's business", "powdering their nose", "answering nature's call", "de grote boodschap doen" or "das Geschäft verrichten". The linguistic and the material infrastructure work in tandem to cement a set of discourses and emotions that render our fundamental interactions with the toilet obscene. Here shame comes into play again since human necessities are made into something shame-ridden and expelled from the public life and public space. Even Elias, who is identifying exactly this in his first book on civilization's process, is paraphrasing defecation and urination by using the concept of "necessities" instead of "calling things as they are" (Elias 1976: 182, translation by author).

2.2.3 The Politics of Necessity and Affect

> We have such a multitude of the toilet types because there is a traumatic excess which each of them tries to accommodate - according to Lacan, one of the features which distinguishes man from animals is precisely that, with humans, the disposal of shit becomes a problem. (Žižek 2017: 82).

That the architecture of the toilet bowl and stall is following structural and ideological notions of social order is at this point been established. How public infrastructures of necessities influence the behavior of individuals and (marginalized) groups in cities will be discussed in this sub-chapter. As already mentioned, space is designed with primarily abled, white, economically wealthy, and male bodies in mind. But what about the neglected? Toilet infrastructure is as much following hegemonic notions of society's composition as any other spatial infrastructures. Barcan (2010: 26) conceptualizes toilets as multiple spaces with an ambiguous and contested character, serving many groups' needs and practices. Whereas the bathroom intends to provide citizens with the possibility of doing one's business, to

wash their hands, to put on make-up, and potentially change diapers, many other needs and practices are withheld by the public bathroom design (ibid.). The execution of those intended basic practices can be brutal for non-hegemonic identities who don't fit the existing infrastructures' logic. For instance, most public bathrooms follow the "gendered patterning of city spaces" (Kern 2020: 100). Perez explains that a theoretically equal distribution of space in male and female toilets in practice doesn't provide equal opportunities since men have the benefit of being easily able to urinate while standing. Therefore, urinals, which take up less space, can be installed in a larger amount than sitting toilets for women, even when male toilets combine both toilet types (Perez 2020[2019]: 48; Plaskow 2016: 751).

Furthermore, Banks (1991: 274) states that women not only use the bathroom more often than men, due to biological reason such as pregnancy, menstruation, and a higher probability of getting bladder inflammations, they also take more than two times longer than men, when using the bathroom. Additionally, most caregivers for the elderly, children and other groups dependent on external help are women, who potentially take longer and have to visit toilet infrastructure more often when guiding another individual (Perez 2020[2019]: 48f.). The toilet appears as a manifestation of Kern's understanding of "patriarchy in glass and stone" (Kern 2020: 69), or rather in ceramic. Safety is another issue that weighs into this structural inequality. Taking situations of women all over the world into account, only two of three women have safe access to toilet infrastructure. Situations for outside urination and defecation are more dangerous for women than for men due to gendered violence, which in some context can lead to health risks and can even deprive them of education, since girls and women cannot attend education if there is no toilet infrastructure (Kern 2020: 69; Vohra 2006).

The toilet appears as what Marc Augé calls a super modern non-space: a space that is part of the urban landscape, provided by public or private institutions, characterized by texts that clearly indicate how to use the place and creating a mass of relations with the self and others, but which is then rather an imaginary, a banal utopia (Augé 1995[1992]: 94ff.). The clear indication on how to use the non-place toilet is intrinsically embedded in the toilet since not only the lock indicates whether a toilet is locked, but also the inscription of the door sign (male/female) is guiding the way on how to use the toilet with certain bodies. Simultaneously, Ahmed (2020: 30) is explaining that toilet signs are not referring to the toilet itself, but to the potential user of it and therefore indicate which room to enter and how to use the toilet. Already in 1991, Taunya Lovell Banks offered a juridical perspective on toilets and went as far as to suggest the repeal of the normatively gendered bathroom. That would not only decrease the waiting times for everybody[5], but would also give equal access to the number of toilets and potentially result in the elimination of urinals (BANKS 1991: 265). Gender free toilets would eliminate problems of attendants who take care of people of the other gender. They then would not have to enter a space that is not designed for them – resulting in discomfort (Kafer

5 An in-depth analysis of bathroom waiting times has been done by Rogiest/ Van Hautegem in 2017.

2013: 40). Another benefit of the gender free toilet is that they do not cause painful situations for transgender and non-binary individuals who often face "exclusion, danger and violence [...] in trying to use an appropriate facility at work, school or in public buildings" (Kern 2020: 110) since other toilet users might more strictly police or misgender them (Lowe 2018: 27). The sign on the door is not only indicating how, but especially by whom the toilet can be used. Augé writes "the user of a non-place is in contractual relation with it (or with the powers that govern it). He is reminded when necessary, that the contract exists" (Augé (1995[1992]): 101). Toilet use therefore becomes a case of hegemonic gender categories as social contracts which are so deeply internalized by everybody, that seme feel the urge to enforce these contracts when necessary and perceived as misused. If some are policing the different use of others, the use of the facility and by that the individual identity is questioned since, "if you cannot use the toilet, you cannot perform a necessary function. Not being able to perform a necessary function in a public space is how a public space becomes unusable" (Ahmed 2019: 31). This inability of using public space is not exclusively related to gender identities and gendered toilet designs. Since there is a strong connection of low economic status and low social ties and networks, people with a low socioeconomic status are in danger to be easily left out when creating city spaces (Wacquant/Wilson 1989). It has as much to do with class for example, when (toilet) infrastructure is hidden behind an impassable paywall by either being bound to consumption or the payment of an entry ticket.

A final structure that should be discussed in relation to the exclusionary character of toilet architecture is the hegemonic ableist approach of design and material. According to Plaskow "disabled people often confront [...] facilities that are up two steps or double as storage rooms for mops [...], in which toilet doors to open inward or are not wide enough to admit a wheelchair" (Plaskow 2016: 749). Individuals that are dependent on external help or tools are in need of an adjusted infrastructure face another material reality, that is not adjusted accordingly and therefore can cause a material exclusion. Not being able to use a toilet decreases the possibility to be in a certain space and to stay there (Kafer 2013: 94). Even though this study has already shown how far public and urban spaces are generally built within a patriarchal and ableist framework, toilet space is especially prone to these power dynamics since it constitutes one of the remaining infrastructures in which the gendered spatial segregation, insufficient toilet infrastructure on basis of location, cleanliness and functionality is still embedded totally. As the examples above illustrate, the infrastructural dimension of public toilets is limiting the possibility of access to toilets for individual bodies and it can operate as a mechanism of the social. Since defecation and urination are human necessities, toilet infrastructure is and will remain a necessity within public space shared amongst all citoyens, too. Plaskow describes accessible public toilet infrastructure as a precondition for citizenship and public participation (2008: 52). As "[a]ble-bodied and cis-gendered women do not usually face the same obstacles to moving around freely in public space" (Plaskow 2016: 749) as disabled women remain alienated and excluded by infrastructure created to accommodate anyone but them.

2.3 Repair to Belong

2.3.1 Can you fight City Hall? Claming Inclusion

As the analysis will show later, toilets in the urban space get classified by officials and users in public, non-public and private. These distinctions can be observed in multiple dimensions of space and have a long history in the examination of space and society in social research. The heavily criticized (Ciepley 2014, Armstrong/Squires 2002; Karacor 2016) theoretical distinction of the public and private sphere by Habermas and other liberal apologists can still be found in city planning discourses. Specifically, Kern (2020: 102) has marked out that this distinction leads to a city construction which is "imbued with a hostile masculinity". Since "the idea of a public sphere [...] of a body of 'private persons' assembled to discuss matters of 'public concern' or 'common interest'" (Fraser 1990: 58) is based on the notion of public masculinity and private femininity (Klaus 1994: 73), she suggests a public space approach that acknowledges the underlying notion of significant exclusions rooted in gender, race, class, and ableism when referring to the public. As such, tools for marginalized and subordinated groups can be constructed, which then again help to develop channels and modes to contribute demands of the public society to create notions of belonging and citizenship (Fraser 1990: 64ff.). With this, Fraser is building upon Habermas's approach of multiple publics, in which societal discourses are negotiated among diverse publics, without recognizing the public-private divide. She is demanding that political individuals decide themselves whether something is of common concern or not, since there is no a priori given boundary of the common. It can only be created out of the community's discourse and negotiation "[o]n the contrary, democratic publicity requires positive guarantees of opportunities for minorities to convince others that what in the past was not public in the sense of being a matter of common concern should now become so" (Fraser 1990: 71).

As a result of this, Fraser contradicts the strict notion of a division of public and private sphere and considers the public whatever is understood as necessary to be publicly discussed by citizens and should potentially be part of the common concern. Not having a clear distinction of private and public averts the danger of enclaving, precluding and delegitimizing certain discourses of subordinated groups, that were rhetorically and culturally marked as private in the past (Fraser 1990: 73). The public as a material (online) network space for example should be considered an important social arena in which a more abstract sphere of democratic space can facilitate encounters and mobilizations, connections and re-connections, and resistance and belonging. Taking into account, for once, the recent social movements and large-scale political protests, such as the Hong Kong Protests or the Black Lives Matter Movement, and further, the social upheavals due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it becomes evident how crucial public life and space is and how significant the impact of restrictions can be for individuals.

Given the material and the emotional connection of urban citizens to public space, questions arise in regard to the exclusion and accessibility of the public. Space thereby not only consists of a material dimension in itself but also of an emotional dimension. The ability to enter, speak, and stay in specific spaces should therefore be recognized as an important influence on the emotional connection and the sense of belonging of the citizens. What is pleaded for here is an active way of renegotiating belonging by way of an emotion-based practice of appropriating space and doing citizenship. Pratesi describes doing citizenship as "the multiple ways in which people—through their ongoing interactional, lived and felt experiences [...] — produce different outcomes in terms of equality/inequality, inclusion/exclusion and entitlement to rights" (Pratesi 2018: 262). Therefore, the contestation and negotiation of spatial accessibility are on par with the negotiation and reproduction of belonging and citizenship. Since infrastructures can be understood as the motor of belonging and exclusion to urban publics, they have to be perceived as a key dimension of the social fabric of urban environments when analyzing notions of belonging and citizenship (Anand 2013; Gandy 2006).

In line with that, Berlant is understanding repair and the replacement of insufficient and broken infrastructures, caused by a glitch that shook society as "necessary for any form of sociality to extend itself" (Berlant 2016: 393). For her, infrastructure is defined by its social movement, use and pattering, "the lifeworld of structure" (ibid.) that opens up potentials to organize life in a new order, once a glitch occurs that makes insufficiency visible. By that, notions of belonging and citizenship are renegotiated.

2.3.2 The Use of Use

As already established in chapter 2.1.2, infrastructural planning and design have an interdependent yet reciprocal relationship with the social practices of city users. Concerning the understanding of space as a socially constructed entity, the question arises of how social practices and interactions of citoyens shape urban space and notions of citizenship. How can citoyens design and appropriate urban space for their needs and necessities and by that become citizens? Since the city "is rooted in the habits and customs of the people who inhabit it" (Park 1970[1925]: 4), but authorities and urban planners are connected to political and economic dimensions, the city's design develops between the conflicting priorities in which citoyens use the city as they need to use it on the one hand — city planners and authorities design the city as they plan it to be used on the other. The earlier mentioned case of contested city space between cars and pedestrians is only one of many ways in which city planners can impose rigid structures on urban design. Every city's infrastructural element is based on approximations on how the city is used and should be used, who is using it and should use it, and who and what kind of behavior should be excluded. Subsequently, people learn to adopt this infrastructural organization through the process of socialization. According to Ahmed this then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: "the usefulness of a thing makes it a use-value" (Ahmed

2019: 25). Since the city represents the material dimension of society, decisions on exclusion and inclusion, use-values, and intended users manifest themselves in the social space and urban design of cities. The social and the material are greatly interwoven. The social construction of city space is interrelated with exclusionary and integrational practices. Since diverse and opposing users and elements are part of the urban social, an engagement and analysis of those various subject positions that use and objects that are used is of importance (Müller 2012: 316).

As already stated, flaws of infrastructures are only perceived by those who are affected by it. Following Heidegger's notion of vorhanden sein, in which he elaborates on the phenomenon that things only take our attention as soon as they stop functioning in there intended way, broken urban infrastructure only becomes obvious and front-staged for those who are affected by the brokenness and the insufficiency of infrastructures (Heidegger 1962[1927]: 200; Ahmed 2019: 21; Graham/Thrift 2007). However, those circumstances are created by hegemonic assumptions as city infrastructure is dependent on the acceptance and the proper use of those who are using it. Thereby, the development and the constitution of city structure gain another dimension, in which the citoyen and citizen, the city user, who is living, working, and visiting it holds a constitutive agency of accepting, using, and by that designing the created city space and its commons goods (Müller 2012: 31; Berlant 2016). Hence, usage as the systematic habit of using becomes a productive tool to engage with the existing infrastructure. Citoyens, for instance, are able to take the opportunity to deviate from the intended use of existing infrastructure and its intended hegemonic logic. By that, they make broken and insufficient infrastructure useful, question normative and social power relations, and appropriate the commons that were not available without care work of the users themselves (Berlant 2016).

Consequently, Ahmed suggests to appropriate usage by queering it and adopting repair solutions to fix the insufficient infrastructure that does not function in the way it could function (Ahmed 2019: 25). Queering use is not only related to gendered dimensions, but rather introduces the practice of using objects differently than the design intended them to be used (Ahmed 2019: 23) By queering use, new sets of (non-hegemonic) behavior are introduced, and the potential possibilities of usage of the object increases. Müller reminds though, that every object still has a limited number of non-intentional uses, since object only offer a limited affordance (Müller 2012: 317). Queer use and the repair of infrastructure not only aims to fix the material constitution of insufficient structures. On the contrary, repair cares about the discursive dimension of accessibility, since it is making the inaccessible accessible by habituating the ideological logics that define a structure's accessibility. Ahmed suggests that use is queered as soon as something is being used in a non-intentional way or by the under commons that were not intended to use it (2019: 34). While Ahmed is referring to queer use, Mattern (2018) builds upon the theoretical framework of maintenance and care of infrastructures, which he understands as both a methodology as a political cause shaped by political, cultural, social, and ecological contexts of technology (Mattern 2018: 1). With this

Mattern similar to Jackson (2014), adopts an epistemological perspective that understand the world as failing in every dimension. Graham and Thrift (2007) elaborate on this by stating that "[A]ll infrastructural systems are prone to error and neglect and breakage and failure whether as a result of erosion or decay or vandalism or even sabotage" (Graham/Thrift 2007: 5). Moreover, these infrastructures intend to continue their existence by evoking a sense of systematic and constant care amongst political subjects that help to repair and reproduce these broken infrastructures — especially in urban environments (Graham/Thrift 2007: 2 & 7). In that sense, repair evolves into a social infrastructure that is constantly and on an everyday basis needed to be performed by for those not belonging to hegemony. To put a stop on such toxic relationships between citoyen and infrastructure, it is necessary to make visible that infrastructure cannot be taken for granted and is strongly implicated with privilege on the one hand (Graham/Thrift 2007: 17f.) and intimate attachments of the marginalized on the other (Berlant 2016). Maintenance and repair become stabilizers and bridges for "the durability of the old, but also the appearance of the new" (Jackson 2014: 223).

Even though this shift of epistemology seems to be an essential perspective, maintenance and repair appear to be an emancipatory possibility of citoyens (or citizens?) to interfere in the hegemonic creation of public space. Possibilities of neglecting and unaccepting are limited since not everything can be used for anything, use, therefore, becomes a "restriction of possibilities that is material" (Ahmed 2019: 26). Deviancy and creative non-intended use, therefore, are also subjected to limitations.

2.3.3 Peeing is Political: Repair & Maintenace

In the tradition of Berlant, who understands repair as the practices of making the commons accessible for the under commons (Berlant 2016), repair and maintenance today are mainly used by postcolonial scholars. Their focus lies on repair, maintenance and care of the marginalized in urban infrastructures and human agglomerations in the global South. Together with Graham and Thrift (2007), multiple authors see especially non-hegemonic identities affected by insufficient infrastructure. The marginalized form, as a consequence, informal networks of care and repair to appropriate infrastructure and, by that, create publics. Anand (2013), for example, examines informal water pipe system in Indian slums and considers how "communities of the affected" emerge via appear the shared experience of inadequate infrastructure, or, as Anand puts it "publics come into being through the intimate and material consequence of water distribution in Mumbai" (Anand 2013: n.d.). In Anand's analysis, the water pipe, claimed and informally repaired and distributed by residents of a Mumbai' slum, is used as an intimate script of belonging to the space and the community. By developing a community that is sharing water problems in their private houses, the individual, affected by broken infrastructure is able to take steps of informally repair and complain through collective action. The glitch in the water distribution system here leads to the evolution of a new public which enters from the private into the public (Anand 2013: N.I.). Similarly,

Truelove (2019: 27) examines the practices of sewage system repair of women in Delhi, where the lacking infrastructure of the public freshwater system only covers 40-70% of the urban population. He describes how the body, that carries water from tab/mobile water tanker to the household develops into an extension or even subsidization of the public water system that makes the water circulate and flow in parts where it would not flow without the human pipe system (Truelove 2019: 27f.). Insufficient, lacking, and broken infrastructure thus leads to the necessity to create something new and informal, or something that extends the existing infrastructure in public. Truelove terms these shortcomings as a form of "infrastructural violence", which not solely emerges through "the material deprivation leveled on residents through their exclusion to equitable access to resources such as water, but through the violence of embodied compensation practices that arise to address such deprivations and ensure water's urban circulation" (2019:2 9).

Building upon the idea that infrastructural maintenance evolved into a human necessity to cope with systemic infrastructural lacks, Ruszczyk focuses on the invisible care and maintenance work of women for the household and the community. Thereby, she takes a feminist stand and argues that the actual infrastructure of today's city is represented by women's bodies who are maintaining and caring. The woman's body allows cities to further function (Ruszczyk 2019: 24). In her study of neighborhoods in Kathmandu, Nepal, women are responsible for the cleanliness of the neighborhood. They clean the trash, dirt and dust from the streets (Ruszczyk 2019: 26). Berlant's understanding of infrastructure is evidently shared by Ruszczyk: It is "the movement or pattering of social form. It is the living mediation of what organizes life: the lifeworld of structure" (Berlant 2016: 393). Further, Ruszczyk suggests broadening the so far material understanding of infrastructures, to acknowledge the women's bodies in Kathmandu as a constitutive element of urban infrastructural dimensions (Ruszczyk 2019: 26). Since theoretical and analytical examinations of repair and maintenance as well as studies of toilet infrastructures have mainly been applied to the global South, the following analysis is going to adapt these concepts on west European toilet infrastructures city of Ghent.

Infrastructure is commonly taken-for-granted and assumed to be only "a material and utterly fixed assemblage of hard technologies embedded stably in place, which is characterized by perfect order, completeness, immanence and internal homogeneity rather than leaky, partial and heterogenous entities" (Graham/Thrift 2007: 10). As a consequence, most academic examples neglect the human, intimate, social component. It is helpful to consider Fraser's concept of „emancipatory publics" in this context. When Berlant, and Truelove, and Ruszczyk show that repair and maintenance are equally embedded in bodies, one can see, according to Fraser's definition, a new public evolving out of the necessity and the interest of individuals to act upon the insufficient and marginalizing infrastructure as a form of public engagement (Marres 2012: 47). As Berlant, Truelove and Ruszczyk show, repair and maintenance are equally embedded in bodies and should therefore be studied as such. By applying these theoretical frameworks onto the infrastructural organization of cities, the following analysis will examine the

urban toilet infrastructure of Ghent. This will be done in relation to practices of space appropriation, urban infrastructure and notions of belonging and citizenship since "particular bodies provide an invisible infrastructure that enables urban life to persist, this infrastructural labor burden reinforces residents' highly unequal experiences of differentiated rights to urban resources, space, and citizenship in the city" (Truelove 2019: 29).

3 The Toilet Bowl: Following Infrastructural Logics

Since the methodological design is an essential pillar of ethnographic studies, the following chapter will extensively address this research's methodological course of action. Ethnographic research methods vary from study to study and, therefore, have to be reevaluated and reinvented in every research, as well as throughout the ethnographic research process itself. In the following account, the history and logic of ethnographic methods are briefly introduced before focusing on this study's used methods. Besides, an introduction to qualitative research methods in times of Covid-19 is given since the societal circumstances were extraordinary in the times of this research. Moreover, the following subchapters will address the spatial and social production of the research field, the process of accessing the field and collecting data, and describes the data corpus consisting of interviews, observations, and artifacts. In the last step, methods of coding and analyzing the prior collected data are introduced, and a reflection of the researcher on these methodological tools is given.

3.1 Ethnographic Methods

3.1.1 Historical and Epistemological Embedding

Ethnographic research methods have to be understood as a diverse set of qualitative research tools combined and assembled to access, trace and understand social structures and logics of the observed field, rather than a linear user manual of qualitative methods. In their essence, ethnographic methods offer dynamic possibilities to gain an in-depth understanding of social practices, social orders, and structures of power and hegemony affecting observed groups. Since research fields, especially in social science, differ vastly in their social dynamics, ethnographic methods can be quickly and flexibly shaped around specific circumstances and continuously reevaluated throughout the research process. Ethnographers speak of a recursive and iterative research design, in which theoretical approaches and field research alternate in a dialectic manner until saturation of data and theory is reached (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 46). The study's outcome might deviate from what was initially intended since ethnographic researchers approach their research with the highest possible impartiality and openness. And both field and developed theory direct the research process in which the researcher functions as a moderator, choosing which path of theory and field to follow.

Naturally, ethnographic researchers enter their fields with certain presuppositions and their own subject positions, which have to be continuously reflected throughout the whole research process; however, theoretical approaches and assumptions should derive out of the field. Malinowski, who revolutionized ethnographic methods in the early 20th century by claiming that the researcher has to go off the veranda (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 16) and into the field, already described the potentially problematic biases as foreshadowed problems. He explained that someone who "sets out on an expedition, determined to prove certain hypotheses

if he is incapable of changing his views constantly and casting them off ungrudgingly under the pressure of evidence, needless to say, his work will be worthless" (Malinowski 2014[1922]: 8). Ethnography, therefore, must be understood as an iterative-inductive research process. Field data is not used to prove preconceived ideas and hypotheses but is developed out of the gathered data. Ethnographic researchers are asked to keep decent proximity and distance to the field. On the one hand, this signifies keeping up a balance between understanding the logic of the field without getting trapped in it. On the other hand, it requires developing theoretical insights about and from within the field without forcing field knowledge and logics into pre-selected theoretical concepts.

Keeping this balance is difficult and constitutes one of the main challenges when conducting ethnographic research. Such being the case, a reflection of potential biases and presuppositions and already appropriated field logics is an essential tool of ethnographic research, which has to be introduced at any step of the research process. As a consequence, ethnographers developed several methods to systemize that reflection and decentralization of the research subject, such as ethnographic memos and a so-called field diary, in which the researcher has a framework to note down emotional reflections, thoughts, fears, and ideas and to connect with the process of writing in the field. These memos and diary entries can later function as an additional source of the conducted research and are a vital tool to understand the researcher's developed narratives and perspectives on the field. Therefore, they should be included in the analysis. Another essential solution to reflect on the gathered data and conducted interviews is the exchange with other researchers. Since this study was held in the context of a master's degree, a research colloquium and fellow students helped to provided ample opportunity for critical reflection. As even the most rigorous methods of ethnography can never erase the researcher behind it, who is human as is his field, I will from now on sprinkle the personal „I" throughout this study. It should function as a constant reminder to the reader, and to me, where the limits of this research lie.

Ethnographic methods aim to analyze objects and subjects of the field flexibly and dynamically, not only taking social practices but also social systems or orders, such as shared norms and values into account. By doing so, ethnography attempts to engage in and understand dynamics and social practice of research fields, theorize those, and in the last step, transfer them into a presentable shape for outsiders with the use of verbalized concepts and rhetoric (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 7). Ethnography is "as a process of creating and representing knowledge or ways of knowing that are based on ethnographers' own experiences and the ways these intersect with the persons, places and things encountered during that process" (Pink 2015: 5). Therefore, ethnography can be understood as a methodological process of knowledge production and translation of research fields' logics towards a broader (academic) audience, outside the researched field by the ethnographer. Ethnographic methods require not only close contacts to members, spaces, affective atmospheres, and artifacts, but also a "full bodied understanding of culture and experiences" (Pink 2015: 23) of the field. These are complemented with full bodied

methods, such as observations, interviews, and the analysis of artifact that enable the researcher to triangulate different perspectives on the research matter (Flick 2004: 310f.).

Historically, ethnographic methods derive from the cultural analysis of ethnology. In the early 19th century, researchers began to analyze the other, mostly non-western societies, from letters and reports of expeditions without leaving their familiar environment. The cultural analysis was characterized by a descriptive study about, but not with(in) researched fields (Hammersley/Atkinson 2007: 1). Yet, after Malinowski's call to leave the veranda, researchers started to get in contact with the field and its members in a direct, unmediated way. This rendered them the ability to not merely describe but, further, to understand social practices and logics. During the 20th century, ethnographic methods became employed to research western societies, especially the urban environments which faced industrialization and urbanization. Not only anthropologists but also sociologists grew interested in the social practices of their societies. Significantly, the Chicago School shaped sociological ethnographic methods at the beginning of the 20th century by analyzing realities of familiar groups and societies as not preexisting but socially constructed (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 20). The Chicago School's approach was to understand the influences of segregation and migration on urban life by conducting in-depth and participant observations of social reality in a non-artificial and non-manipulated way (Hammersley/Atkinson 2007: 2; Breidenstein et al. 2013: 21). From today's perspective, the Chicago School of Sociology was a trailblazer for contemporary sociological, anthropological and social geographical methods and theories, and the emergence of cultural studies.

Ethnographic methods got further developed throughout the 20th century and became much more structured and empirical over time. Especially the sociology of everyday life used ethnographic approaches and also developed them into a mature methodological set. The sociology of everyday life and its pioneers Schütz, Garfinkel and Goffman denied the notion of objective truth and followed the paradigm of a socially constructed reality (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 26). Herein, reality was no longer conceived as a stable, objective fact, but as a set of conditions that are continuously being produced and reproduced in everyday practices. Following this logic, researchers observed such reality producing practices by actively engaging in those themselves. In a second step, they dissociated themselves from everyday structures of social order, interpretation, and action to take distance from the supposed commonplace and understand its structures of meaning (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 27). To this day, ethnographic methods start from this vantage point in their efforts to comprehend everyday life, structures, practices, and knowledge in a qualitative, in-depth, and open manner.

3.1.2 Research in Times of Covid-19

In March 2020, the spread of Covid-19 confronted many dimensions of our social organization with profound changes. Belgium entered a so-called lockdown on the 18th of March, which caused considerable re-organization of social, private, and

labor circumstances, (food)service industries, the majority of shops and cultural institutions had to close. "Home office" became the norm for when it was possible, and school education went online to prevent the virus from further spreading. Access to public space became increasingly restricted by government measures which banned outdoor activities, such as sitting on public benches or meeting more than one person from another household in public. These measures resulted in a vastly changed use of (public) space by the citizens: public transportation services were reduced, the majority of commuter traffic vanished from streets and highways, and shopping streets were emptied. Out of those diminished opportunities, citizens started to go on walks; the flaneur took back the streets. Extraordinary circumstances are impossible to ignore when evaluating the necessity, availability, and use of public toilets as the focus of the following chapter.

The pandemic did not only enormously influence the research field itself. Additionally, it changed the possible tools to conduct this ethnographic study. At the very beginning of the pandemic, when the Covid-19 virus still appeared as something entirely unknown and unpredictable, all meetings and encounters with people outside the so-called private bubble had to be relocated to online meeting spaces. These circumstances, obviously, caused problems in accessing and observing social interactions in public, such as protest actions of toilet activists or meetings of the city council. They changed the situation for interviews and informal conversations with people as well. The social climate was characterized by suspicion, confusion, and fear of potential infections. Citizens had to wear face masks in public spaces and were required to hold several meters distance from each other to decrease the risk of transmitting with the virus. These measures made it very difficult to start conversations with strangers or to read potential emotions and expressions on people's faces when, e.g., entering public toilet infrastructure, if those infrastructures were open at all. Potential participants were distanced and anxious, and feelings of fear of infection or infecting others dominated the behavior of the researcher in the same way. Likewise, interviews had to be conducted with an online meeting tool, which took away essential elements of social interaction and social reality, considering the opposite only appears as real in the fullest sense in a face-to-face situation (Berger/Luckmann 1991[1966]: 43f.).

Even though most of the online conversations got conducted as video calls with the possibility to see each other, it still resulted in the disappearance of essential dynamics of non-verbal communication, body language, gestures, facial expressions, and a shared spatial interview situation, given that the framework of online meeting platforms do not cover a holistic picture of the respondent's body (Pink 2015: 74; Janghorban et al. 2014: 9). Also, technical problems such as an unstable internet connection, problems with the soft- and hardware, or interruptions by others were repeatedly disturbing important thoughts and atmospheres during interviews. The possibility to grasp important micro-emotions and affective atmospheres was narrowed. Yet, due to the fact that almost every professional and private social interaction outside of the household moved to an online space, digital meetings became the new norm. Therefore, I did not encounter any situation in which somebody

used online meeting software for the first time or had fundamental problems with it. On the contrary, people were not only used to the software and its technical features, but also seemed to feel comfortable with it.

Additionally, the usage of online meeting platforms during the pandemic made it very easy to get a conversation going—especially at the beginning of the lockdown. Me and the participants suddenly shared a situation nobody understood, and that created an essential atmosphere of solidarity, assurance, and alliance. Another practical benefit of using online meeting platforms was the included recording function. Thanks to the affordances of social meeting tools, there was no need to have another external recording device. This was practical for the researcher and increased the quality of the interview recordings for further processing. It also minimized the participants' awareness that the interview was recorded and, therefore, minimized the interview effect significantly. Although it was communicated (orally and by a written consent form) and declared at the beginning of each interview, participants mentioned at several moments that they forgot that they were being recorded and were surprised when they were told that the recording will stop from now on.

Ultimately, the digital nature of some conducted interviews had not only disadvantages, but also positive effects. Moreover, digital interviews were at some points the only option to have a conversation with respondents at all since federal infection regulations and the necessity of personal quarantine did not allow for meetings in person at every time. Therefore, the conduction of online interviews and conversations were the pragmatic and (unfortunately, for most parts) only options to gather data at many moments over the course of my research.

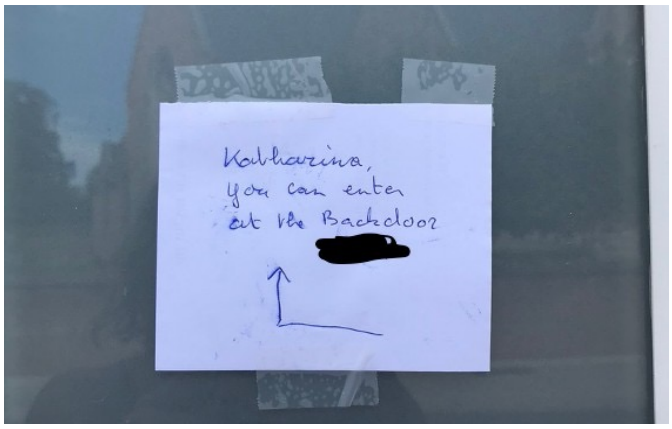

Fig. 1: Margaux note on her front door, sending me to the backdoor to meet in her garden - own image

Nevertheless, as soon as some regulations were loosened I tried to conduct as many interviews and conversations in a face-to-face situation as possible. Interestingly, at that time, when most office spaces, university buildings, and libraries still had strict rules and restricted access, and safety rules asked to meet strangers in well-ventilated rooms, or preferably outdoor spaces, conducting interviews brought me into very diverse settings. After the reopening of restaurants and coffee shops,

several interviews were conducted on patios of lunch restaurants. Even though those public and often well-frequented places are not always ideal for interviews, especially when they involve personal or delicate information and tabooed or shameful conversation topics, I still decided to meet there—just for the simple reason that there was otherwise a lack of spaces which served infrastructures like seating, outlets for the recording device, and of course, toilets. Often other suggestions were made to the interviewees; but the majority preferred to meet in restaurants, sometimes to connect the lunch break with the interview. Since it was not always easy to convince people to engage in an interview, it seemed to be an excellent compromise to meet at non-ideal places, but at least offered the opportunity to physically meet the interviewee in a face-to-face situation. Other interviewees invited me to their yards, patios and pavilions, which were good opportunities to construct a very familiar and personal atmosphere as well as getting exciting impressions of the interviewees living conditions. Since Covid-19 was still present in those situations, we were not only sitting outside or in well-ventilated spaces, but also kept a safe distance during the conversation. Yet, I cannot report any negative effect on the interview situation, from my perspective, since at that point, everyone was already used to the security measures against corona pandemic. And still, the pandemic was the opener to any every conversation I had with respondents this year.

Some interviews were conducted in the interviewees' office spaces. One was even equipped with a glass screen between the interviewee and me. Another one happened in a spacious room, in which we could sit at a decent distance from each other without wearing face masks. Since my field phase extended into the second lockdown, when restaurants and cafes had to close again, I seized the chance to take an ethnographic walk through the city with one of my interviewees. This gave us the possibility to perceive the Ghent's original public toilet infrastructure in the inner city—an experience that sparked many conversations and extended my mental map of the toilets and spaces available to Ghent's homeless population. Overall, I can say, the Covid-19 measurements caused several unusual but not solely inconvenient situations, which asked to be handled with more creativity and flexibility, especially after the end of the first lockdown, than they would have in pre-pandemic times.

3.2 The Field

3.2.1 Spatial Bounaries of the Field

Naturally, the informal observations of public sanitary infrastructure had started already months before the actual field phase began. In that phase, first impressions and thoughts were collected. The mental map of toilet infrastructure in Ghent started growing hand in hand with the first theoretical deliberations and the collection of reflections about possible contacts, respondents, and activist groups. The initial focus was put on pee activism, making Ghent into an interesting and remarkable site of research. Pee activism is first and foremost represented by the grassroot mo-

vement plasactie vzw (Eng. pee action) and its wing piss off!, with whom they were running for the city council in 2018. The existence of pee activism, in the first place, which seems to be something quite outstanding, then the interesting character of the northeast Flemish city itself, but also the fact that I am living in the Ghent, what made the social networks and a basic knowledge about the city's infrastructure available to me, made it, at last, the arena of this study. As the following will show, over the course of my research, my scope further expanded from pee activism towards the more holistic story of public toilet infrastructure in Ghent. Ultimately this broadening of the topic proved to be a wise decision, when pee activism came to a hold in the last years and months anyways, because of lacking energy and time of the main activists.

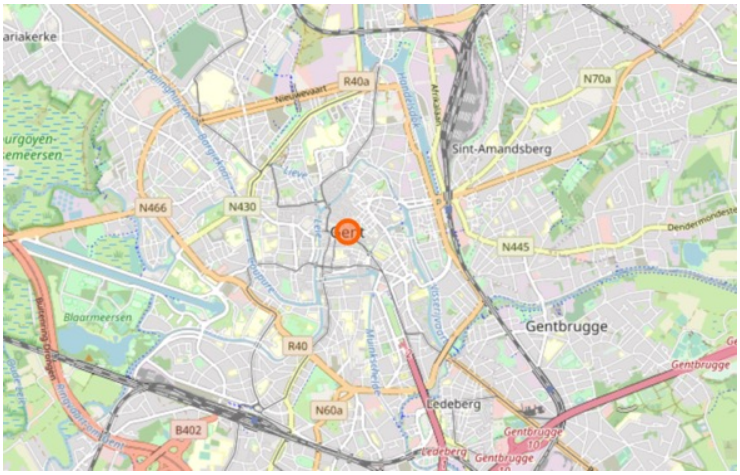

Fig. 2: Ghent center with surrounding municipalities - open streetmaps

Ghent is not only a famous destination for tourists interested in its medieval history (1,1 million overnight visitors in 2017 (De Wilde 2018)) but also hosts one of the eleven Belgian universities. Ghent is the city with the highest number of students in Flanders and, adds a fifth of the total population (260.000 Ghentians) during the semesters. Due to two-fold identity of catering to tourists and to students, Ghent is occupied with investing in a positive and diverse city image, based on cultural events, climate neutrality, and child friendliness (Stad Gent n.i.). My analysis will show that this also impacts the organization and design of infrastructures, such as toilets, provided by the city (see chapter 4). Since the sanitation infrastructure is mainly contested in the inner city, the analysis will focus on the Ghent inner city infrastructure, which is geographically marked by the ring roads R40 and R40a and the waterways of the Handelsdok in the east, the Nieuwevaart in the north, and the Schelde river in the south. The inner city is encircled and therefore geographically segregated from the outer industrial and domestic areas. However, the analysis was not set out to solely focus on the inner city in the first place, yet the majority of newspaper articles, interviewees, and artifacts collected throughout the research mainly related to the area inside the ring.

Often, interviewees' focus was even more narrowed down to the neighborhood around the Korenmarkt and Vrijdagsmarkt, representing the most central and the-

refore also most visited points in the city of Ghent. Similarly, the train stations Ghent Dampoort and Gent-Sint-Pieters got mentioned in several interviews. Repeatedly interviewees mentioned their frustration about lacking and insufficient public toilet infrastructure in domestic areas at the outskirts of Ghent, especially in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, when the few existing public toilets were closed. One interviewee bemoaned

> "[…] outside the touristic center, for example here in Rabot, where I am living - it is also city of Ghent - there is no public toilet for nobody, you know. And if you go outside, you have to go to the Horeca[6], to cafés. And in the corona time it is very difficult, because also the cafés are not so available anymore for everyone. And therefore, it was already difficult and now it is more difficult" (Aleah: 342).

Fig. 3: Ghent city center, within R40 - open streetmaps

The following analysis will take the complaints about lacking infrastructure in the suburbs into account and will focus on the missing visibility of lacking toilets in the city's outskirts. Interview questions about public toilet infrastructure were mostly answered by the interviewees concerning existing toilet infrastructure in the inner city, or about an unequal or unpractical distribution of toilets in the city center, for differently abled bodies (including bodies that are disabled, but also bodies that cannot easily use urinals). Whereas the lacking infrastructure outside of the city center only got mentioned concerning parks and other areas or recreation but seldom connected to domestic areas within the outskirts.

Further, the analysis explores why the questions of public toilet infrastructure is seldomly connected to domestic areas within the outskirts. Since public toilets

6 acronym for hotels, restaurants, and cafés.

seem to be mainly discussed in the city center, and the planning office is focusing more on the inner-city infrastructure (interview with Cato & Charlotte) the analysis will focus on the inner-city toilets and detect why it seems to be such a city center focused infrastructure and problem. Toilet infrastructure outside the inner city is going to be included in the analysis, too, but based on a lack of data not going to be focused on.

Even though all my interview partner agreed on being mentioned with their full name, I decided to anonymize most of the respondents as much as possible, since the analysis is focusing on universal and replaceable structures rather than on specific subjects. Additionally, the anonymization helps to avoid potential conflicts within the field. Although, certain subject positions in the field were unique and aa full anonymization of them would result in lacking comprehension of relations and events within the field. I decided to change their names, but I am aware of the fact, that certain subjects of this analysis can be retraced to their real persona. Besides, the toilet visit is, as the analysis will show, connected to severe feelings of shame and embarrassment. Therefore, an anonymization, not only of interview partner but also of observed persons seemed to be mandatory. Observations included people that were just urinating in (dry) urinals, here a distance to the urinators was held and the urinators where not further described in the protocols to keep distance and preserve their anonymity.

3.2.2 Accessing the Field and the Field Rapport

Gaining access to the field took a while and was not always easy. As public toilet infrastructure was the subject of interest from the beginning, I started observing toilet infrastructure in the city center of Ghent already at the end of April 2020, while the first Covid-19 lockdown was still in effect. The observation took place at one of the main public toilets underneath the Sint Michielsbrug, just around the corner of the Korenmarkt, one of the main squares in Ghent. This first observation gave me fascinating insights into the kind of users, of public toilet infrastructures in the city. Interestingly, there was a perceivable difference between the Korenmarkt toilet on the one hand and urinals at the Vlasmarkt on the other. During this observation, I also visited the public toilet underneath the Vrijdagsmarkt where I then recognized the sticker (figure 4) of the plasactie vzw hanging next to the entrance. As already mentioned above, the unique pee activism in Ghent was one of the first points of interest when engaging with public toilet infrastructure in the city of Ghent. I had

Fig. 4: Let her sit, Sticker plasactie vzw, Vrijdagsmarkt - own image

heard about them already via social networks and friends and visited their website, even before realizing their presence was also noticeable as part of the Ghent's physical spaces.

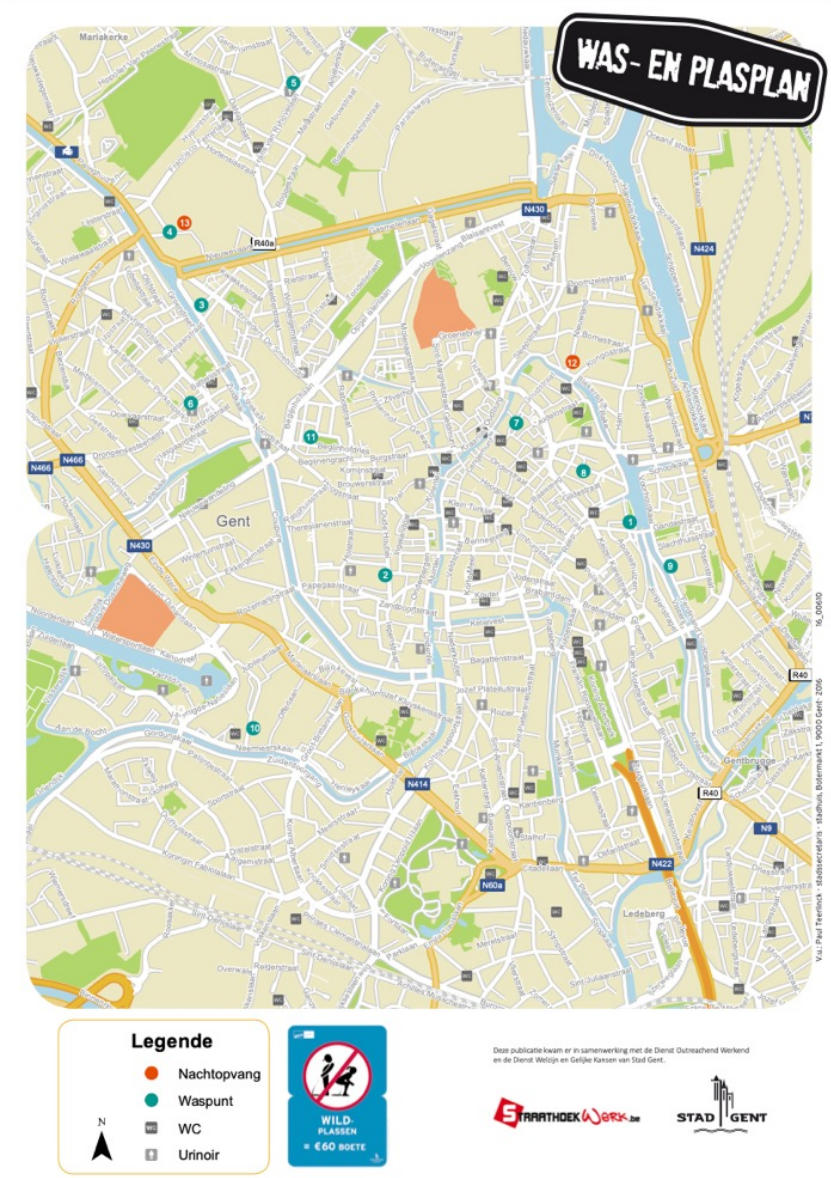

Fig. 5: Wash and pee plan of Ghent - Stad Gent

Subsequently to this observation, I began compiling an overview of their actions and their output on Facebook and their website (plasactie.be) before I contacted the plasactie vzw through their website's contact form. Unfortunately, yet, no one responded to me in the following weeks. And therefore, I tried reaching out to the individual members, whose name I found on the website via their private email addresses. Since I didn't get a response that way either, I repeated the whole process twice, this time with other (private) email addresses I found online and via Facebook. Finally, six weeks after my first attempt of contacting her, Aleah answered. During that waiting period, though, I tried to contact with piss off! as well. Piss off! is a group of individuals, that ran as an independent list for the city council elections in 2018. Their platform was fighting fot equal sanitary rights in the city

of Ghent. Only later, I figured out that the plasactie vzw and piss off! are institutionally connected, each performing on another level of civic activism. During that time, I also asked personal contact of mine, who works for the city administration and later became a patron for this study, to gain access to the city administration (Breidenstein et al. 2013: 53). Without this patron, it would have been quite challenging to figure out who is the one responsible for public toilets within the city administration. With her help, I got in contact with Charlotte, who works for the Ghent city administration and is responsible for the was- en plasplan, the city's plan that manages and maps public availabilities of toilets, to wash body and cloths, and to get access to drinking water. Further, the patron connected me with Susan who is working for the equal opportunity service in the city administration.

At the same time, I reached out to the city council women (schepen), who are in charge of the public facility management and other services and could share other interesting perspective on public toilet infrastructure. I wrote several emails to the responsible council person for tourism, equal opportunities and participation, public space and mobility and special planning. Sadly, to this date, I have received only few answers, and I could not manage to talk to more than one person of the city council, as I have received not more than one answer to inquiries. Often my emails were forwarded to the council woman deemed responsible for my matter, as no one saw themselves as the person in charge. Three of the council wo:men forwarded my email to Lisbeth (facility management) with well-wished:

> "I understand that it's not always easy to find out which deputy mayor is responsible for public urination. It's my good colleague [Lisbeth]. I'll put her in cc. Good luck!" (E-mail Tim, Jun.)

Even after explaining that I am interested in different perspectives on the matter and therefore would additionally like to talk to other departments, I did not get positive responses. I found out later that the organization of toilet infrastructure indeed concerns different departments of the city, depending on the specific kind of toilet infrastructures. While the general coordination is managed by the service for public cleanliness, the facility management is in charge of new toilet infrastructure. Similarly, the service for festivities and culture takes the responsibility for toilet infrastructure during events like the Gentse Feesten. (Dry) Urinals however are coordinated, constructed and maintained by the service for public space (Artifact 12).

Even though Lisbeth must have had at least three forwarded emails of her colleagues on top of the email she already had received from me, I did not immediately get an answer from her. All of that happened in early July. After months of negotiations, weeks of no answers, and me pushing further to have a conversation, Susan, who is working for the equal opportunity department finally accepted an interview with me in late October. It was fascinating to experience this unapproachability of the city council and city management. Certainly, they were not waiting for a social researcher, but the almost structural defense tactics to keep me away from the city administration and city council were spectacular and downright Kafkaesque. The

city staff consistently ignored or forwarded my concern to the next, higher administration level, taking away any responsibility of their own. And while interest in an honest conversation with me was more than once feigned, once I tried to settle on a date or format to this conversation, it became an impossibility due to the respondents' sudden elusiveness. Even in the interview with Susan, which was very interesting and gave a first and essential insight into how the city administration is communicating about public toilets in Ghent, she used the same defense strategies, as I already experienced via mail. During the interview with Susan, I figured out that the department of equal opportunities already communicated about me and the fact that they forwarded me to the facility management. She disclosed,

> "Yes, I heard that my colleague Tim already had contact with you and that he also told you to go to FM, […] Facility Management" (Susan: 324).

Since Susan did not have the feeling that she could help me further with the city's data and arrangements, she took over a gatekeeper's function. Thanks to her communication with some of her city administration and department colleagues, I received an email of her colleague Tim. Tim had contact with me in July and back then just forwarded my email. Now, he was sending me a fascinating study from a research bureau (CityD-Wes Group) that analyzed the toilet infrastructure of Ghent and gave policy advice on public toilets in May 2019. This study involves not only a detailed overview of the existing toilet structure in Ghent but is also investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the plasplan on top of giving an action plan for future renovations of public toilet infrastructure.

With Susan's help and an article for local newspaper De Gentenaar at the end of October, where I gave an interview about this study[7], Lisbeth, Charlotte, and Cato[8] suddenly contacted me with the proposal to interview all three of them. Unfortunately, this meeting got canceled twice and finally took place without Lisbeth at the end of November – the very late phase of this research project. It was exciting to experience the practicability of media pressure on one hand and Susan's gatekeeping function on the other. Suddenly there were answers to mails I had already sent weeks before, including apologies for previous dismissals. Even though Lisbeth in the end was consented to engage in an interview with me, the communication with the councilwomen was different from the communication I experienced with other respondents. She demanded to read the questions beforehand, and even after I gave her some more information about the interview and explained to her that I would prefer not to send the exact questions, she insisted on getting them, since she would „be better prepared to answer the questions" (e-mail Lisbeth, Nov.).

The contrast to non-official voices and activists in their interview behavior became most clear after I finally received Aleah's (plasactie vzw) answer. She was willing

7 I was in contact with the journalist who repeatedly reported about the public toilet infrastructure in Ghent, to get access to all his article, when his boss asked me to have an interview with the newspaper, which I took as an opportunity to reach out to people living in Ghent and producing some media pressure towards the politicians.

8 Another member of the department for facility management

to immediately engage in an interview, which became one of the most extended interviews in this study. She was very excited that someone else became engaged with the topic of public toilets in Ghent, she established a very open and solidary atmosphere during the interview, which not only led to an exciting and long conversation but also to an email by Aleah to all the other toilet activists, who were active with the plasactie vzw and piss off! in the past. She asked all of them to engage in an interview with me, since she evaluated their input as crucial for this paper. Her e-mail read:

> "[…] Ons inbreng is inhoudelijk erg van belang voor haar thesis. […] Mag jullie verzoeken om voor haar tijd vrijmaken? Ze zal jullie zelf contacteren voor een afspraak. Maar geeft a.u.b. via deze e-mail je belangstelling dor zodat ze jullie gericht kan contacteren. Ik heb gisteren aan haar een interview gegeven" (Email Aleah, Aug.)[9].

Aleah evolved into an essential sponsor of this study since connected me with (former) toilet activists and important key figures in the Ghent toilet field. Some of these key figures are Maximiliaan, a former architect who worked for the planning office of the city, and Marc, a urology expert, who is not only working at the urological station of the university hospital in Ghent, but also was part of a committee of the city to improve the toilet infrastructure in the early 2000s. Furthermore, Aleah suggested to contact Lena, who designed a female urinal and worked together with the plasactie vzw for several years. Throughout the interview and the following email contact with Aleah, it became evident that she imagined this paper as a channel to bring forward the topic of toilets in the city. After the publication of the article De Gentenaar for instance, I received an email of her complaining that the plasactie vzw was not mentioned in the article. Besides, she asked me to share the interview and my papers manuscript to be published on their website. For Aleah, this project became a vehicle to bring toilet infrastructure back on the map, since the plasactie vzw was not very activeany more at that time. Aleah explained:

> "[…] the last two years, because I do not have time with my little boy, I do not have time for actions. And the other thing is, the core members of plasactie are shrinking a lot. We are with three persons, and I am the motor of plasactie. If I do not do anything, there is nothing happening. And this is a little bit annoying, and that is ja because now since I have a child, I do not have time to take action. And that is a bit the pity that nobody else is continuing this matter" (Interview Aleah: 10).

She understood this study as something that is not only bringing together information and institutional players but that is also capable of changing the public toilet infrastructure of the city of Ghent with that. I benefited from her enthusiasm

9 Engl.: Our involvement is very important for her thesis. Could you try to make some time for her? She is going to contact you for a meetinf. But please let me know via this email, whether you want to talk to her, so that she can contact you. I already had an interview with her yesterday.

and her connections to gather more information, and I was happy to give her information as well as speak about the plasactie vzw with De Gentenaar. At some point, I almost had to remind myself that I am not part of the next generation of plasactie vzw, to prevent myself from going to much native within the field (Fuller 1999: 226).

The process of accessing the field was characterized by a constant coming and going and especially numerous attemptes of knocking on closed doors. In contrast to the activist networks, which were very open and happy to help, the access to the city required a consistent, active, and first and foremost multi-sided approach via different contacts and channels of access. In the end, my patrons and the newspaper article made all the difference and opened up the city administration in the last phase of this research.

Each respondent related differently to me in my function as the researcher. As a young female social researcher interested in public toilet infrastructure, I experienced certain expectations since respondents assumed in several cases that I was more informed about the details of Ghent's infrastructure and scientific discourses than I initially was. For instance, interviewees presumed that I was aware about the connection between public space use and toilets or queer theory, and they did not explain these phenomena in detail, even though these were exciting answers for this study. Therefore, I often had to press on explanations myself to get the detailed answers I needed. Especially the activist wing of my respondents interacted very openly and positively in their interviews. I assume that my own subject position as a woman, who is engaged with feminist theory and chose public toilets as a research topic, made me an interviewer with high reliability and connection for that issue. In the activist wing and when contacting the city administration, the majority of my interviewees were women between thirty and sixty, which gave most of the interview situations a touch of shared experiences with the urban space. It was quite challenging to access the city administration, and the contact with the responsible people was friendly but still more reserved and less committed than with other respondents. Interestingly, several interviewees of the city asked me to share my findings with them "so that [they] can compare and integrate them in our [their] study" (e-mail Lisbeth, Oct.).

Further, I had the impression that my alien status, as a German in Belgium, did not cause any problem throughout the whole research process. My nationality seldomly got thematized by the respondents, only the De Gentenaar mentioned it several times in the short interview. The interviews were mainly held in English, which at no point provided communication difficulties. Often languages got mixed since some interviewees knew German vocabulary, and I know and understand Dutch. Terms out of the field kept being used in Dutch, such as wildplassen (wild peeing), GAS boete (an acronym for municipal administrative sanction fee), urinoir (urinal, often used when referring to the dry urinals in the urban), and Gentse Feesten (Ghent Festival). Over the research process, more and more Dutch got introduced into the interviews. Nevertheless, I though must suspect, that as neither the researcher nor the respondents did communicate in their native language,

some nuances might have been dropped due to lacking vocabulary or the inability to express in English. Yet, another perspective here, could suggest a more direct and therefore honest expression of opinion and discourse, since rhetorical techniques of blurring certain matters were less involved (Kruse et al. 2012).

To conclude the methodological chapter of this research, I'd like to offer a visualization of my access to the field. The map (Fig. 6) of my field rapport shows how entangled and intersected my field's social connections are. Especially the strong

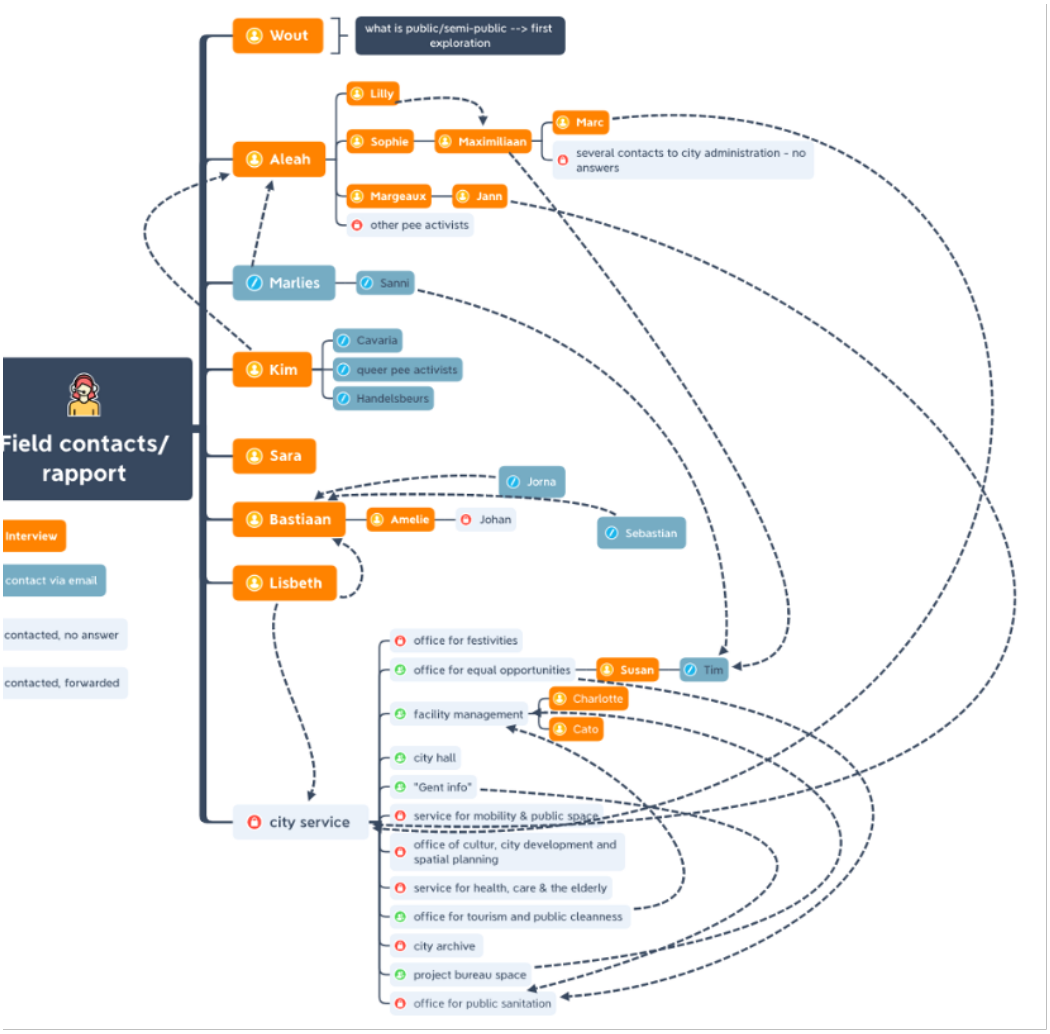

Fig. 6: Contacts in the field - own image

connections of the activist wing are evident. Aleah connected me with a group of (former) toilet activists, who in turn had exciting connections to the police (Jann), medical personnel in the urology (Marc), and urban architects (Maximiliaan). These networks were well-suited for my research aims and helped me gain multiple and intersectional insights on the topic of public toilets. Mapping the forwarding strategies inside the city service (here marked with the green icon) shows how extensive my case got transferred from one department to another, often resulting in no answer at all.

3.3. Data and Analysis

3.3.1 Corpus of Data

As already stressed, the field is constructed around three major groups. Several activist groups and individuals represent the activists fighting for better sanitary infrastructures in Ghent's city. The division between activists and those who are affected is not distinct. Naturally, activists experienced the public toilet infrastructures and on basis of their personal experiences got engaged with the improvement of toilet infrastructures. I decided to make a distinction between those that actively realize the effect of insufficient infrastructure and actively act to improve that (the activists) and those who are affected by the lacking infrastructure and unconsciously repair it. Whether this distinction is accurate, will be discussed in the following chapter. The third group is representing those who are in charge of the constitution of the Ghent toilet infrastructure, being city planners, private enterprises and for instance the police.

This ethnographic study uses multiple methods to investigate the different perspectives and groups in the field of public toilet infrastructure in Ghent. This study consists of four multi-sited observations in the public space of Ghent, mainly focusing on public toilet infrastructure in the inner city. Three of the observation

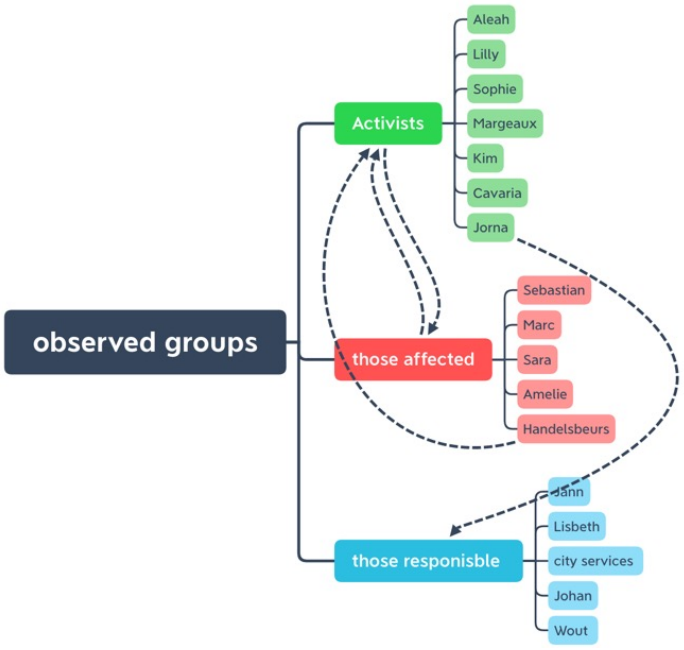

Fig. 7: Mapping and grouping of observed individuals - own image

were done alone. One happened in the framework of a walk that was combined with a conversation with a street worker and policy advisor, who is occupied with improving the sanitary situation for people living on the street. The observations, especially the first at the end of April, were useful tools to gain first insights and an overview of public toilet infrastructure, its condition, and users. Besides, fifteen semi-structured interviews have been conducted, covering multiple positions and

discourses of vastly different players in the field. The interviewing phase started in early August with a conversation with Wout, responsible for the national train station toilet in Belgium, to explore distinctions between public and semi-public toilet infrastructure and develop field boundaries. The following interviews focused mainly on toilet activists in Ghent since Aleah connected me with other toilet activists and people who were solidary with toilet activism in the past, and they were all very responsive and open to engaging in an interview with me. Besides, I got in contact with a transgender person through the Facebook group "Queer it up", which is a meeting point for people with queer gender identities in Ghent. After I published a post in this group, asking for members to talk about toilet infrastructure with me, Kim responded and engaged in an interview. After a newspaper report (Artifact 12) about toilet complaints and the so-called wild-kakkers in times of corona, I contacted the ombudsman service of the city of Ghent, that was mentioned in the article and immediately suggested to have a conversation with me. Interviews with field players affiliated with the local police and the urology of the UZ Gent followed after I got contact data from respondents (mainly Aleah) of former interviews.

Additionally, I talked to Sara, a disability scholar, who is herself affected by lacking accessible toilet infrastructure for wheelchair users, and with Bastiaan a journalist of De Gentenaar, who already published several articles about the public toilet situation in Ghent in the past. This conversation resulted in an interview about this study, which, after publication, led to the two last interviews. One with

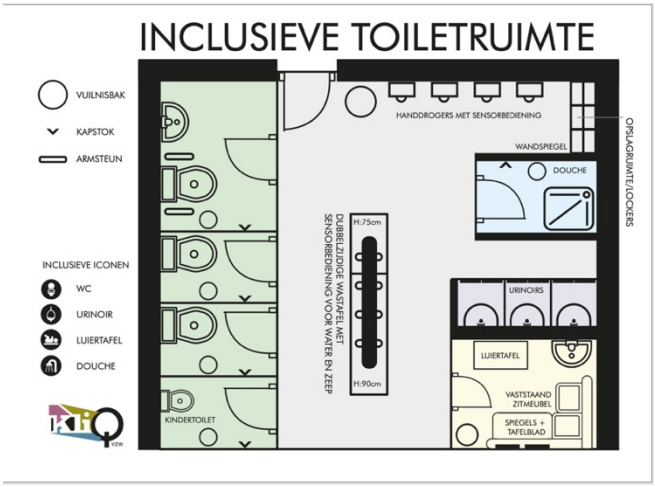

Fig. 8: Inclusive toilet room, provided by Kim - Kliq

the service for well-being and equal opportunities and one with the city's facility management and festivity department. Additionally, I contacted other field players, such as LGBTQI+ institutions, former employees of the Ombud service, and citizens of Ghent via email, which resulted in essential insights and artifacts of this study.

Artifacts were collected. I collected a number newspaper articles of the local press (het laatse nieuws, de Gentenaar) and the Flemish public broadcaster (vrt

niews) reporting about problems of public toilet infrastructure, reviews of public toilets in Ghent on google, official "pee plans" of the city of Ghent, that give an overview of the existing infrastructure and reports of the plasactie vzw, that I found online. Besides that, my respondents provided official reports about the toilet infrastructure of Ghent and Belgian train stations, documentations of actions and articles of the public toilet situation by the interviewed feminist activist groups (plasactie vzw and piss off!), pictures and posters of a queer activist group one of my respondents was connected to and designs of inclusive toilet rooms by an LGBTQI+ institution in Ghent. Since an analysis of all artifacts would go beyond the scope of this study, a selection of the most important artifacts is going to be made in the following analysis.

3.3.2 Coding & Grounded Theory

The following analysis is based on the just introduced data and artifacts that were conducted between April and November 2020 in Ghent, Belgium. To make the collected data oversee- and analyzable, interviews got transcribed in a first step and computerized in the qualitative data management and analysis program NVIVO. With the help of NVIVO the data got illustrated and in a second step coded to gain a more in-depth understanding of the content, but also to be able to gather theoretical assumptions from the data. The process of data gathering, transcribing and coding happened in a cyclical process, going back and forward between already conducted data and the field (Böhm 2004[2000]: 77). That made it possible to reflect on the gathered data, to draw theoretical conclusions from it and take these reflections in to the field and the further research process (Glaser/Strauss 2017[1999]:51). Even though some theoretical assumptions were already gathered before going into the field, as well as some basic notions of infrastructure and exclusionary practices of policy makers were present, the following analysis deducts its theoretical sampling from the gathered data. Codes were developed from within the data to analytically itemize and prepare the conducted data to draw theoretical conclusions from it in a further step. As Böhm suggests, questions were asked to be able to formulate first codes, without formulating theoretical assumptions yet: What is the topic? Who is involved? What aspects of the phenomenon, in this case toilets are mentioned? And how do those aspects relate to the participants and their purpose? (Böhm 2004[2000]: 480).

In a second step, categories where produced, that investigate interactions between different actors, purposes and phenomenon of the field that became observable throughout the interviews. This step is known as axial coding, that is again applied recursive to verify the acquired categories with the new data. In a further step, subcodes were developed and the categories of codes assorted to structure and observed phenomena and develop a core category.

The structure of the analysis will follow these applied selective codes. Its design is based on the logic of the developed codes, in line with the theory chapter of this study (Böhm 2004[2000]: 483).

4 The Bathroom Stall: Analysis

The following chapter will analyze the conducted observations, interviews, and artifacts towards exclusion and belonging of city users in relation to public accessible toilet infrastructure of Ghent. To offer a well-organized and convincing account of how toilet organization and use can be read as important social arenas in which different bodies contest for their acknowledgement as citizens, the result-section is divided in four sub-chapters. Chapter 4.1 will focus on the perception of public and private toilet infrastructure in the urban, as well as the recent trends and toilet termination by the increasing commercialization and privatizing of public space. Moreover, the chapter will give an overview of Ghent's toilet infrastructure's accessibility to different types of city users. Chapter 4.2 will give a more in-depth analysis of the exclusionary aspects of the material dimension of Ghent's infrastructure. By analyzing the location and distribution of publicly accessible toilets, notions of exclusion by design, normative constructions of users, bodies, and necessities are exposed. This sub-chapter closes with criminalization and legal repression as strategies of city management to further cement said exclusionary structures. The focus on material exclusion of chapter 4.2. is complemented in chapter 4.3 with the examination how affective and sensory dimensions can be understood as an internalized form of self-exclusion. Feelings of fear, disgust, and shame concerning toilets will be identified and brought into a context of access. This analysis closes with chapter 4.4, that further ascertains how city users take back exclusionary designs and repair broken infrastructure as both a counter-hegemonic strategy and a way to again feel affiliated and belonging.

4.1 The Ghent Urban Toilet: State of the Art

4.1.1 Perceptions of Private and Public Toilet Infrastrucutre

Right at the beginning of the research process, the issue arose of how to typologize toilet infrastructure and how to define the research subject. Questions about the nature of public, semi-public, private spaces and toilets, and different toilet designs, architectures, and users emerged within the observations and interviews. Respondents' notions of toilet categories differed vastly. How should toilets that are only serving people able to urinate while standing be classified? Do toilets in places that close at a specific time and are bound to consumption or the payment of an entry fee count as public or rather semi-public? Should toilets of restaurants and cafés in the inner city be perceived as publicly accessible or quasi-private, since they are not open for a broader public and mainly serve customers? The questions of defining toilet typologies was brought into the field since this study not only wants to investigate theoretical understandings of public, semi-public, and private, but moreover, wants to approach the answer from the vantage point of the toilet user, owner, and policymaker's perspective by taking dimensions of material, social and affective accessibility into account (Kern 2020; Clough 2010; Ahmed 2014).

Public toilets in the very beginning of this research were a priori understood as city-built infrastructure that is open and accessible without opening hours for everybody using the city. Semi-public toilets were perceived as those infrastructures that were linked to places of private business such as shopping malls and train stations; those toilets were thereby quasi-privately owned but publicly available. The infrastructure of those toilets is mainly created for customers, and therefore hidden behind a paywall of consumption or require an actual entry fee (Lowe 2018: 77f.). Lastly, private toilet infrastructure was perceived as toilets in private households, private institutions, or toilets of businesses that are only accessible for employees. Although these definitions can be set to correspond with a type of folk understanding of toilets, the analysis of artifacts, the coding of conversation, and survey of academic literature quickly pointed towards a reality where this typological divide did not apply to many toilet users' and planners' experiences (Lowe 2018: 78; George 2008: 164f.).

Since it became apparent in an early stage of the research that notions of those categories differed between respondents and appeared to be flexible, I tried to figure out how the respondents looked at public, semi-public, and private matters in relation to toilet infrastructures in the city space. These notions of categories differed between respondents and appeared to be flexible. Even though the respondents reflected indirectly on the public and semi-public divide of toilet infrastructures, boundaries became indistinct and inextricable. For instance, Maximiliaan, a former city planner and architect in Ghent, perceived the toilet infrastructure of restaurants and cafés as public infrastructure at the beginning of his interview, since he explains that "there are cafés and restaurants, and mostly they have public toilets" (Maximiliaan: 376). Later on, in the interview, he exemplified the fluidity of toilet classification by revealing a definite distinction between public toilets on one hand and toilets belonging to restaurants on the other:

> […] For example, het Vleeshuis at the Groentenmarkt. There were public toilets. They were designed for the customers of the restaurant, but when we started the project, we said, well that is a building of the city, we want to make it public toilets. We realized them with public money, so they have to be open. And they have been open for around ten years, but there were so many complaints of the customers of the restaurants, they said they are not clean […]. And the restaurant said – that is not ok, because we are cleaning them every morning, but it is so central, that in the evening it was too dirty… […] They are still there, but not as public toilets (Maximiliaan: 382f).

Both quotes by Maximiliaan raise questions into the diversity of toilet infrastructures and their respective necessities and uses. Maximiliaan's statement demonstrates that toilets can technically provide infrastructure for several dimensions of urban space. The toilet of the Vleeshuis here appears as a private one for the customers of the restaurant, yet at the same time, it provides access for the public, city users, and non-customers. Therefore, the categorization of toilets seems to be

flexible and ambiguous, and not predetermined by architecture since its function changed over time (Barcan 2010: 28). Instead of changing the material architecture, the Vleeshuis decided to simply relabel the toilets as a non-public or private toilet to limit toilet usage to paying customers. In other words, the sheer discursive act of re-identifying the toilet here resulted in a more exclusive accessibility bound to consumption in the restaurant. This example highlights Ahmed's (2019: 26) claim that the possibilities of use are defined by social and symbolic mechanisms rather than its material characteristics.

Additionally, Maximilliaan's statement reveals that different toilet types have different audiences, users, and connected expectations. While the Vleeshuis was bothered by the lack of cleanliness of the toilet for its customers, Maximiliaan does not describe attempts to make the toilet cleaner for everybody and remain public. Instead, the toilet is taken away from the city user and is restricted to all but the customer. Here the implicit assumption is revealed that the non-customer audience, by their behavior or the sheer increase of toilet users, is causing the dirt and insufficient cleanliness. By that, different needs and expectations of toilet infrastructures appear and are brought into public and non-public context.

Similarly, Kim's statement reveals different criteria of hygiene and cleanness when it comes to public toilet infrastructure. He is "not super critical when it comes to hygiene and toilets, because [...] it is a public toilet, it is not going to smell like roses and is not freshly cleaned" (Kim: 452). On that note, I recorded my surprise about the cleanliness of a public toilet in one of the protocols (2: 3). Kim further opens up an implicit dichotomy between assumptions of dirty public toilets and hygienic and clean non-public toilets. And this divide in expectation lies at the basis of why some city users are reluctant to even use public toilets, as Kim notes the following:

> it has been years that I used a public toilet, because I just use - if I have to pee, I just go and wild pee. Like I know now, especially with the thing of Stad Gent, I know pretty much where the toilets are. But still, if I have to pee, I just go ask in a café or I just do it somewhere (Kim: 452).

Even though Kim is informed about the existence and location of public toilet infrastructure, he rather uses non-public toilets than the public toilets of the city of Ghent. Although, toilets are part of the urban package that includes benches, parks and post boxes, Lowe states that people became conditioned to experience the urban without the expectation of accessibility (Lowe 2018: 78). In this sense, the public toilet becomes inaccessible by the assumption that it is too dirty and not clean, while the non-public toilet of a café seems to be more attractive to be used.

4.1.2 Commercialization and Privatization

Going back to the example of the Vleeshuis, it is interesting to see that the existing toilet infrastructure could easily change in its targeted audience by being relabeled it as non-public, without bigger architectural or material infrastructural changes.

That again sheds light on the dimensions of toilet classifications. Even though Maximiliaan mentioned that the toilets were designed for the restaurants' customers, the architecture between semi-public and public toilets does not seem to differ vastly and can easily be relabeled by a mere discursive change. Therefore, a toilet does not necessarily become public because of specific architectural signifiers but rather by its appearance, as well as the label of the toilet on maps the city uses to advertise publicly available toilet free of entry.

Lowe states, "it is all about intention [...] public bathrooms are public because they exist for anyone's use, no strings attached" (2018: 77f). The above given example opens a discussion about the responsibility of toilet construction and maintenance, target groups, potential users, accessibility of toilets and the material, and the discursive creation of access. Today's public or publicly accessible toilets have become an increasingly limited space concerning its availability and accessibility. An increasing number of toilet infrastructure depends on non-public and quasi-private entities, limiting the accessibility by door codes, guards, and entry fees deciding who can and cannot enter (Kern 2020: 106f.). In line with the commercialization of public space, the ownership of the infrastructure and what appears to be public is newly negotiated, and therefore the possibility of using the increasingly privatized facilities becomes limited. Toilets are "in use because they are part of an existing arrangement" (Ahmed 2019: 27). This arrangement creates a framework for the individual and the infrastructural to work and serve in a certain way. Ownership of toilets becomes a dimension that reproduces a normative notion of how it should or should not be used and of an audience that should or should not use the toilet (Ahmed 2019: 29). As such, the increasing process of neoliberalization of urban space leads to cities abandoning public toilet infrastructure transferring its affordances ultimately to a reproduction of social norms and hegemonies. The toilet gets commercialized and privatized and by that limited in its access.

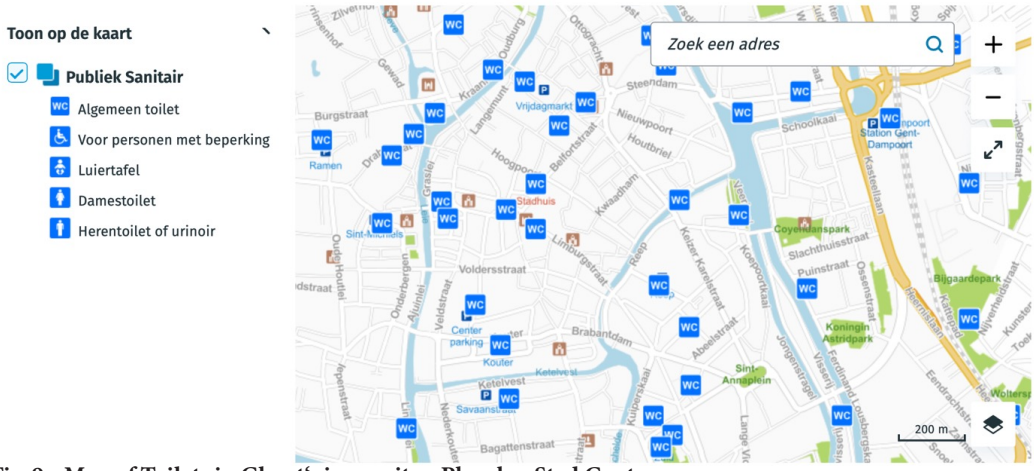

Fig. 9: Map of Toilets in Ghent's inner city - Plasplan Stad Gent

The difficulties of finding definite distinctions between different types of urban toilets are then the consequence of this far stretching commercialization and privatization of toilets. Even though Maximiliaan is seeing a difference between the cha-

racter of a public and a private toilet in his example, he is not always following the logic of this distinctions himself, for example when he states that "in some parks, there are cafés and restaurants and mostly they have public toilets" (Maximiliaan: 377f). Unlike in the Vleeshuis example, the cafes' toilets he refers to here are not explicitly mentioned as being built by the city but appear public here since they are located in public recreational areas. The clear distinction of the public as being city built becomes blurry here and appears to be more dependent on the accessibility and openness to non-costumer users.

Maximiliaan, a former employee of the city of Ghent, shares his theoretical notion of the public and private divide with Cato's and Charlotte's assumptions about toilets. Both work for the service of facility management and projects of the city of Ghent. As Cato states in the interview, "public toilets are the toilets in the city's buildings, and some special toilets, the publiek sanitair [Eng.: public sanitary infrastructure] of course, like the Stadshall and Stint Michielshelling" (Cato: 145). It seems that Cato's understanding of public toilet infrastructure is either in connection to another city infrastructure or is specially built toilet infrastructure and is therefore distinctively separated from other kinds of toilets in the urban space.

Later on, she mentions the situation on the Vlasmarkt, a big square that is a famous spot of the Ghent nightlife due to a high density of bars and clubs in the neighborhood. Here she is referring to non-public toilet infrastructure as an alternative, when urinals are crowded, or the physical or social conditions are not making it possible to use the urinals: "on the Vlasmarkt - you mentioned it already - there are only the urinoirs and no female urinoirs, that is correct, but I guess that there is also a possibility to use the toilets of the cafés there and mostly they are open also of course" (Cato: 234). Even though Cato just defined public toilet infrastructure as a city-built infrastructure, she suggests using the surrounding toilets of private bars and cafés to relieve oneself if one cannot use the urinal. By that, she affirms the lacking possibilities for bodies not being able to use the urinal in the city-built infrastructure, which has a long history since public toilet infrastructure has always been exclusionary. Throughout time, mostly men were taken into account for public toilets—a circumstance for which the Vespaciennes in the 19th century Paris are a great example. Public toilets were built out of an abled cis-man perspective, since most planning and architecture positions were staffed by those men as well (Kern 2020: 108; Möllring 2003: 98). Additionally, Charlotte is expanding the public toilet network towards the café toilets even though they do not belong to the official network of public toilets of the city of Ghent, since only

> the toilets in the public buildings and the toilets especially built by the city are the official toilets. But you have also a lot of toilets with a semi-public function. Like a toilet in a pub or in a shop, or in a parking place, they also have a public function, but it is not an official public toilet (Charlotte: 148).

These examples show once again how contingent the labels of toilets change. Depending on the context, toilets of cafés, restaurants, and shops, those that just

got considered semi-public by Charlotte, get in- and excluded in the toilet network of the city of Ghent. The facility management, here represented by Cato and Charlotte, focuses on the city-built toilet infrastructure as public infrastructure for maintenance and cleaning issues and is clearly and upon request excluding the "semi-public toilets" here. And yet, those toilets are considered opportunities to urinate and defecate, e.g., at the Vlasmarkt, if no city-built infrastructure is around. When talking about use, they are considered accessible and open, while the city is not responsible for its maintenance and financing. Demarcations of public and semi-public seem to highly depend on the point of view and are, therefore, difficult to generalize.

4.1.3 Issues of Accessibility

Whereas Cato and Charlotte, employees of the city and planning office, stay flexible in their public definition, Sara is broadening the perspective. The theoretical and official political distinction between public and semi-public toilets is crucial for her. The reasons become evident in the interview with the disability scholar. The differentiation between the public and non-public influences the economic and material responsibility of the toilet. But it tremendously influences laws and policies concerning toilet accessibility, too. Sara explains "a couple of years [ago] there was a bill passed that public buildings need to be accessible. But cafés and restaurants are not public, only banks and administrative buildings" (Sara: 532). Here, she refers to the regulation of the Flemish Service for Equal Opportunities of the year 2010, which defined rules for the accessibility of buildings (art. 29/2) and thereby of sanitary infrastructure in public buildings as well. The regulation demands to have at least one accessible toilet in every sanitary entity and, in case of gender-segregated toilets, one toilet per gendered entity (Artifact 10). Accessibility here does not only refer to people having special needs because of a disability, but also takes parents with children, obese people, elderly, and people dependent on assistive equipment into account (Gelijke Kansen; Inter n.i.).

While Cato and Charlotte, who must know about those regulations, still use their own bodily experience and perception on toilet infrastructure to flexibly relabel toilets, Sara reveals how other bodies experience the distinction of public and non-public. Whereas public buildings are obliged to include accessibility to the building and toilet, non-public buildings do not. Similarly, while people in need of barrier-free accessibilities can approach public buildings with the security to enter and visit the toilet, non-public spaces do not offer this security. Preparations become necessary to feel comfortable and safe in public, which manifests an unequal experience of the urban. Sara explains that "even until today I calculate how much I drink; when I drink it; when I will be around a toilet" (Sara: 80f). She is not only igniting a discussion about different opportunities of access in the urban, but equally demonstrates how important a clear distinction of public and semi-public infrastructures can be. She hopes perception changes, „[w]hen you hear these stories about the stress and thinking about toilets, and those things [people whose bodies have changed] need to do in advance" (Sara 304f). Those labels have a vast

influence on the perceived and felt reality of space for people with an increased need for accessibility.

Because public toilet use in the city of Ghent is a service free of charge, another variable in the distinction of public and non-public toilet infrastructures needs to be discussed. In contrast to the free city-built toilet infrastructure, semi-public sanitation is built by private or state-owned enterprises. And while it is not necessarily connected to consumption, a financial admittance, in the shape of either a product that has to be bought beforehand – "only for customers"— or an entry fee that has to be paid, is often demanded, nevertheless. These admittances are "restrictions that affect not only the homeless but also people who enter public space for reasons other than [...] consumption" (Kafer 2013: 154).

Wout, the manager responsible for service in the national train stations, for instance, explains that they „noticed, that at the moment it is 50 cents to go to the toilet, but if we are going to work together with [names of the companies], it will become one euro" (Wout: 193). Here, the toilet's entry fee is not only charged to external non-customers, but also to those who already bought a ticket for the train. Wout explains that the fee will be raised in the near future, when the train stations start working with an external company that will implement new toilet infrastructures in all Belgian train stations. As the interviews showed, train station toilets were often perceived as public toilets, and even the Belgian train company (NMBS) mentioned the multiple users of their toilet infrastructures, highly depending on the station's identity. Take, for example,

> Antwerpen-Centraal where [they] did an investigation and 25, 22-25 % are tourists who are not taking the train. So, it might be that there are more non-travelers [visiting the toilets]. [They] noticed that in [their] concessions there are more non-travelers buying things, so [Wout] assume[s they] can draw that line also for toilets (Wout: 250f)

Ghent, in contrast "is one of the train stations which is very far from the central city, so there most of the people that are using the toilet are travelers" (Wout 236f).

Wout is connecting the station's sanitary infrastructures with the commodification of toilets. In the framework of the modernization of toilets in Belgian train stations, the NMBS will sell the space for sanitary infrastructures inside the stations to an external company, making the toilet infrastructures into a lucrative private business. Wout explains that the planned increase of the entry fee from fifty cents to one Euro is not only going to increase the revenue of the company operating the toilet infrastructure. Moreover, a voucher system will be implemented that can be tied to other shops in the station. Wout explains

> That like for example, that you have to pay one euro […] it might be an option, to say like you get a voucher of 50 cent and you can use it in the shop. And it also, how do you say, it convinces the people maybe to buy something in the shops, they would have never bought (Wout: 292f)

In this manner, toilet infrastructure in Belgian train stations follows a neoliberal logic of consumerism, offering their toilets only for those who have the euro to use it. All the while, the company is synergizing toilet as part of a private industry by attracting and luring toilet users into consumption inside the station.

However, as Susan, who is working for the Ombud Service in Ghent, shows, customers of the NMBS already figured out strategies to circumvent toilets' payment in the station. One way of doing so is by using the free toilet in the train, which is albeit only accessible for normative bodies because of size and comfort. Another strategy is using free toilets in the surrounding of the stations. For example, about Brussels Susan shares "I go to the toilet in the Bozar [museum], it is close to the station, and you can use them for free" (Susan: 323), to avoid using the station's toilets.

Since non-public sanitation infrastructures were mentioned explicitly or implicitly in several interviews as solutions to relieve oneself while being in the city, they seem to be an essential extension of the existing public toilet network of the city. Simultaneously, the constant emphasis on the importance of those toilets in interview functions as an indicator of insufficient and lacking public toilet infrastructure. However, even the non-public toilets can be „extremely dirty" (Kim: 343). Kim found clear words for that situation: "it is all gendered, at least the ones I have been to. It is expensive, if you have to pay you have to pay for the dirtiest fucking toilets I have ever seen. [...] For example, at the station of gent Sint Pieters" (ibid.).

Instead of visiting the public toilets or searching for a free accessible toilet, Kim, for instance, opts to go home or to go "somewhere, to drink a coffee and then use the toilet. Then [he] mostly just consume[s] something, because [he does] not want to have the awkward moment, when they say, 'no sorry only for customers'" (Kim: 468). In doing so, Kim shows, for once, that he is rather visiting a non-public or his private toilet before going to a public one. Furthermore, as already discussed, these actions demonstrate how far he already habituated the probability of either being rejected as a non-customer toilet user or being asked to pay an entrance fee. He instead consumes to make sure that the toilet visit is possible without neglect or uncomfortable effects. Additionally, his statement opens up another exciting dimension of toilet usage in the urban. By describing him asking for a toilet in a non-public context and being denied access as potentially awkward, he reveals the large role emotional comfort plays when visiting toilets in the city. This topic will be further discussed in chapter 4.3.

So far, "non-public toilets" often referred to publicly accessible toilets that were not built or maintained by the city. However, another dimension of sanitary infrastructure surfaced during the interviews since several respondents admitted that, even though they find public(ly accessible) toilet infrastructure essential, they themselves do not use the infrastructure too often. Maximiliaan, for example, states that "[h]onestly, as I am living in the city center, when I go out, it is not necessary to go to a public toilet" (Maximiliaan: 361). Private toilets, therefore, seem to be the third pillar when grasping toilet networks in the city. Private toilets can be perceived as those infrastructures that are generally not accessible to the public and only serve a limited number of people—those who obtain a private connection to the

toilet owner. The toilet network, therefore, expands not only from public and publicly available toilets to the own private toilet, as Maximiliaan's statement showed, but also to toilets of friends. Kim disclosed "I just went to the home of somebody" (Kim: 317). A similar case are the private toilets of enterprises which only allow access to for instance their employees and deny it to others. Lowe summarizes the observed structures as follows: "With public bathrooms, access is given. With publicly accessible bathrooms, access can be granted. Access can also be denied" (Lowe 2018: 79).

Taking the given statements and examples of diverse notions of public, non-public, publicly accessible, semi-public, quasi-private, and private toilet infrastructure into account shows clearly that a theoretical and practical classification of toilets is hardly possible. The preceding chapter illustrated how notions of toilet classification are rather subjectively constructed than universally valid. Additionally, these notions seem to be flexible and not always pre-determined. Knowing full well that the clear and definite distinctions are not possible, the following analysis will nevertheless undertake a rough understanding of "public toilets" as built by the city, "publicly accessible" as not built by the city but principally accessible for city users (including quasi-private) and "private toilets" that will remain not accessible for the general citoyens.

4.2 Material Exclusion

4.2.1 Exclusionary by Design

During the field phase of this study an employee of the city of Ghent provided me with insight into a city delegated study, conducted by an external research office the CityD-Wes Group, that investigated the quality and quantity of toilet infrastructure for the city of Ghent in 2019. In the study, the researchers were differentiating the observed public and city-provided toilet infrastructure not only on the basis of potential audience, but also by the type of building they are located in. The potential audience types are split into eight different categories, representing gender neutral toilet units, units for women and men, urinals, accessible toilets for people with disabilities, toilets for children, urinals for children, as well as diaper-changing tables.

Totaal aantal toiletunits en aantal toiletten in Gent, naar type gebouw en type voorziening (verwerking WES op basis van informatie Stad Gent, data maart 2019)

Type gebouw	Totaal toiletunits		Genderneutrale toiletten		Damestoiletten		Herentoiletten		Urinoirs		Toiletten voor personen met een beperking		Kindertoiletten		Kinderurinoirs		Luiertafels	
	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%	Aantal	%
Onderwijsvoorziening	1	*0,5*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*
Privaat gebouw met openbaar karakter	8	*4,1*		*0,0*	23	*9,7*	15	*9,6*	22	*6,5*	8	*10,4*		*0,0*	2	*13,3*	3	*9,7*
Stedelijk gebouw/stedelijke functie	100	*51,5*	30	*81,1*	195	*82,3*	127	*80,9*	179	*53,0*	59	*76,6*	1	*50,0*	11	*73,3*	25	*80,6*
Toiletgebouw	23	*11,9*	7	*18,9*	19	*8,0*	15	*9,6*	29	*8,6*	10	*13,0*	1	*50,0*	2	*13,3*	3	*9,7*
Urinoir	62	*32,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*	108	*32,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*		*0,0*
Totaal	194	*100,0*	37	*100,0*	237	*100,0*	157	*100,0*	338	*100,0*	77	*100,0*	2	*100,0*	15	*100,0*	31	*100,0*

Fig. 10: Overview Toilet Units: Number/Type/Building - CityD-Wes Group

As figure ten shows, the majority of the city-built toilet infrastructure in Ghent is located in official buildings of the city and buildings with a city related function. Only 23 units are located in buildings specifically built to host toilet infrastructures.

Another 62 units are represented by dry urinals that are not bound to buildings and are placed at frequently used spaces in the city. This means that a total number of 84 toilet and urinal units are accessible for people with the ability to urinate while standing, while people with a disability only have 10 and people that are not able to stand while peeing but who are not dependent on an accessible toilet have 28 potential units to urinate during the day. It is important to mention that these 28 units are further restricted to certain times of day, since contrastingly to urinals, which are accessible at any time, indoor public city toilets are often restricted to office hours. It is remarkable, that more than 80 percent (n=274) of women's toilets are located in city buildings and therefore only accessible as long as those building are open. According to the plasplan most buildings close at 18 p.m. (Artifact 1). While the table given here is drawing the same picture for men's toilet units, it is not taking into account how the majority of urinal users are men[10]. Adding toilet units and urinals in public buildings together reveals that only 66 percent (n=532) of the male urination infrastructure is located in buildings with early closing hours.

Even though the research office's study is doing further differentiations on basis of opening hours of the toilets—the ROS distinguishes between toilets being open twenty-four hours a day (31,4%), open during the day (9,8%), during the day and the evening (8,8%) and not daily accessible (43,8%) (cf. figure 11)—urinals and men's toilets are still counted separately. In this manner, it is easy to misunderstand the toilet infrastructure of Ghent as equal between options for females and males to urinate, even though there are almost thirteen times more possibilities to urinate for standing urinators, when taking 24/7 toilet options into account.

Totaal aantal toiletunits en aantal toiletten in Gent, naar openingsuren en type voorziening (verwerking WES op basis van informatie Stad Gent, data maart 2019)

Omschrijving		Alle dagen (24/24)	Alle dagen overdag	Alle dagen overdag incl. avond	Geen info	Niet alle dagen beschikbaar	Totaal
Genderneutrale toiletten	Aantal	3	4	5		25	37
	%	*8,1*	*10,8*	*13,5*	*0,0*	*67,6*	*100,0*
Damestoiletten	Aantal	8	28	74	6	121	237
	%	*3,4*	*11,8*	*31,2*	*2,5*	*51,1*	*100,0*
Herentoiletten	Aantal	6	19	46	3	83	157
	%	*3,8*	*12,1*	*29,3*	*1,9*	*52,9*	*100,0*
Urinoirs	Aantal	112	30	54	11	131	338
	%	*33,1*	*8,9*	*16,0*	*3,3*	*38,8*	*100,0*
Toiletten voor personen met een beperking	Aantal	4	13	16	1	43	77
	%	*5,2*	*16,9*	*20,8*	*1,3*	*55,8*	*100,0*
Kindertoiletten	Aantal		1	1			2
	%	*0,0*	*50,0*	*50,0*	*0,0*	*0,0*	*100,0*
Kinderurinoirs	Aantal		2	12		1	15
	%	*0,0*	*13,3*	*80,0*	*0,0*	*6,7*	*100,0*
Luiertafels	Aantal	4	5	11	1	10	31
	%	*12,9*	*16,1*	*35,5*	*3,2*	*32,3*	*100,0*
Totaal toiletunits	Aantal	61	19	17	12	85	194
	%	*31,4*	*9,8*	*8,8*	*6,2*	*43,8*	*100,0*

Fig. 11: Overview toilet units: opening hours – CityD-Wes Group

An exemplary overview of these gendered discrepancies can be found in the example of the Sint-Amandsbergs' toilet infrastructure, a domestic neighborhood

10 As the analysis will present later, there are techniques to use the urinals, that got created for people with, without a penis by using extension tools or physical techniques.

locatie	open	gewoon toilet	urinoir	aangep. toilet	adres
Begraafplaats	ma-za: 8-17u	1			Visitatiestraat 13
Dienstencentrum	ma, di, vrij: 8-13 en 14-16u; woe: 8-13u en 14-18u; do: 8-13u	1		1	Antwerpsesteenweg 376
Bib. Halvemaan	ma-woe: 14u-19u, do: 14-17u; za: 10-12u30	1		1	Halvemaanstraat 92
Bibliotheek Westveld	ma 16-19u, woe 14-17u, zat 10-12u	1		1	Heiveldstraat 350
LDC OCMW Wibier	9-17.30u	1		1	Antwerpsesteenweg 768
Buurtcentrum	ma en do: 9-12u; di: 8u30-11u30	1		1	Wittemolenstraat 91
Sporthal Rozebroeken	ma-za 8u30-23u; zo: 8u30-22u	1			Victor Braeckmanlaan 180
Zwembad Rozenbroeken	ma-za 8u30-23u; zo: 8u30-22u	1			Victor Braeckmanlaan 180
Urinoir Banierpark	24/24u		1		Banierpark (Dendermondse stwg St.-Amandsberg)
Urinoir H. Hartplein	24/24u		1		H. Hartplein (zijkant H. Hartkerk - St.-Amandsberg)
Urinoir Antwerpse voetweg	24/24u		1		Antwerpsevoetweg (St.-Amandsberg)
Urinoir Oud Gemeentehuis	24/24u		1		Oud Gemeentehuis (St.-Amandsberg - achterk.)

Fig. 12: Sint Amandsberg Toilet Overview - Plasplan Stad Gent

in the west of the city center. Here, none of the eight gewoone toileten (Eng. classic toilets) is opened after 11 p.m., and most of the toilets are closing between 5 and 6 p.m. or are not open on a daily basis. At the same time four dry urinals are available at any time. Again Kern (2020) and Perez (2020) come into place by stating, that most of the city planners are male bodies, that imagine and plan space accordingly. In line with that, Serlin (2010: 169) writes:

> [t]he "person" at the center of the traditional liberal theory is not simply an individual locus of subjectivity […] He is an able-bodied locus of subjectivity…who can imagine himself largely self-sufficient because almost everything conspires to help him take his enabling body for granted".

According to that, Charlotte explains in the interview, that even though the city funded the design and product development of a female urinal (Miss Wizz) with about 3000 Euro and had conversations with the product designer Lena about a structural implementation during the Gentse Feesten and in the public space, the society would not yet be ready to implement female urinals. Chapter 4.4 will further thematize this case.

The fact that the majority of toilets are serving men was not really acknowledged by Cato and Charlotte as much as by Wout, who explains that the NMBS is counting "1,5 women toilets for 1 men toilet" (Wout: 426). However, when Wout is further describing the newly designed toilets spaces, he mentions that "the six [toilets] are the urinors, so we have six urinoirs and we have twelve toilets and I think it is four toilets for men and eight for women" (Wout: 431f). Again, the urinal infrastructure is not included in the count when speaking about the men's toilet, while the gender ratio leads to another conclusion. This is especially interesting because it hints at how toilet infrastructure based on notions of equal space use does not necessarily lead to equally distributed space. Women toilet infrastructures do

not only need more space to accommodate the same amount of toilet units, because toilet stalls take more space than urinals.

Studies additionally show that it takes longer for women to visit the toilet, a due to the fact that there are no fast urination infrastructures implemented for women (Rogiest/Van Hautegem 2017). While those are material structures that prevent toilets from being equally distributed, Perez (2020) opens up another dimension by emphasizing gendered role patterns of labor divisions. Due to the fact, that women are still in charge for the majority of reproductive and care work within families and private contexts, which includes taking care of children and other family members that are in need of support but also have to do the family groceries, the duration as well as the ways women take in the city highly differ from men. As women on average spend more time in the public than men when it comes to (reproductive) labor and as they are often dependent on public transportation since the family's car is structurally used by the man, women become more dependent on public toilets than their male partners (Perez 2020[2019]: 32; Löw 2016[2001]: 212).

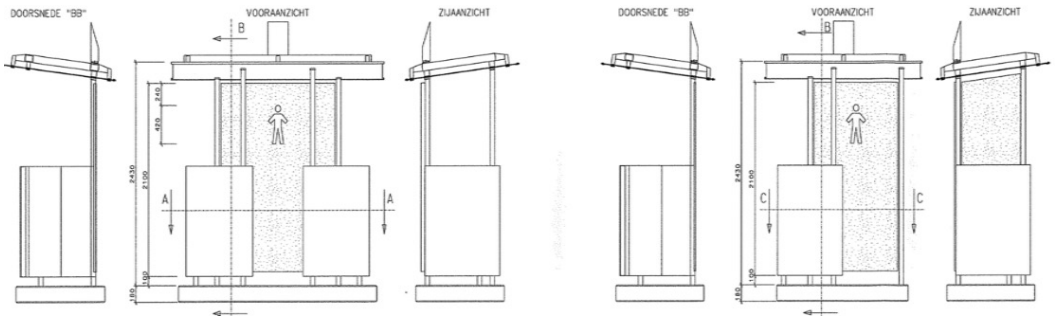

Fig. 13: Model of the Ghent dry urinals, Publiek Sanitair Overview - Stad Gent

As such, toilet infrastructure reveals itself as insufficiently and unequally distributed in the social as well as in the spatial between man and women. Löw concurs by stating "[t]hus, it cannot be denied that the gender specific difference in the urban life of young women and young men is an indicator of unequal opportunities and possibilities" (Löw 2016[2001]: 211). The relationship between the female body, which was differently socialized with (urban) spatial competencies and the power of (infra-)structure than a male body, leads to a different arrangement and constitutions of space (Löw 2016[2001]: 215). It is important to note that said mechanisms of socialization are already infrastructurally incorporated from childhood on. Whereas Ghent is already offering fifteen urinals for young boys, there is a total number of two children's toilets in Ghent. This teaches girls from a young age that they have to adjust their body to the existing infrastructure while boys not only learn to use the urinal but also get used to sufficient infrastructures that suit their bodies.

Distribution and Location

Since the accessibility of use and accessibility of location for toilets is highly dependent on the location and distribution of toilet infrastructure within the urban context, the following part of my analysis will focus on official numbers and notions of toilet placement on one hand and the citoyens experience with toilet locations and distribution on the other. This is done by discussing interviews with toilet activists and those individuals who are having non-normatively abled bodies or are affected by insufficient toilet infrastructure out of other reasons, as well as a city delegated study of the research office, which addresses questions of accessibility, distribution, and location.

As already mentioned, the public toilet infrastructure of Ghent is concentrated in the inner city, where the majority of the toilet units are located. Due to the fact, that more than half of the public toilets are located in official city buildings that are mainly located in the inner city, 100 of 194 units are therefore located in the inner city (inside the ring street that is surrounding Ghent). The shown map, published in the research offices' report, shows the location of the public toilet units sorted by opening hours. It shows that not only the material toilet infrastructure concentrates in the inner city, but the highest accessibility of toilets in terms of opening hours is given in the inner city as well (black represent toilets that are open 24 hours daily, grey stands for open during the day). The density of toilet distribution in general, but especially of toilets that are accessible on an everyday basis is significantly lower in the suburbs of Ghent (not daily available toilets are tagged by white). According to Cato and Charlotte, there are different ratios for toilet infrastructure within the inner city and the suburbs of Ghent. While toilet infrastructure within the inner city should be accessible within 250m, toilets in the suburbs only have to be accessible in a range of 500m (cf. Cato & Charlotte: 423 & ROS: 12). In line with this logic, the ROS states that there are only a few blind spots in the Ghent toilet infrastructure and that the lower number of public toilet infrastructure out of the city center is only logical because of the lower number of pedestrians. Moreover, the ROS attributes a local character to the suburbs that makes it possible to use the own private toilet (cf. Ros: 12). Aleah, one of the leading members of the plasactie vzw reaches a contrasting set of conclusions. While she considers the toilet infrastructure well within the city center to be proficient, the suburbs are faced with many infrastructural flaws „in the touristic part of the city, it is like this, that [the toilets] are open, and they are also clean. But outside the touristic center, for example here in Rabot, where I am living, it is also city of Ghent, there is no public toilet for nobody" (Aleah: 372). Following Aleah's example, the interactive plasplan map of the city reveals, that there are in fact seven toilet units in the Rabot neighborhood, represented by two dry urinals that are accessible day and night and three urinals as well as one female and one male toilet in a neighborhood center, which are only accessible from Tuesday to Thursday between 9 a.m. and noon. It is not exactly clear whether Rabot belongs to the inner city, because it is located within the ring street R40, but is not part of the medieval and economic center of the city and neither

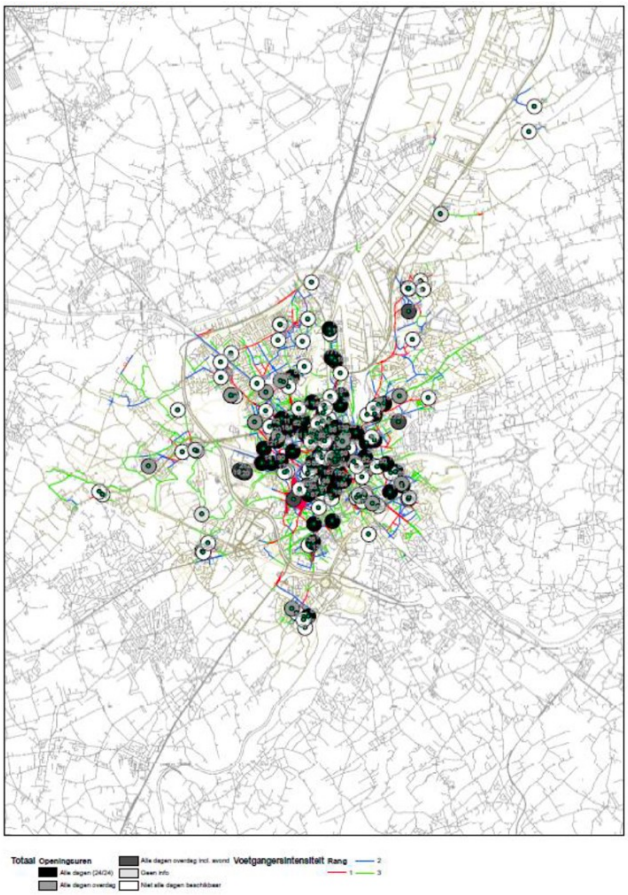

Fig. 14: Map Toilet Distribution, opening hours - CityD-Wes Group

the study of the research office, nor Cato and Charlotte could further define where the inner city starts and end. Therefore, it is not obvious what ratio can be applied to Rabot. One way or another, the distribution of toilets in Rabot shows, that only urinal-suited bodies are taken into consideration, while female, disabled and bodies with other needs and necessities than urinating are not taken in to account, or rather only have the possibility to use a toilet for nine hours of the week.

Fig. 15: „Wildkakkers“ in Ghent - het nieuwsblad: video screenshot - Het Nieuwsblad

Likewise, Kim remarks that "as a person with a vagina, it is pretty obvious, that there is sometimes just no toilet available. Especially now with corona, like for example during corona, when everything was closed, there was nothing" (Kim: 253f). The case of the "wildkakkers" (engl. wild poopers), who used urinals as a place to defecate during the first corona lockdown, and that was reported about in the international press (Artifact 12), confirms this observation. With many public buildings, and thereby their public toilets, closed, it is apparent that toilet infrastructure apart from male urination was simply not thought of, and therefore left people with little resources to poop apart from outdoors.

These perspectives that emerge here, are further thematized in the interview with Kim, who not only sees the geographical location of the toilet as potential obstacles for accessing the toilet, but also emphasized that the architectural location can cause a potential exclusion, because

> if you look at the location of toilets often it is also not really inclusive for people who have difficulties to walk, or who have incontinency [sic!] and need to go to the toilet very fast. Especially at stations, you probably have to also catch a train and who then have to walk long ways (Kim: 236f).

Similarly, the interview with Wout of the national train service made clear, that the remote location of toilets in the stations is intended. He shared:

> In the past the idea was that it needs to be in the flux. But now we noticed that the toilets are a destination, so we can put them a little bit further in the hallway. If the people need to go to the toilet, they will go anyway. And if you put it in the beginning of the hallway, they don't see the other concession, but if you put it in the back of the hallway, they also see the other concessions and they maybe buy something (Wout 218).

Even though Wout explained earlier the renovation of the station's toilet infrastructure will happen within a paradigm of social integration, including an increased accessibility of toilet infrastructure in the stations, that accommodates diverse body types, needs, and necessities and is based on gender neutral as well as disability and family friendly architecture (cf. figure 16), his statement in the interview reveals another logic that is used when placing toilet infrastructure in the station.

Fig. 16: Presentation „Sanitair NMBS", slide 17 – provided by Wout

Instead of locating the toilets at a central spot in the station where the majority of users can reach it without the barrier of a long distance between tracks and toilet, Wout as a representative of the NMBS explains, that the location of the toilet is mainly chosen on the basis of the highest possible turnover for the businesses, located in the stations. Again, a consumption-based logic of the NMBS regarding toilet infrastructure reveals itself. The toilet in itself is made into a vehicle to collect money by use (cf. the increase of toilet fee to one euro), and to ensure complementary profits solely by the given location of the infrastructure as well. The certainty of toilets "being a destination" (Wout: 219) makes the toilet into a powerful organizational infrastructure that is, on basis of its necessity, able to guide toilet users along the business into the toilet and by that transforms them into potential customers of station shops.

Whereas toilets today seem to be arranged around the commercial centers and located in a way that they attract people to consume, Margeaux mentions, that "there is almost always a urinal near the church [...]. In the past there was the church and a urinal. Now some churches maybe don't have a urinal anymore. But normally yes, there is one next to a church" (Margeaux: 449). Margeaux continues to explain, the urinals were "for the people, before or after church every week. Women of course not, they didn't count in that time. But for the men there was a urinal" (463). This little anecdote of Margeaux seems to reveal almost too obvious how neoliberalism and consumerism superseded the importance and centralization of religion in postmodern western societies, but still keep the patriarchal order (Kurenlahti/Salonen 2018). Unfortunately, I didn't get access to the city's archive to check further on the historic location of public sanitary infrastructure in comparison with the distribution of toilets today.

4.2.3 Deviant Toilet Use

The analysis already revealed that the Ghent toilet infrastructure has a high degree of insufficiency, lacking accessibility, and inadequate cleanliness. Particularly, for certain individuals, bodies, and identities this malfunctioning infrastructure is a source of anger, frustration and discomfort. Besides the distribution and location of toilet infrastructure within the city of Ghent, there are other material as well as social dimensions that are affecting the way toilet infrastructures are perceived by people and are affecting the way in which these can be used. While the previous part of my analysis focused on the geographical and spatial location of toilets, the following builds upon these spatial dimensions of exclusion by taking into account structures that are making toilet infrastructure hostile. One of the most evident examples of hostile architecture, that came up in numerous interviews and is embedded in the majority of western toilet infrastructures is the social, material and spatial segregation of gender in toilet rooms. As the above-mentioned examples reveal, the infrastructural dimension of public toilets is not only limiting or complicating the possibility to access toilet infrastructure for certain bodies, but as a matter of fact can operate as a spatial mechanism of exclusion and segregation in relation

to public spaces. Since defecation and urination are human necessities, toilet infrastructure becomes a necessity and a common of the public because the access to public space is otherwise limited for certain bodies otherwise. In this sense, Plaskow (2008: 52) describes accessible public toilet infrastructure as a precondition for citizenship and public participation.

The data that was collected throughout the field phase showed that especially bodies that are deviating from a patriarchal-hegemonic notion of bodies were not only facing a higher level of exclusion of publicly available toilet infrastructure but in connection with that increased number of discomfort and uneasiness towards toilet infrastructures. In the interview with the transgender man Kim, he feels "that toilets are really a space that show you who has the privileges" (Kim: 343). The current construction of toilet infrastructure seems to reveal multiple dynamics of power, since it is built along hegemonic notions of gender and ableist understanding of bodies. Toilet infrastructure appears in its architecture, location, distribution and quantity to be based on the normative male and abled body, that is willing to consume or pay to relieve itself. According to Kafer (2013: 154), this leads to a regime of social control in which subjects are heavily policed for use deemed "inappropriate":

> Homeless people are frequent targets of attempts to "clean up" public restrooms, as are those practicing public sex, with cities doing everything from locking "public" facilities to refusing to build or install new public restrooms. Private businesses and restaurants typically designate their restrooms as "for customers only," a restriction that affects not only the homeless but also people who enter public spaces for reasons other than shopping or consumption (Kafer 2013: 154).

Naturally, the majority of the respondents that engage in toilet activism reflected critically about the effects of insufficient toilet infrastructures and explained their own experiences as a reason to engage with toilet infrastructures. Kim, for example, stated "I am trans* so, that is mostly why I am very passionate about toilets, because it is just a big issue in my life" (Kim: 19f) and Lilly confessed, that "ja of course, that is one of the reasons that I was so attracted to this topic in the beginning, because I am someone that has like a small bladder, I think I always have to think before I go outside" (Lilly: 186). Whereas even people in official functions, were often acknowledging lacks in toilet infrastructure and their personal issues, their difference from toilet activists lays in the fact that they did not reflect on the further consequences of these infrastructural problems (Cate & Charlotte: 414). Throughout the interviews several subjects pointed out that they are suffering because of the existing toilet infrastructure. Since the majority of the individuals, I spoke to were women, the gendered segregation of the bathroom was referenced in almost every interview. Often as "extremely absurd. [...] It really makes no sense; it is really the exact same room and they put men and women" (Kim: 497) and as a source of frustration. Segregated toilets were often even leading to emotions of anger, for instance because of long queues in front of female toilets, even though "there is this study [...] that

calculated the perfect toilet waiting architecture. I mean there is enough discussion about it, enough numbers and studies and talk about it, but still nothing is changed or done about it" (Lilly: 390). Others reflected on the binary toilet infrastructures with feelings of anxiety and fear as segregated toilets were multiple times perceived as increasing the danger to get sexually or violently assaulted for women. Ashley for instance does not feel comfortable in this context and believes no women does.

> You always have this feeling of getting assaulted as a woman. Because you still are... maybe there are a lot of women who don't want that and, in your unconscious, you still have the fear of getting violated, and that is from the fact that there is still inequality, it is not enough, say that we have general equality, but everywoman still feels uncomfortable to go to a toilet. (Lilly: 375)

Having a transgender perspective, Kim similarly explains "that it is more likely that you are being harassed if toilets are binary" (Kim: 164), since binary toilet rooms "are sites of uncomfortable and often threatening exchanges with those who cast her butch body as dangerously out of place" (Kafer 2013: 154). At the same time, he is acknowledging the potential importance of gender segregated toilets for different subject positions. For instance, it offers women that are wearing a hijab have the possibility to take their veil off and retie it in a segregated space, since men are excluded from it. In this example, segregation is offering comfort, security and one of the only possibilities in public to hide from the men's gaze. Since individuals and identities seem to have various and often contrasting expectations and needs towards toilet infrastructure, the development of a toilet that is serving everybody's needs seems to be a complicated process of negotiation.

Not only are already mentioned regimes of hegemonic construction influencing the behaviors of individuals and groups in toilet infrastructures, also the way deviant and non-intended behavior inside toilets is avoided by design and infrastructures should be pointed out here. Historically and contemporarily, the toilet is one of the only places in public that offers through its architecture and location a sense of privacy. Therefore, toilets were and are often used for behavior which was initially not intended by the designers and purchaser (Barcan 2010: 26). Another example of this is since Humphrey's (controversial) study on tearoom trade and impersonal sex in public places. Humphrey asserts that toilets were for instance used by gay men to have sexual encounters there, hidden from society, community and family in the 1960s (Lowe 2018: 161; Humphrey 1976[1970]). The many versatilities of toilet use show, that dealing with toilets demands a multilayered analysis of space construction in regard to use and deviance and is highly connected to notions of (not) belonging to the society.

Since deviation of use in toilet buildings should be avoided, the toilet infrastructure of Ghent used certain techniques to avoid queer use of the toilet rooms. Maximiliaan describes a problem of vandalism inside the city-built toilet infrastructure that obliged city planners "to look at more strong materials, so at a certain moment

we had to decide to replace all mirrors by metal mirrors, because they don't crash so fast" (Maximiliaan: 294). He also mentioned the following,

> the hours of opening and closing were done manually. We were figuring it out if it also can go automatically. But the problem with automatic was, that homeless people were sleeping in it then. For example, at the Zuidpark we had that. […] There was something put in between the doors so it couldn't close properly and then ja they slept inside. We had that very frequently that people were sleeping there. Especially in winter it is warm there (Maximiliaan: 322).

The infrastructural organization as well as technological solutions to close the toilets in the evening were discussed here, to avoid people living on the streets from using the toilet as a sleeping place in the nights. During the walk with the social worker Annika, who works with people that are living on the streets, explains that the constitution of the infrastructure is not only trying to avoid her clients from sleeping inside the toilets, but due to the implementation of new faucets, the possibility of getting drinking water in public sanitary infrastructure is obstructed. Not only does the use of the toilet bowl itself become highly policed and restricted here, also the toilet room and other facilities like mirrors and faucets are facing material limitations in regard to their intended use. Especially the door as an object that can easily deny or offer entrance has a strongly limiting character here. While the door gets locked during every toilet visit, indicating that a toilet is in use, authorities have the ability to lock the door automatically or manually for a specific timeframe in which they don't not want the infrastructure to be used. The lacking usability therefore leads to an inaccessibility of the infrastructure (Ahmed 2019: 60). However, Maximiliaan's description of techniques to keep the door open when being locked automatically shows, that there lies a certain potential of subverting these limitations and imposing a new use to the infrastructure itself. Chapter 4.4 will further elaborate on this.

Wildplassen 2019		**26**	**83**	**153**	**44**	**43**	**57**	**716**	**21**	**178**	**88**	**114**	**39**	**1562**	**-149**
	Wildplassen 2018	*43*	*76*	*134*	*131*	*39*	*56*	*857*	*24*	*50*	*129*	*132*	*40*	*1711*	

Fig. 17: Public urination numbers - Politie Gent bulletin 2019

Even though deviation is made difficult and attempted to be avoided through means of symbolic and material circumstances by city planners and police officials, deviant behavior not only takes place within the toilet infrastructure (Ahmed 2019: 41). As figure 17 shows, public urination in Ghent was fined 1562 times in 2019. In the interview with Jann working for the communication department of the police, he explains that the city of Ghent, together with the police is trying to minimize public urination, since it is being perceiving as a big problem by the city, especially during the Gentse Feesten. As to why the city prioritizes this fight against urination in public, he explains that "it smells [and] when you see someone peeing in the center, no matter where, it doesn't match the expectations" (Jann: 142). Jann is not further explaining whose and what expectations are not matching with public urination,

but his statements reveals an interesting perception on wildplassen within the city. Jann's discourse hints at how public urination is shrouded in an air of deviance and shame and has to be excluded from public perception (Elias 1976: 189). In this, Jann detached the affordance of contemporary urban space entirely with the event of public urination. Simultaneously, he constructs the typical public urinator as a male student that "stays in Ghent and parties on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, sometimes the weekends. That is the reason for wildplassen, for the high numbers" (Jann: 265). In line with this, he mentions intoxication and the lowering of inhibitions as a reason for this deviant behavior. Because such actions do not belong in the public space, he considers it both necessary and evident to fine them right away: "I mean if you are caught you just pay because you know that you did something wrong" (Jann: 447).

Moreover, Jann perceives public urination as a male problem: "for men it is easier. Just zip and you can. But a woman sometimes has the pants or the skirt, so it is more difficult" (Jann: 161). He is referencing to the politie bulletin, a yearly report of crime and law infractions, that illustrates numbers of public urination per month. Although the report does contain statistics on gender and public urination, Jann explains "but it is a feeling! [...] My colleagues see the men and the women peeing. So, it is a man, sometimes it is a woman. But there are more men than women" (Jann: 193). As such, Jann grounds his opinion on wildplassers on an emotive perception in the first place, that is neither based on numbers nor on personal experience, since he does not work as a policeman on the streets. Even though he cannot really explain how he arrives at this perception, a short call with one of his colleagues during the interview reveals, that his feelings towards the gendered distribution are accurate. Of the total number of 1803 fined public urinators in 2019/2020, only 257 were women, while the other 1546 were represented by men. Even though Jann thinks "there are not enough. When I go to other cities, in Spain, France, in the big cities I think it is my feeling, there are more public toilets. And they are better and more signs" (Jann: 365), he explains, that a potential unavailability of toilet infrastructure is not taken into account when fining public urinators.

4.3 Internalized Exclusion

4.3.1 Feelings of Belonging

The above-mentioned examples in chapter 4.1 underline how the social and material infrastructure is able to guide and govern the body within the urban space. Taking the material component into account, this chapter will introduce affective dimensions that are connected with the toilet visit, and how those are often in line with deviance from normative bodies and perceptions of city users. In the interview with Kim, he is considered the hegemonic construction of deviating from normative standards as the reason for a hostile atmosphere in the gendered toilet:

> if it is normalized, that you are sharing the same restrooms or toilet, then no one is making a big deal out of it. And now it is like weird and it created an atmo-

> sphere of, I can harass you or talk to you if you don't want to, because you are on my territory (Kim: 175).

The toilet as a space and the toilet's user's use are both subjected to relations of power, control and socio-political governance. Not only are the already mentioned material design and infrastructure influencing the behavior of individuals in toilet infrastructure, but also the way in which deviant and non-intended bodies and behavior inside toilets is constructed and is tried to be avoided by emotional regimes are relevant here (Kern 2020: 106). Again, Kim comes into play, who describes a situation in which he got mis-gendered by a toilet attendant sending him to the "wrong" women's toilet.

> I felt really bad, I also got a panic attack later, because it was one too much of a trigger and microaggression. Obviously, that doesn't make me feel comfortable when somebody is like "No, you are a woman you have to go to the women's bathroom". I seldomly have the energy to explain this to people in general – to strangers (Kim: 563).

Biological sex is used as a tool here "because biology is often assumed to be about what is fixed or immutable. The very idea of two distinct sexes is transformed into an architectural principle by the use of doors" (Ahmed 2019: 202). And these doors structurally exclude Kim from the toilet he perceives "right" and he is sent to the door that he perceives "wrong". Through the gesture of the toilet attendant, sending Kim to the women's toilet, no door appears to be accommodating Kim's body anymore in this situation. Kim's comfort is drastically decreased by the social perception of the toilet attendant that mismatched his body and the door/toilet. Ahmed writes "when your use of a facility is questioned, you are questioned [...]. If you cannot use the toilet, you cannot perform a necessary function" (Ahmed: 2020: 31), and by that you cannot perform your (citizenship) status within the public space and society.

Fig. 18: Touchless facilities - Sint Michielsbrug toilet Ghent - own image

Beyond toilet attendants, interestingly, one can create another sensory and human connection via a critical assessment of public toilet's framing of bodily waste. As an obvious and ubiquitous form of dirt is generally tried to be olfactory and visually sealed off and excluded from the public's eyes by its disposal in toilets (Barcan 2010: 26f.). By planning the implementation of new toilet infrastructure in

the NMBS stations, Wout explains, "so, if they need to pay one euro for visiting the toilet it needs to be clean, bright fresh and all that stuff and I think that is very important. You do not want to pay one euro to go to the toilet, and you do not want to smell the stuff and that need to be very important" (Wout: 196). The protocols of the observation that were conducted in April and July, run along the same lines and reveal that most infrastructures can be used without any touch since "the touchless use of the public toilet continues in the hallway. The water of the sink such as the hot air hand dryer can be activated with a sensor; only the soap has to be pumped manually" (Protocol 1: 6). By this, a hygienic use is offered, for exmaple, the automatic flushing of the toilet makes sure, that the remains of the previous user disappear even in case of their potential uncleanliness. The body and the remains of the other are perceived as something potentially disgusting, that has to be proximately flushed away. Disgust sticks to the other body (Ahmed 2014[2004]: 97). The automated disappearance of human remains and the hygenic sensual experience of toilets is by that taken another step further and is keeping toilet users from having any physical and sensual connection to the dirt disposal infrastructure. Besides the actual toilet bowl, there is no connection to other human beings (Bravermann 2010: 71).

In line with this physical detachment, Penner (2010: 239) describes the evolution of "a scientific terminology to describe bathroom activities: toilets became 'hygiene facilities'; bathing became 'body cleansing'; and urinating or defecating became the rather sinister 'elimination'". The sterility of the Korenmarkt toilet is beyond the technological and discursive sanitation further produced by the use of colors that allow associations with medical infrastructure and medical personnel's uniforms. This further hygienizes the toilet rooms. In relation to accessible toilet infrastructure, Sara explains "often the way it is made accessible is very sterile and medical. The handlebars are often made of metal or white plastic. [She] would prefer a bamboo stick or a colorful, inviting thing" (Sara: 577).

What Sara is hinting at here is an affective distance to the toilet stall. The toilet excludes not only by its architecture and infrastructural composition, but also the interior design, as well as the social construction of accessibility of the toilet seems to play a role in the comfort and inclusion since "ideal conceptions of 'form' are almost always implicitly or explicitly based on a male" (Penner 2010: 234) and abled body. Sara articulates her discomfort in the following terms:

> I am really ambivalent, [since] there is a lot of discussion about the social access, for [her] it is about physical access […]. When she needs to choose between a physically accessible toilet in a context where you don't feel welcome in or no toilet at all, well, it's clear what I choose for (Sara 547).

This notion of not feeling welcome is interesting. Because the insufficiency of the toilet infrastructure is not fitting her body, it is causing an affective detachment in which in no way feels she belongs. Either she has to use the toilet that does not fit her gender but physical needs, which is highly medicalized, or she has no option

to relieve herself at all. Due to the limited number of accessible toilets for her body, Sara appears to be almost disillusioned. Even though she does not feel welcome in a toilet she is yet dependent on infrastructures that are dirty and located in the men's toilet room or in remote places with a long access route. The "inability to use the toilet [becomes] both symbolic of and material evidence for [her] exclusion from the public sphere" (Serlin 2010: 168). While the abled bodied has the ability to exceed moral and bacteriological expectations of society, the disabled carries the stigma of dependence, lack of control and failure (Serlin 2010: 168)

The medicalization of the (accessible) toilet can be connected to the disconnection of society with bodies., creating "a body-without-organs, which is only defined by zones of intensity, thresholds, degrees and fluxes" (Deleuze 2006: 130). Especially in the context of individuals with disabled bodies "that very often did not [feel] owners of their own body, the more they got in to contact with a medical contact every day; bathing, washing, all this, the more their body became something functional like a vehicle" (Sara: 23). But also, for normatively abled this comes into place. While the individual is increasingly governed through the body, it at the same time detaches more and more from its own material by hiding physical functions and practices.

4.3.2 Fear and Loathing

While the previous chapter already took dimensions of affects and hygiene into account, this chapter will more specifically focus on affective obstacles to attain a sense of belonging through fear, disgust and notions of danger. Lilly who is, in addition to Kim's experience with the toilet attendant earlier, affectively connecting the architectural infrastructure as a physical element of exclusion to a perceived sense of danger:

> outside you have all the free urinals […]. If you are a woman you have to go downstairs at the parking garage at Stint Pietersplein, but yeah, there is a toilet, a sitting toilet there, but the thing is, if you are partying at night on a Thursday, ja as a woman you will always be bothered by man. So, it is fucking creepy to go there alone (Lilly: 202).

Lilly is describing her frustration about lacking female toilets in the Overpoort neighborhood (a popular area for student bars and nightlife) and explains how the location of the toilet underneath the Sint Pietersplein is causing anxiety. Due to the remote location of the free toilet, that makes having to walk for several minutes users coming from the bars where "you suddenly also had to pay in the cafes for going to the toilets. Also, if you are a customer (Lilly: 199). Due to its location in the underground parking, any social control by individuals passing by is taken away. To enter the public toilet, that is including two accessible toilets, it can either be reached by one of the two staircases that lead into the underground parking garage, or one elevator that is located at the opposite end of the parking garage. These circumstances lead to a situation in which it is necessary to cross the whole under-

ground parking garage to reach the toilet, when being dependent on the elevator. Here the accessibility of the toilet becomes discussable, and Lilly explains that free and accessible toilets "are mostly in the underground parking lots" (Lilly: 284). For Lilly the inaccessibility of toilets, not only for disabled bodies, leads to the threat of violence, that is "of course worse in other countries, looking at the African continent or India. But also, here in Europe we have examples of women that have been sexually violated because they didn't have proper access to toilets" (Lilly: 206). As a matter of fact, Ghent has several underground toilet infrastructures in the inner-city hat are hidden underground, and often connected to parking garages (Vrijdagsmarkt, Kouter, Zuid & Sint Pietersplein).

Fig. 19: Underground parking, Sint Pietersplein, with toilet sign on the ceiling - own image

Similar to Lilly, Annika the social worker with whom I did a walk through the city is referring to the potentially dangerous toilet infrastructure, here in the Groene Vallei Park. The park is located in the east of the inner-city and is a popular park for joggers and parents with children, since it is offering play and sports grounds. Annika explains, that since there is a methadone center that is distributing methadone to registered clients close-by, the park as well as the toilet got used by people consuming on methadone and other narcotic substances quite frequently. She tells me about numerous complaints on the dirty condition of the toilet, but also about injection material that was left behind and got reported. Simultaneously, Margeaux

Fig. 20: Stains and Burn Marks, Veerleplein - own image

Fig. 21: Blood Stains on Ceiling, Veerleplein - own image

reports, that "you see, that there had been some junkies. So, people don't feel too good, when they see that" (Margeaux: 329). The feelings of disgust towards the dirty toilet, the potential risk and fear of getting injured by needles and the imagination of what had happened on the toilet not only led to a decrease in use, but eventually resulted in the closure of the park's toilet (cf. Protocol 4: 5). Continuing the walk, she shows me remains of drug users in the public toilet located at Veerleplein in the inner-city, close to the Gravensteen one of the most frequently visited tourist site in Ghent. Again, a methadone center is close by and therefore the toilet gets often used for the consumption of drugs, here traceable by blood stains at the ceiling, that are caused when injecting a needle, and burn marks inside the acces-

sible toilet stall, which Annika identifies as marks of smoking or heating heroin or other substances.

Another hint on sensorial reasons to exclude certain toilets from use is given in the second Protocol. While visiting the public toilet at the Veerleplein, I encountered a man during his shift for a bike food-delivery service that is using the women's toilet. In the course of a short conversation with him, I found out that he does not like to use the men's toilet nor the accessible toilet, since they are often dirtier than the women's toilet. He explains that he is dependent on the public toilets, since restaurant toilets are generally too narrow for his big backpack. Moreover, since Covid-19 he is not allowed to use these toilets anymore. Therefore, he rather chooses the clean women's toilet to avoid going to the filthy men's one. This reveals that the sensory barrier of encountering the dirt seems to be higher than the social barrier of visiting the other genders' toilet. Sara shares the notion that men's toilets are dirtier. Since accessible toilets are often located in only one of the two gender segregated bathrooms, she has to "go to the men's toilet were man a peeing while standing next to me. And it is way smellier. And I think they are also very often less clean. Usually, I use the toilet in the men's toilet, and I wash my hands in the women's toilet, there I can take my time there" (Sara: 556). Coming to a similar conclusion, Kim is explaining that it can be more annoying and disgusting for transmen to visit the men's toilet stall than the women's toilet since "there are mostly urinals and there is one stall, and this is the one where everybody is shitting [...]. It always smells bad and you know it is really a struggle if you have to pee and you have a vagina and you cannot go to the women's bathroom" (Kim: 386).

As these account exemplify, smell seems to be one of the most impermeable sensorial barriers. Following Classen et al., the public can be considered the domain in which a regime of olfactory neutrality rules, that is, banning "smells which are considered offensive from such areas" (Classen et al. 1994: 169f.). The consideration of what is perceived an offensive and bad smell is therefore socially negotiated and appears to be in equally measure gendered. Moreover, it goes hand in hand with the stigmatization of certain groups and the evolution of western societies in the twentieth century as deodorized and perfumed, deeply hiding the filth and an included process of othering (Classen et al. 1994: 177; Pink 2015: 18).

In line with Sara's and Lilly's experiences, Classen et al. describes how smellscapes, the unique configuration of smells, influence how individuals are experiencing certain environments (Classen et al. 1994: 97f.). The experiences of space based on smell can organize the world since smell and the categories that are given to certain odors are deriving from a social construction. Despite being highly politisied and gendered, these physical sensations are, however, "hardly considered a political vehicle or medium for expressions of class allegiances and struggles" (Classen et al. 1994: 161) because of their direct bodily reaction. As much as infrastructure and architecture can create material, symbolic, and class boundaries, olfactory dimensions can establish zoning and segregation of space by the odor impression management of individuals (Pink 2015: 17). In line with that Maximiliaan explains "that [the old dry urinals] were so stinky was the reason that they were in corners

and in bushes" (140). Toilet infrastrucutre is highly affected by that as Kim points out that the perception of public toilets as dirty leads to a complete avoidance of these infrastructures. What is added here is that dimensions of sensory and affective perception are causing potential exclusion of certain toilets by the potential users on the one hand and an exclsion of people on basis of location, constitution or use of the toilet on the other hand.

4.3.3 Toilet Taboo and Shame

Fear and disgust are not the only affective dimensions surrounding toilet infrastructure. As already mentioned in chapter 4.1, the toilet visit is often felt as something awkward that preferably remains hidden. Sara, for instance, is speaking of "a taboo around the toilet—which shouldn't be there" (Sara 451). Apart from the closed door, Sara reports how she often has to overcome the material and emotional obstacle of going to the toilet, realizing that it is closed, going to the reception to get the key, and going back to the toilet, before she is able to use it. The situation does not only show the material barriers Sara has to overcome when visiting the toilet, it also reveals affective dimensions of embarrassment and discomfort. She refers to these situations as highly uncomfortable: "it is like infantilizing as well – it is like mommy I need to go to the toilet" (Sara: 456) and connects the practice of asking for the toilet access to emotions of shame. Sara's emotionally informed reading of this situation as an infantile practice inspires her demand for barrier free toilet access. In line with Elias, she would rather like to shamefully hide her shameful necessities because she in some sense considers them infantile and demeaning (Elias 1976: 193). Due to the fact, that she has not only a body that has waste, but also a non-normative body that has waste, the ableist production of society should definitely not be neglected here and the. Just presented matter cannot only be simplified as a matter of shame.

Kim, who has experience in both male and female directed toilet infrastructures due to his transgender identity also mentions a dimension of shame tied to his toilet visit. He perceives the toilet visit, especially when defecating, as a deep internalization of (gendered) shame.

> I feel that women also poo less long, because they are like very conscious and being like "it cannot be loud, I don't want somebody to smell it, I don't want anybody to actually think I am taking a shit" […]. It is just, like I also know a crazy number of women actually who don't shit in public spaces, or like in a café space, just nowhere, they only do it at home. I mean how do you do this? (Kim: 419).

The toilet visit, and especially the act of defecation appears to be something that cannot acceptably happen publicly, even though it takes place on public toilets. Kim here illuminates the potential sensory dimensions of the act itself by emphasizing the smell and the noise of defecation that have to remain hidden. Moreover, she articulates the sheer impossibility of imagining the female defecator in the eyes

of normative society. Ki's report, that he knows women who do not defecate in publicly accessible toilets and rather withdraw themselves from the public, from the eyes and noses of strange others into their private toilet, reveals an interesting perspective on the power and impact of emotions. This evokes the theories of Ahmed, who elaborates on how emotions shape objects and objects shape emotions in a reciprocal dynamic (Ahmed 2014[2004]: 7). The toilet in its material existence, therefore, becomes a vehicle of shame that carries out different societal expectations of behavior and cleanliness, etc. depending on the subject position. In the same way, the individual gets shaped by notions of shame and embarrassment that are grounded in societal discourses and become manifested in the infrastructural. This leads Ahmed to conclude that neither the subject nor the object produces emotions, but that they are both "produced as effects of circulation [...] that allows us to think of the sociality of emotion" (Ahmed 2014[2004]: 8). It is precisely in this process of circulation between the internal feelings of bodies and the social conditions that surround them which helps understand how shame operates. "I don't want anybody..." refers to an unspecified other that is potentially seeing, hearing, smelling or imagining the act of defecation. This other becomes the subject that is potentially judging the toilet practice and intensifies the affective exchange of internalized shame. It is along these lines that Ferguson and Crowley define shame as an emotion "in which the person's entire sense of self-worth is under attack [...] the shamed person hides or withdraws from further social contact" (1997:20).

Similarly, Margeaux jokes: "We don't pee!" (592). And explains further how "all these normal things, it's the same with breastfeeding" (Margeaux: 603) are socially constructed in a way that you have "to go to another room to do that [...] liquids of bodies, sweat, blood, milk, pee is all something we don't like anymore" (Margeaux: 623).

Building on Maximilliaan's statement of the previous chapter, in which he explains the location of dry urinals was determined by their smell, he further explains that there are no female urinals. His explanation for this infrastructural organization is the following: "of course women also have this need, and they do it also, but they do it more discrete. And so, when you walk in the city, you cannot see it. But man of course, they don't care about it, if they are seen or not" (Maximiliaan 167). Again, clearly gendered behavioral patterns are referenced that acknowledges the female need to urinate but describes the process of urination as simply being done in a more discrete manner. It's in this context that Maximiliaan opens a discussion about the potential effects of public toilet use to women Since women seem to hide more carefully when urinating in public, they are not perceived as a group that is doing it (often): "mostly wild peers are man" (Maximiliaan: 155). Therefore, women are perceived as a group that is having a lower necessity to get toilet infrastructure. On that basis the city "decided to install as a first step urinals" (Maximiliaan: 156). Even Aleah, who is urinating in public herself shares the notion that "wild peeing is caused by man [...]. And because women they don't do that, they don't have free toilets" (Aleah 385). Regimes of shame do not only seem to restrain certain groups from urinating in public, moreover, it similarly influences the perception of female

needs in a way, that less toilet infrastructure is built, since the female toilet visit is made invisible and perceived as not something that is not existing. This again led to an increasingly restricted accessibility of public spaces for women and those not recognized in the urinal infrastructure. Gendered shame, therefore, forms "a disciplining device operating through structures of oppression" (Fischer 2018: 371).

While elaborating on the possibility to implement gender-neutral toilets with the toilet renovations in the NMBS stations, Wout explains the reason to keep the gender segregated toilets as the following:

> I can imagine, that for men…they might find it difficult that they are doing their thing in the urinor, while the lady behind them is washing their hands, so it is why we, it is an image of comfort and privacy, ja let us call it like that (Wout: 457).

Besides his linguistic paraphrasis of the toilet visit as "the thing", he complements this evasive referencing with highly gendered notions of shame. The statement reveals that Wout, being a man, can imagine a structure of shame and the inability to urinate when being watched by a member of the other sex. Similarly, Jann shares this notion and brings it into relation with public urination and elderly men, since "when you get older it is more difficult to pee. And maybe when they are in the streets, and you can see them... it is more stress. [...] But if they close the door, nobody can see them and nobody can see them" (Jann: 385). The awareness of others being able to see the elderly urinating in the street here guides Jann to the conclusion that older men would rather use the toilet stall then the urinal or the street to hide from the eyes and the potential pressure and shame of others. While Jann does not seem to perceive the public urination as something generally shameful here, his focus is put on the shame of elderly man, that feel ashamed when being observed having difficulties with urination. Notions of non-hegemonic masculinities are evoked here. A similar notion of male shame is observed in the first protocol at the Vlasmarkt in the inner-city of Ghent. Here a (middle aged) man is observed waiting in front of the double urinal that is currently occupied by one man. He only enters the urinal once the other man left and the double urinal is free. Even though the urinal offers the possibility to urinate with two people at the same time, man one is waiting for man two to finish and leave the urinal.

Since the observation took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, him waiting does not necessarily relate to a specific toilet behavior but might be rooted in social distancing practices. Further observations of the same urinal reveal less shameful and distanced behaviors, as I can observe a man letting "his eyes gliding over what is happening in the street, while he is peeing. He is following different persons on the street with his eyes and has an upright body language. [...] He doesn't seem to be ashamed or feel another unpleasant emotion" (Protocol 1: 11). Another man is approaching the dry urinal and "three meters before entering, he starts opening his pants. He walks into the right urinal to urinate there" (Protocol 1: 12), and when

leaving "the urinal and while walking away in direction Dampoort, he is still closing his belt in the middle of the street" (Protocol 1: 12).

Since the behavior of women was not easily observable due to the closed architecture of toilet stalls, there are not such findings about women in the protocols or interviews. Whenever visiting the hallway of a publicly accessible female bathroom, there were no observations of women finishing their urination act by closing their pants after leaving the toilet stall. Since shame "reminds the individual of standards of propriety and behaviors necessary to remain a part of the social group" (Ferguson/Crowley 1997: 20), conclusions can be drawn about the (felt) social status of women in comparison to men. While men as the hegemonic subject care less about social degradation due to shameful behavior, women are socialized and often forced by a patriarchal power structure to obtain their already degraded social position in the male hegemony. As such, shame by that becomes another mechanism to produce as well as reproduce hegemonic social order.

4.4. Repair to Belong

4.4.1 Institutional Repair

Practices of informal repair and maintenance were mentioned on several occasions during the interviews I conducted. While some interviewees were partially aware of the fact that they are sustaining the current state of toilet infrastructures with the help of tools or the inclusion of non-public toilets, others were not reflecting on the deficiencies that their behavior were sustaining an everyday basis by their efforts of repair (Mattern 2018). Throughout the research process, institutional, technological as well as affective dimensions of repair were observed that served as "technologies of empowerment to inspire a more fully democratic society" (serlin 2010: 168). While repair and maintenance are concepts mainly used by geography scholars, Ahmed is introducing queer use as an extension of that. Queerness of use is the theoretical as well as methodological approach to "make use audible, to listen to use, to bring to the front what ordinarily recedes into the background [...] to queer use as to front up to use; to make use strange" (Ahmed 2019: 198). By that she is bringing the usage of use to the foreground. And at the same time opens up the potential of use to make things strange, to changing use from how it was originally intended into a dimension of reinvention and appropriating of usage.

Examining the pee activism in Ghent revealed diverse methods of bringing the topic of insufficient and discriminatory toilet infrastructure on the streets. After the police tried to fine Aleah with public indecency for public urination during the Gentse Feesten in 2004, she started a petition with the demand that women need as many toilets as men during the Gentse Feesten, free of charge. Aleah explains, "I kept fighting for this subject from that time on until June 2014. So about 10 years I made a lot of manifestation during the Gentse Feesten, actions and media campaigns on this matter" (Aleah: 88). Together with a group of other pee activists, Aleah founded the plasactie vzw in 2004, after her incident with the police.

Aleah and Margeaux got to know each other while Aleah was hanging posters in a pub that was owned by Margeaux by that time, advertising to make the toilets in pubs and cafés free during the Gentse Feesten. Aleah's idea was to make the quasi-private toilet infrastructure free, since everybody fell back on those toilets during the festivities. Together they started brainstorming for a solution, so that at least customers didn't have to pay the toilet visit. They developed "some cups and we put them there and one cup was for one toilet visit [...] if you bought a drink, you got one. So, the lady knew, I don't have to ask money. And the customers the ones who were here all year, they had a patch, so they also didn't have to pay" (Margeaux: 18). With this, they found an informal and creative solution to decrease the costs of toilet visits for the actual customers of the pub but didn't put all the pressure on pub owners of hosting and cleaning for the toilet visitors that try to avoid the 50 cents for the city-organized mobile toilet. After this encounter, Margeaux became part of the activist groups, whose first fights were mainly focusing on lowering and abolishing the toilet fee of 50 cent, people had to pay when visiting one of the mobile sitting toilets during the Gentse Feesten. Their action resulted in a decrease toilet fee of 15 cents to 35 cents between 2007 and 2011, before the city attempted to increase it to 50 cents again. While the city had conversations with Aleah to make the toilet visit free, Aleah mentions that she had the impression that they were trying to negotiate about an increase in 2011 behind her back.

> One of the members of the council of the city hall Gent, he informed me, well [Aleah], this Monday they are going to vote for this, so they are lying to you that they are making it free. And that was the reason why I went to the court, because they were actually negotiation with me, to make it free, but behind my back the wanted to rise it (Aleah: 147).

What Aleah is referring to, is the moment in which she decided to sue the city of Ghent for discriminatory practices against women, which caused a lot of media attention in Flanders. The second appeal in 2014 garnered even more media attention and succeeded in having free toilets during the festivities. Aleah mentioned that this juristically precedent even garnered academic interest as an "article was published in a juristically paper, that this verdict was actually a discriminatory verdict which is not according the European anti-discrimination law" (Aleah: 126). Another scholarly paper about that case got published, addressing the ability of suing cities in case of not applied potty parity on the basis of the Ghent case (Sottiaux 2006). After only installing seven free toilets between 2004 and 2011, the city not only had to make all toilets free of charge, but also had to install more sitting toilet infrastructure in general, to offer just mentioned potty parity, since men "had about 220 urinals for free" (Aleah: 137). To win the fight of discriminatory toilet infrastructures during the Gentse Feesten, the plasactie vzw not only sued the city, but tried to raise awareness of the wider history of inequality. Aleah reports, how they were starting to do actions during the Gentse Feesten to raise awareness. Apart from manifestations with collective female public peeing, the plasactie vzw deve-

loped a female urinal with the financial help of the city, that was usable and free of charge during the festivities. Additionally, information stands were built up during the festivities, that got interrupted and fined by the police several times with a couple of hundred euros, starting in 2012. Aleah explains that it was the new council man of the Gentse Feesten in 2013, who "wanted to really finish with plasactie. Because actually plasactie was a negative publicity for Gentse Feesten. Because we were there every year, and we were always saying that the city hall is discriminating women (Aleah: 167). While the city was still supporting the activists in the first years, the plasactie vzw became more and more contested in the following years.

Fig. 22: You have been toilet trained - free2p33

In line with this, Margeaux reported some other actions the plasactie vzw did, outside the Gentse Feesten that got interrupted by the police. She explains that the activists for instance wanted to appropriated dry urinals within the inner-city for women. Before doing so, "we asked if we could use a urinal in Ghent and we planned to stand there and to say to the men, you have to go somewhere else because this is for the ladies to use the plastuit [female urination device]" (Margeaux: 125), and the activist were told, that it is not allowed. Even though the dry urinals are located in the public space, they are already infrastructural, but also symbolically belonging to men, obstructing the public space for women, now manifested by the rejection of the city to be used by women. Not only Aleah detects the decision of the city hall to put a urinal at some place as exclusionary. She explains "when you reserve this place, even if it is two meters on two meters you reserve that 2x2 meters only for men. So that is actually an action of sexism" (Aleah 327). Kern (2020: 114) equally summarizes that such spatial preoccupation reflects discriminatory (infra-) structures within the society therefore reveals who can be in the urban and therefore has the power, and who will be out of place.

Kim does not understand himself as a pee activist but who is occupied with the topic of toilets, as a consequence of his experiences as a transgender man with not belonging into the normatively binary system of gender and therefore of toilets. As part of a collective of queer activists, he also engaged in strategies of institutional repair:

> We made stickers and we started an Instagram account that is called "free to pee", and we made stickers with free to pee on it, just to actually stick them on bathroom doors like to cover the men's, women's icons. We just made like standing toilets and sitting toilets - things like that. To just like, really as a form of activism stick it on the doors, when you are annoyed by gendered bathroom (Kim: 76).

Kim explains further that the Handelsbeurs, an old concert hall in the inner-city of Ghent, contacted free2pee on basis of those stickers, to have a conversation, since they were about to renovate the bathrooms and open to implement gender-neutral toilet signs. In an e-mail conversation with the responsible person of the Handelsbeurs, I learned, that the toilets got relabeled and now offer sitting and standing toilets for everybody. He explains that

> it took several months and a few inhouse discussions to make this decision. […] Our communication manager […] was in close contact with the ‚gender neutral movement' to get their opinion. But after we changed the labels, we were glad and a bit proud we did so (Handelsbeurs e-mail contact, 20.10.2020).

On the question how people accepted the newly labeled toilets he answered

> as far as I know and experience, we have a very loyal audience and they knew where to go in the past, so men kept on going to the men's room and ladies to

> the ladies room. [It is] like as if it is intuitive or something. But I should ask my colleague to confirm this. :) We think that adding ‚zitplaatsen' [Eng. sitting places] and ‚staanplaatsen' [Eng. standing places] made it more confusing, since people thought they would end up in the concert hall (Handelsbeurs e-mail contact, 20.10.2020).

The above outlined methods ways of toilet activism are primarily interested in changing the discursive and symbolical constitutions of the existing infrastructure, while the plasactie vzw was advocating the expansion of toilet infrastructure of sitting toilets and their thus mainly focused on the free accessibility of existing toilet infrastructure and the appropriation of toilet infrastructure. As the Handelsbeurs example shows, the relabeling of the toilet infrastructure can be understood as an important step for people, negatively affected by binary toilet infrastructure and a symbolic change for the toilet owner, connected with feelings of progressiveness and proud, while the "loyal" cis-gendered audience continued visiting in the toilets in a gendered way, albeit slightly confused, way.

4.4.2 Technological Repair

Technological repair came up as another strategy of repair in the data. By the invention of tools, some of the interviewed women were able to expand their toilet network and by that their accessibility of urban space. As Ahmed states, form follows failure and is therefore analyzing "inventiveness cm[ing] from the fact – or the perception – that things are not functioning as well as they could be" (Ahmed 2019: 25). In this manner technological repair is trying to fix and a broken world "so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web" (Fisher/Tronto 1990: 40).

A personal experience at the Gentse Feesten in 2019, internet research in the beginning of this study, and the recommendation of Aleah during her interview, led me to get in contact with the product designer Lena, who invented the female urinal Miss Wizz. As her bachelor project in 2010, the developed product had to be an object that is "solving a societal problem" (Lena: 10). Being affected by the lacking urination infrastructure during the Gentse Feesten herself led her to manufacture a solution: "if you need to pee there you are fucked. You really need 30 minutes to find a toilet there. It is so crowded there and to find a spot it is very difficult" (Lena: 497). Therefore, she decided to develop a female dry urinal to solve the problems of public urination, long queues in front of the female toilet units, and lacking infrastructure she experienced during the festivities, since "misfits provides an incentive to change" (Ahmed 2019: 25).

With the help of the plasactie vzw, she started this initiative during the Gentse Feesten in 2011, where they conducted a testing phase with the Miss Wizz during the festivities to try out the functionality of the toilet as well as the acceptance by women using the female urinal. The Miss Wizz was conceived to fill the gap in fast urination infrastructures for individuals with a vagina that have difficulties to ac-

Fig. 23: Female Urinal - Miss Wizz

cess urinals penis-oriented urinals. After finishing the prototype, the Ghent service for festivities got in contact with Lena and offered to finance the further development of the female urinal, so it could be used for the next Gentse Feesten and in an outside bar at the waterside of Ghent (cf. Lena: 103). After the first prototype in 2010 Lena started to investigate other shapes, made it cheaper and easily transportable by using metal poles, lighter material and a waterproof canvas that could be opened and closed by a zipper. Since she constructed the urinal as a dry urinal, it needs no connection to fresh water, and only a connection to the sewage system to lead the sewage down the drain or to collect it in a tank, that can later be used as a fertilizer (cf. Lena: 149 & 168). By that the Miss Wizz is taking environmental dimensions into account, too. After implementing the Miss Wizz during the Gentse Feesten, Lena made

> a proposal of a female urinal, to put it next to the male urinals, because they are everywhere in Gent, these public urinals for guys, I mean that is really a shame. And I have a design, that is, ja that look similar - for you know - the government wants to have like the same style in public toilets. And I proposed it and presented it physically. And the city said, ja in the end of the year we are going to get the budget and then we will see (Lena 278).

Since the city broke its promise and Lena didn't hear anything of the administration, she is currently working on launching the Miss Wizz on the market herself. In 2018 she developed the Miss Wizz Urban that is based on the design of the male dry urinals in the city of Ghent and is planned as a permanent infrastructure and an extension of the male urinals. The representative of the city administration Cato

stated in the interview that the society would not yet be ready to have female urinals in the city space and therefore, they would not have come to an agreement with Lena (cf. Cato & Charlotte 231).

Fig. 24: Miss Wizz Urban - Miss Wizz

What Lena created with the Miss Wizz is an attempt to complement the insufficient material infrastructure of urinals that are by now mainly serving cis men. Since the bodily dimension is hardly changeable, Lena is enlarging material possibilities to urinate and therefore possibilities to access the public space for women, since other interviews revealed a shape of repair, in which women start to either avoid places on the basis of lacking toilet infrastructures or have to leave them because they have to urinate. As an addition to the Miss Wizz, Lena "was also thinking of building something which can be on top of the male urinals as an add on. So, you don't need to build new urinals but that you can just change them" (Lena: 385), as another, less elaborate design, that is literally extending the existing male urination infrastructure. During the interview with Margeaux, who was part of the plasactie vzw in the early 2000s, she reports that she built a toilet wagon herself, since the plasactie vzw wanted "to give some lessons to pee with the plastuit [but when the city forbit it] I said we make one toilet of ourselves, and then we can use this one for the lesson. And then we build one" (Margeaux: 45), in which she implemented one of the Miss Wizz female urinals. Margeaux explains that it was not always easy to motivate people to use the female urinal since people were hesitant and didn't knew how to use it "some people rather wait for the sitting. And some people are curious and take a look. But I always show them how to use it! And I always show them how to do that, like that and then [moves hips and shows how to do that]" (Margeaux: 164).

Another mode of repairing the insufficient infrastructure is presented by Kim, who, before his coming out as transgender "liked to go to the men's bathroom, just to be like as a form of little protest, because I was just like Why? Like, also when the women's restroom was occupied. I always went to the men's bathroom. Because yes, it is the same – it doesn't matter" (Kim: 31). The appropriation of the "wrong" bathroom was described by Margeaux, too. During the time as a parking assistant in the city she often "had to pee and there is this urinal and so I took it and went there with my plastuit" (Margeaux: 583). The plastuit is a female urination device

Fig. 25: Plastuit (engl. pee bag) - Margeaux

Fig. 29: Margeaux's Toilet Wagon: *t'Krochtje* - Margeaux

that got developed to make it easily possible to pee while standing with a vagina. With the plastuit Margeaux could take back the urban space, that was taken from her by an infrastructure by being designed in a way, that she was not able to use it and therefore was excluded from it (Ahmed 2019: 23). The plastuit allowed her to appropriate and queer materially gendered space. However, the social dimension of the urinal as a men's space was reproduced by one of her male colleagues, again affirming the social control that comes into play with non-hegemonic toilet use:

> He was like: "Don't do it!" And I said, 'Why not?' And he was like 'No!' And I said, 'stay there so you don't have to look'. And he was like 'I can go with you to the cinema'. And I: 'Yes, why? Here it is, why should I go to another?' He was 20 years … 20! This was incredible (Margeaux: 585).

Margeaux was able to overcome the intended use that functioned as a "restriction of possibility that is material" (Ahmed 2019: 26) by the invention and use of the plastuit that served as an extension of the existing infrastructure. With the reappropriation of the urinal, she was through repair work able to perform the necessary body function and therefore able to use the public space the way she wanted and not the way she was restricted to do "when I am biking, and then I just go hup, like man on the tree" (Margeaux: 222).

Apart from tools that are making urban (toilet) infrastructure accessible for certain bodies, Sara mentions that "there is an app "to the loo" and "on wheels" and

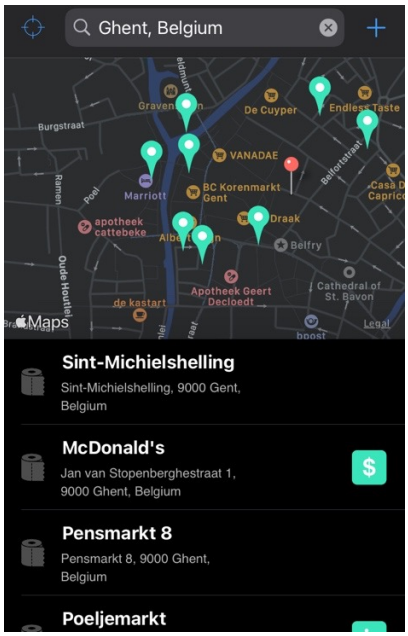

Fig. 26: ***Flush*** **-screenshot of toilet finder app - Flush**

there you can see the accessible places, not just toilets, around Flanders or Belgium" (Sara: 121). While she would not use the app in Ghent, since she does not want to limit her life to spaces being accessible, she explains that the app could help, if she was "in a new city and [she has to] urgently look for a bathroom, so when [she] could just not pic any restaurant or café, or when there was a meeting [she] need to organize outside of the office" (Sara: 130). Through my own online research, I cannot find the particular apps, but I recognize, that there plenty of "toilet finder" apps available, often including all publicly accessible toilets and better updated by the community than the official city plasplan. One app is even including a rating and review system, opening hours and in formation about facilities and accessibilities.

4.4.3 Affective Repair

Even though Lena designed a solution to overcome lacking urination infrastructure in the public, her case makes visible, that there are still certain hegemonic barriers present, that hinder an easy implementation of the repairing infrastructure. Despite the help of the plasactie vzw to test the Miss Wizz, subventions were needed and therefore a monetary dependency of the city was established to further develop the dry female urinal into a sellable product. Furthermore, the implementation of the dry female urinal appears to be dependent on the evaluation of its necessity by the city. Due to the fact, that Cato is perceiving the society as not yet ready for this type of change, she is neglecting the necessity of fast urination infrastructure in the city for people with a vagina. In doing so, Cato is reproducing the limitation of women's accessibility to public space and norms of urban space and toilet infrastructure.

While Lena is mainly trying to fix the insufficient and broken infrastructure towards a more vagina-friendly toilet situation, Sara who is not only affected by lacking toilet infrastructure on the basis of gender but is as well dependent on a

wheelchair accessible toilet described another experience of public space exclusion in the interview. While being at the beach she had to visit a toilet but when she arrived at the public accessible infrastructure it was closed, so "that was the reason that I had to leave the beach a couple of times and just interrupt our holiday because I needed to pee" (Sara: 233). As Graham and Thrift (2007: 10) state our

Fig. 27: Public Toilet in Ghent-Merelbeke with sign explaining closure because of Covid-19 - own image

culture seems to be based on allegedly taken-for-granted infrastructures with "perfect order, completeness, immanence and internal homogeneity rather than leaky, partial and heterogenous entities" that are only revealing its flaws to bodies that got socially constructed as deviant or non-normative. Sara is affected by the insufficient infrastructure that does not fit her non-normative abled body. As a result, she has to leave the spaces and social settings earlier than she would like to, purely on the basis of a lacking possibility to urinate. This limits her abilities to enter and remain in public spaces and cannot only be seen in the context of special inhabitation, since "access to toilets is a prerequisite for full public participation and citizenship" (Plaskow 2008: 52). Sara describes how the Covid-19 pandemic further amplified the inaccessibility, since "I was affected by it on holidays and the time that I did go to the city, I did make sure, that my trips ware not as long as usual. Because I didn't have my spots on my maps" (Sara: 235). With thus, Sara is admitting changes in her behavior on the basis of missing toilet infrastructure, even though she prefers not to:

> I don't want to organize and design my space in a way that there has to be an accessible toilet around. [...] out of the feeling or the resistance to create my world only with accessible places and spaces I don't want that. I want to go to places with a nice vibe [...] So, every time I am somewhere, and there is an accessible toilet, it definitely gets like the good vibe tick, and also the accessible toilet tick (Sara: 105).

Fig. 28: Fine for public urination (one fine equals twenty portions of French fries) - own image

To overcome situations of inaccessible toilet infrastructure, Sara developed a mental "map of public toilet, that are quite clean, I have my map of restaurants and places" (Sara: 85) that she built upon her experience of spaces that she visited in the past. Via email, I asked her to write down the accessible toilets she is having on her mental map when staying in the inner city of Ghent. Next to several toilets in the underground parking spots of the inner city, and shopping centers, she adds a number of semi-public toilets that are located in the Design Museum, de Krook Library, an indoor organic market and the university building in which she is working. Additionally, she mentions that these are only the toilets she is using "outside of the toilets in restaurants and cafés" (email conversation Sara, 05.10.2020). In doing so, Sara is expanding her network of publicly accessible toilets towards qua-

si-private ones, that offer her the possibility to remain longer in the public space, than without this extension. Lilly describes a similar tendency since she follows a preferential hierarchy of "public toilets, then restaurants and cafes and then wild peeing" (Lilly: 244). These mental architectures of optionality signify an informal technique of repairing urban toilet infrastructures.

Fig. 30: Public urination prohibited - own image

In contrast to Sara, who is dependent on the help of another person or tools when she wants to urinate in public, Kim is "someone who wild pees very fast, so I don't think I ever went home because I had o pee, because I then pee on the streets and hope nobody calls the cops" (Kim: 255).

Lilly and Kim add another dimension to the potential toilet infrastructure of Ghent. Since Kim "would have never done it, if there would have been a toilet obviously" (Kim: 290), the urban space is used and serves as a provisional alternative urinating infrastructure (Graham/Thrift 2007: 18). Although Kim is aware of the fact, that peeing in public is illegal, and is aware of the sixty euro fine (120€ during the Gentse Feesten), he nevertheless risks the illegal urination to be able to remain in spaces. For Kim the extension of toilet infrastructures to the open does not only consist of being able to relieve himself, but also "is a kind of protest, because of lacking toilet infrastructure and opportunity to actually pee on a toilet" (Kim: 290). When peeing in public, the interviewed individuals described how they were hiding "between two cars" (Lilly: 231) or "went behind a car to pee" (Aleah: 46), without further explaining why they were doing this. Since Kim already mentioned the illegality of urinating in public and Aleah got treated "with a fine – but not a fine for wild peeing, but fining 'openbare zedenschending', in English it is offending of the public order" (Aleah: 46), public urination, especially for individuals that need to squat down, seems to be discursively as well as physically policed.

What these affective repair strategies have in common is an appropriation of the space but also a renegotiation of feelings and regimes of shame in relation to the toilet visit and public urination. The activists and individuals are reframing their affects from an internalized feeling of shame that is determining their behavior and actions from within towards a feeling of anger caused by outer structure.

This translation of shame to anger indicates an emancipated reading of the infrastructure as the entity that is causing and dictating the taboo and shameful feeling around the toilet, rather than the self. Kim, for instance, reports of a situation in which he reshuffled his feelings of shame and is experiencing the following as something empowering, when he "heard somebody next to [him] pee and poo very loudly and [he] though like you know – 'you inspire me right now'" (Kim: 425).

5 Flushing Away Privilege: Conlusion

To start off this concluding chapter, I would like to revisit the question that started the theoretical enquiry of this toilet paper. You look around, but this time you quickly find the infrastructure you were searching for. Its location is convenient, its design feels welcoming and personal. As you enter without a long wait or financial fees, you encounter facilities that suit your needs, regardless of the specificities of your body and living situation. After relieving yourself, you head out into the city to return to the order of your day. There has been no inconvenience, sense of threat nor feelings of shame. Being there when you need it, the infrastructure not only feels as if it belongs to you, but by extension makes you feel as if you yourself belong. Things are exactly as they need to be. Whereas to many this situation might seem like a banal and familiar encounter with a city's well-oiled infrastructure, this paper argued that for many people such scenarios are rare occasions. To some, the designs of the city simply seem unaccustomed. While the city belongs to everyone, it seems to belong more to some than others. The patriarchal, transphobe, ableist and neoliberal logics that influence the material and discursive organization of our everyday lives in Western-Europe have their blind spots and can lead to the further exclusion of many marginalized identities. Be it deliberate or by default, these exclusionary logics find their articulation in city infrastructure and result in people feeling as if they don't belong. Their needs become a form of societal waste in themselves; something the city readily flushes down the drain.

This study set out to critically investigate the unequal distribution and organization of toilet infrastructure in Ghent. Starting from a theoretical orientation which combines insights from urban sociology, spatial theory, and affect studies, a framework was established through which city infrastructure could be read as the results of societal power structures. More specifically, toilet infrastructure was considered a locus of different discursive forces that help reveal underlying hegemonic notions of citizenship and belonging. In order to do justice to this multifaceted network of meaning that contemporary citoyens find themselves involved in, toilet infrastructure and its uses were understood as defined by material and affective components. Not only do the physical design, spatial setting, and organizational aspects of toilet infrastructure determine whom can utilize said infrastructures and under which terms, moreover, these understandings become something embodied in the emotional lives of the city's subjects. The city's infrastructural power extends far beyond the stalls and faucets of its toilet designs, as it equally consists out of the hearts and minds of those who can or cannot use it. Such felt realities are both cause and effect of everyday power infrastructure and help to further cement discourses on whose needs matter. As such, the right to access can be understood as something taken-for-granted and further upheld by policy makers, city planners, and citoyens alike. However, since these notions of belonging are not stabile entities, but always susceptible to a degree of contingency, emotions can also become a gateway for the citoyen to renegotiate their relation to the material and repair a broken infrastructure.

By way of ethnographic methods, I analyzed how public toilet infrastructure signifies a potent site of struggle in which power relationships get affirmed or resisted. The corpus of this research existed of field protocols, in-depth interviews, newspaper articles and further written artifacts of the field. Special mention was made of the repercussions of Covid-19 on the research process as the restricting of public space and contact opportunities effected how this study was conducted. Starting from the materials and discourses that came forward from this research, a four-folded analysis is offered. The result section outlines the state of the art of toilet infrastructure in Ghent, the material and internalized forms of exclusion these generate, as well as the different repair strategies that excluded individuals rely on to appropriate failing infrastructure and queer toilet use. The state of the art consists of a detailed overview of the design and distribution of Ghent's toilet infrastructure. Institutional and activist agents helped to understand how the city space mostly aims to fit cis-male, middle-class, normatively abled bodies. Moreover, this failing infrastructure was seen sustained by a lack of consensus as to what constitutes a public and private toilet. While public toilets were often defined by their position as city-funded, the toilet infrastructure of local bars and stores was—despite its private ownership—commonly referred to as public. The problem with this incoherent definition, however, is that these privately owned, yet publicly accessible, toilet infrastructures are only public in theory and subjected to a strict set of (financial) conditions. Although the city kept referring to the existence of these toilets to emphasize the generous amounts of toilets scattered around the city, these toilets are in fact limited in their accessibility—and therefore offering a distorted image of what the city provides. Underlining these limitations of Ghent's toilet infrastructure is a growing tendency to the neoliberalization and privatization of public space. Through the eyes of spatial planners, the citizen is first and foremost a consumer, who has access to toilets, albeit for a price, in city zones around which the commercial life is organized.

The analysis continued by going into detail how these inadequate toilet infrastructures are being further emphasized by, and equally result in different types of exclusion. To fit the papers theoretical groundings, a distinction was made between material and internalized exclusion. The former being ways in which the physical dimension of infrastructure becomes a restrictive or repressive force, the latter as forms of how emotional state and bodily affects pose barriers to toilet use. Materially, the toilet strongly indicates its preferred users and ways of use by its gendered design. By being distinctively organized in standing urinal toilets and sitting toilet bowls, men are privileged to more easily adopt toilet infrastructure than women. While the interaction between biological and social conditions limits women to only use a particular type of toilets, the city does not direct itself to amend these inequalities. Standing urination facilities greatly outnumber sitting ones, with the existing women or disability accessible toilet infrastructure often further constrained by opening hours of the buildings that house them or pay walls of the companies that own them. The limited distribution and difficult to reach locations of these toilets provide a further encumbrance to an already broken infrastructure.

Although for certain bodies, these conditions are dire to say the least, these infrastructural problems are seldom addressed because of the social taboos around human waste. Toilet use is often connoted with the uncivilized or disgraceful, therefore keeping it far from the public eye. This leads to issues such as toilet use and infrastructure being left unaddressed because its workings and deficiencies remain out of sight and out of mind for those who do not encounter problems with it. These taboos also lead to more manifest forms of material exclusion in their own right by generating an aura of undesirability around the act of peeing. Since peeling is seen as corrosive to the social fabric of society, it needs to be contained to very specific spaces, and when reaching beyond those limits, punished by law.

The construction of certain types of toilet use as something deviant is what deprives underprivileged bodies of yet another option to answer their basic necessities, yet it also contributes to affective regimes of power and control. The interviews revealed that the failing infrastructure was by those excluded not only perceived as a practical problem, but also as a symbolic expression of a city with little regard for their needs. Inability and hindrance to access toilet infrastructure here signified that certain bodies simply didn't belong in a variety of settings. This was a notion which got articulated by trans identities when toilet segregation and misgendering generated difficult decisions and potential humiliation. By non-normatively abled bodies when the facilities needed were just not there, or only present in the facilities of the other sex. But also present overall with women since the abovementioned lack and coinciding conditions of toilet infrastructure led to a radical reorganization of their daily life in many different ways. A pincer position of problems thus presented itself in which a lack of infrastructure generated affects of embarrassment and discomfort, which then further excluded these bodies from feeling free to access the little infrastructure that exists. Two of the prime affects that sustain such affective barriers are fear and disgust as women accessible toilets are often placed in areas with little social control (such as parking lots) or are inadequately maintained and therefore tied to the threshold of revulsion. Class also factors in here, since accessible and frequently clean toilets seem to be mostly directed to the middleclass consumer. Toilets in areas of lower socio-economic status often end up in a vicious spiral of vandalization and neglect since its perceived position as unclean paradoxically distances it further from frequent use and maintenance. However, the most powerful affective apparatus, which sustains this emotional unease and hegemonic space organization, is that of shame. While fear and disgust are affects that operate from the outside, shame appears to be an affect that is deeply internalized and is dictating behavior from within the individual. The toilet as an object and a space, as well as the practices of toilet use are highly tabooed and made invisible to public discourse by shame. Particularly a highly gendered component of shame could be observed within the data, that resulted in a further affective exclusion of bodies that were already lacking toilet infrastructures. Women, trans, non-normative abled and elderly individuals often compromised in their needs because of the potential discomfort of addressing them or restricted themselves of access altogether out of fear of judgement and confrontation.

The last part of the analysis took a hopeful approach to the broken infrastructures of the urban space by discussing how underprivileged bodies attempt to amend the conditions that failed them. Making the distinction between three different forms of repair work, the analysis took interest in institutional, technological and affective repair. Institutional repair are situations in which individuals or collectives engage in ways to raise awareness of city officials or institutional agents to change the city's material conditions. The organizations plasactie vzw and piss off! are a prominent example of this, since this grassroots group/political party use activist action to prioritize equal pee opportunities on the city's agenda. Mainly operating around the Gentse Feesten, the plasactie vzw has made longstanding attempts to ignite debates, subvert patriarchal logics and motivate the city to invest into more gender-balanced facilities. Going as far as legal action to attain their goals, they function as a broker of righteous indignation and productive solutions to the city establishment and the disenfranchised citoyen. Technological repair deals with the bottom-up infrastructural alterations of existing technologies or the introduction of new ones. The MizzWizz, for example, offers a standing toilet for women that is both mobile and easy to use. While the city first showed interest in utilizing this technology, discursive understandings of what the city needs and is ready for hindered its widespread implementation—once again exemplifying how hegemonic discourses on gender roles remain an important barrier of progressive action. Another example, the Plastuit, a portable tube that can be carried around, offers women a greater convenience to pee while standing. However, for these technologies to be embedded in the social, they first have to become adopted both mentally and affectively. Therefore, the final repair strategy deals with affective repair. Here subjects attempt to resocialize themselves in order to reject normative standards of acceptance and deviance, as well as rewire the negative emotions grafted on these understandings. While strategies such as mental mapping, or queer use of the city's affordances to publicly urinate, help reduce fear and anxiety, an acknowledgment of the power structures that lay behind these broken infrastructures can counter the internalized shame that excluded bodies systematically have to undergo. Functioning as a strong control of the self, shame counts as an affective apparatus that keeps hegemonic understandings of belonging in place, and therefore signifies an essential barrier to be broken down for public infrastructures to be fixed.

Having ended this result section with issues of repair, I would like to make use of the occasion to reflect on this paper own possibilities of improvement. Although I believe this study was developed and executed with a great deal of academic rigor, standing at the brink of completion also reveals some shortcomings and overall inadequacies. While the main focus was put on the conducted interviews with respondents that were already involved with toilets, this paper would have benefitted from further inclusion of observations in the public space. Even though the Covid-19 pandemic changed the public realm, observations as well as ethnographic conversations were technically possible and would have added an interesting and spontaneous perspective of city and toilet users to the analysis. Besides, this paper shows, that the chosen access point to approach the city administration was impro-

vable. Even though several access strategies were used, some remained unattempted, which might have gained earlier and better access and a better understanding of the city's perspective on toilets.

Moreover, as with every scholarly endeavor, my findings leave me with a great deal of further questions. Within the timespan and scope of this paper, I was not capable of filling these lacunas, but I do believe they offer new and exciting paths for future researchers to traverse. While this paper focused in-depth on the publicly accessible toilet infrastructure in Ghent, a comparison of sanitary infrastructures and practices in multiple cities would, for example be an interesting and important extension of this research. Not only, to examine other practices of access and exclusion to city space, but also to evaluate Ghent's toilet infrastructure as part of wider tendencies and to expand the list of repair strategies marginalized groups developed to repair their broken surroundings. Furthermore, the list of exclusionary infrastructures in urban spaces is seemingly endless. While practices of the discriminatory infrastructure of snow clearing were already mentioned within this paper, a further feminist engagement and making-visible of the material, but especially affective exclusion of marginalized and non-hegemonic groups within the city is mandatory. Additionally, a specific analysis of the spatial exclusion in terms of toilet infrastructure of lesser discussed marginalized groups, such as religious groups, the elderly or non-neuronormative individuals, would be interesting

To offer some concluding notes, I would like to point out that as a direct extension of this paper, repair and maintenance of insufficient infrastructures should be examined regarding its ability to change infrastructure in both the short and the long-term. While repair can be seen as an empowering practice, that is making insufficient infrastructure usable and city space accessible, the hegemonic order of things is still sustained through a limited increase in access. After all, repair can be understood as the practice of erasing a symptom of a broken system. In this sense, the system behind these failing infrastructures is ironically being stabilized through such strategies of repair. Further analysis into practices of queer use and infrastructural repair, on a structural level and in terms of long-term development would be of great importance here.

While my analysis mainly focused on the flaws and insufficiencies of toilet infrastructures, the question of the perfect toilet that accommodates all bodies and is accessible for everybody remains. As the chapter on repair work and belonging already demonstrated, possibilities and practices that have the ability to further include further groups seem to exist but are not (yet) introduced into the hegemonic construction of toilet infrastructure and urban space. I want to end this paper by giving the word to Aleah (474) who is pleading for public toilets that are "an attractive point in a city, not a disgusting point. They have to be a meeting point in the city, that people meet there and like to go there, you know? That is a good public toilet! Maybe there is a point that you can sit and drink a coffee and just talk to each other. It has to be a place it is not a taboo place but a part of the city's life".

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Artifacts

Artifact 1 – Wash and Pee Plan „Plasplan“ ©Stadt Gent. Retrieved from: https://stad.gent/nl/wonen-bouwen/organisaties-voor-daklozenhulp-gent/publiek-sanitair-en-was-en-plasplan. [23.04.2020]

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Artifact 3 – Fonteyn, B.: Duitse maakt thesis over openbare wc's in Gent: "Het klinkt grappig, maar het is heel serieus. De Gentenaar, ©Het Nieuwsblad 23.10.2020. Retrieved from: https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20201022 95759089. [23.10.2020]

Artifact 4 – Presentation of ©NMBS on a new tender of toilets in stations. Provided by Wout. [05.08.2020]

Artifact 5 – ©Politie bulletin 2019. Retrieved from: https://www.politie.be/5415/sites/5415/files/downloads/Politiebulletin%202019%20%28cijfers%20jan%20-%20dec%29.pdf. [10.09.2020]

Artifact 6 – free2pee poster, provided by Kim. [11.08.2020]

Artifact 7 – ©Miss Wizz Urban, privoded by Lena [19.08.2020]

Artifact 8 – Foto "t'Krochtje", provided by Margeaux. [19.08.2020]

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Artifact 12 – Fonteyn, B.: 'Wildkakkers' actief in Gent en ook dat is een gevolg van de Lockdown. De Gentenaar, ©Het Nieuwsblad 19.08.2020. Retrieved from: https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/dmf20200818 95627130 [19.08.2020]

Artifact 13 – ©Kliq - design of an inclusive toilet room - provided by Kim [11.08.2020]

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