Undoing Gender in the Restroom

Bathroom experiences and practices of students with non-normative

gender identities at the Erasmus University Rotterdam

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Abstract

In general, toilets are divided into three categories, namely male, female, and accessible. There has been an increasing demand for gender-neutral toilets at the campus of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Conceptually, this raises the question of how students who do not fall into these mentioned categories cope with gendered restrooms. To put it differently, it raises the question of how genderqueer people navigate the toilets. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with genderqueer students at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, this paper analyzes the way in which genderqueer people deal with the binary gender system. This paper demonstrates the toilet trouble marked by the experiences of those individuals. Furthermore, this paper analyzes the strategies for picking a restroom and the strategies within the restroom. Those strategies apply to motives to enter a restroom, but also to specific practices while being inside a gendered space. Some strategies involve the desire to adapt one's appearance, other strategies heighten the toilet trouble. In so doing, this paper makes a theoretical contribution to the notion of how gender influences one's practices and embodiment of gender. Finally, this paper makes a social contribution, that is to the understanding of how gender is shaped in public space.

Key terms: gendered practices, genderqueer, nonbinary, passing, toilets.

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Introduction

The need for a gender-neutral restroom at the campus of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (henceforth EUR) has been expressed by various students (Ficheroux, 2017; Sukmana & Gasimov, 2018; Hofland, 2023). Since 2017, this call for a gender-neutral restroom has been articulated and the demand has not been met, except for students at the Erasmus University College (henceforth EUC) (Laanen, 2017). Something is off with the categorization into 'men' and 'women.' So why do students want a gender-neutral restroom? Everyone has a body that gets assigned a sex at birth, generally male or female, based on genitalia. This distinction of sex is problematic because not everyone is conforming to their sex/gender. This means that not everyone agrees and lives up to the expectations a specific gender or sex has - whether it be feminine or masculine. As a result, there is a division in restrooms: public restrooms, and non-public restrooms. Non-public restrooms do not divide people in terms of sex, such as toilets at home, while public restrooms do. Consequently, some people are not welcomed in the ladies or the gents, while others are welcomed in neither restroom. Especially for queer people, people who are not *conforming* to a cisgender – identifying with the sex, or rather genitals, you are born with - or the heterosexual norm, the access to a public restroom is not evident.

Although the restroom is about eliminating, it is a space that involves policies. It regulates who is allowed to enter and who is not allowed to enter. Or to put it more radically, public restrooms produce different gender identities, those can exist because these places create boundaries (Molotch & Norén, 2010). Public restrooms are therefore deeply political. With the binary distinction, nonbinary individuals are forced to choose between the two sexes/genders they do not identify with. This shows the importance of this subject: since genderqueer students must face the structures of gender when they have to use the loo, so how do those students deal with it? For this thesis, I want to center the following question: How do people with non-normative gender identities engage with the toilet trouble?

Especially queer theory has shown the relevance of studying sex and gender. It teaches us to engage with sex and gender in a way that does not assume the first to be biological and the latter to be cultural. Queer theory has taught us to think of gender and sex as performative (Butler, 1990). Both sex and gender are connected to behavioral expectations, although they are still relative to the body. Moreover, the restroom issue is also a feminist issue since feminism can be seen as a field where the oppressed unite to fight against the oppressor. For bathrooms specifically, queer people are oppressed as for instance trans women have to face diverse kinds of violence when entering a public restroom (Bender-Baird, 2016; Patel, 2017). Jones and Slater (2020) state that "attempts to restrict trans people's access to toilets are (…) about (…) ideologically securing the boundaries of (a particular type of cisgender) womanhood (…)" (p. 840). This again illustrates the political character of the toilet. In the end, it is important to realize that public restrooms did not arise out of the blue. There is a reason why toilet stalls do not go to the floor. Or why the diaper changing station is often inside the female restroom. These design decisions seem to have some underlying assumptions or beliefs. One of those may be the image of women as caregivers, which explains the presence of the diaper tables inside the ladies. Additionally, the belief that sex has to be separated from public spaces, shapes architectural decisions about the stall not being from floor to ceiling (Molotch & Norén, 2010).

The reactions queer people receive and the fact that the EUR does not provide students with a gender-neutral or gender-inclusive toilet, leads to the urgency of the issue at stake. Furthermore, this research might deepen the understanding of queer experiences in the restroom. Research that has been done focused on different contexts, such as primary schools and children's development or queer spaces (Slater et al., 2018; Colliver & Duffus, 2021). Other projects focused on the creation of queer spaces, like creating designs for a gender-inclusive restroom (Molotch & Norén, 2010; Sanders, 2017). Research also paid attention to the overlap between the oppression of gender and race by coloniality (Patel, 2017). My research might

contribute to these studies since it has another context at its foundation, namely a university. In addition, a different group is targeted than the aforementioned research. Instead of exclusively targeting trans people, several gender nonconforming students at the EUR take part in this study. So besides trans students, this study engages with any non-normative gender identity to see how those students navigate their toilet use. Besides studying experiences, toilet practices will also be at heart of the study. In the following section, the theoretical framework will follow to gain a better understanding of gender as performative. After that, the research method and data analysis are presented. Subsequently, the results, conclusion and discussion of the research are presented.

Theoretical framework

In order to answer my research question, it is important to determine what gender is and how it can be sociologically approached. Therefore, I will define the term 'gender' by using Judith Butler's (1990) theory. Their theory describes gender as performative, thereby postulates gender as behavioral and repetitional. After having explained the performativity of gender, I will deepen this notion with terms such as 'passing' and 'policing' (Moriel, 2005; Nordmarken, 2019). Furthermore, I will discuss the performativity of queer people. For queer people, especially trans people, passing and policing are well-known issues (Patel, 2017). Since the policing of gender is done by others, this process happens in public spaces. An example of such a place is the public restroom since those are segregated by sex/gender. This division embodies the institutionalized gender identities and therefore creates the possibility to pass and police others. This may shape the practices in sex-segregated spaces, such as the toilet.

The Performativity of Gender

According to Butler (1990), the body is a construct. Butler supports this claim by using Foucault's idea of inscription. She mentions that a body is "always already interpreted by cultural meanings" (p. 11). This explains the famous quote of De Beauvoir (1973): "One is not born a woman, but rather becomes, a woman" (p. 301). From this perspective, sex and gender are closely related to each other, since bodies receive their meaning in cultures (Butler, 1990, p. 11). This is why Butler talks about *the sexed body* and sex having been gender all along. Now, what is gender exactly? According to Butler (1990), it is about acts:

> In what senses, then is gender an act? As in other ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is *repeated*. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation. (p. 191)

Gender is about rituals and repetition. These repetitions of certain stylized acts, legitimize being a woman or being a man - or rather becoming one of them. For example, the way one dresses and the gender one falls in love with characterize their sex/gender, though it already existed before one acts in this particular way. The norm that women are expected to dress up and are sexually attracted to men, already exists before a woman is born since it is 'a function of a decidedly public and social discourse' (Butler, 1990, p. 185). The actions and characteristics of genders create expectations. Those expectations are put on the body, or to cite Butler: "gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies" (p. 186). The gender expectations are of importance while thinking about the performances of genderqueer people and therefore require further explanation. This is articulated in the undertaking of passing and policing.

Passing, Policing, and the Performativity of Non-normative Gender Identities

To understand gender, it is essential to explore what practices come along with it. According to Moriel (2005), passing is a reaction besides fighting or fleeing. She describes it as "an art form perfected by reiteration and conscious study of the rules policing passing" (p. 170). This reiteration is what Butler (1990) emphasized in her theory of performativity, as gender is about imitation and repetition. Thus, this implies that 'passing' is not something *of the body*, it is an "interpretation or 'reading' of the body for social cues" (Garfinkel, 2013, p. 58). For Garfinkel, 'passing' involves the risk of being detected and therefore a feeling of stress is present when one is trying to adhere to the preferred sex roles. He describes this process according to the case of Agnes. Agnes was born a boy and had a convincingly female appearance (p. 60). Agnes' features are described as naturally female, in her words: "I have always been a girl" (p. 65). She describes some difficulties from her childhood, like playing boys' games. From this it becomes clear that gender is not solely restricted to the body or to appearances, it is also about practices; for example, playing with dolls instead of playing baseball or going to the female restroom instead of the male restroom. Agnes' acts and appearance were not seen as "a matter of decision

or choice but were treated as *given* as a natural fact" (p. 67). Thus, passing is about appearing as a 'natural sex/gender.' With passing comes the risk of being detected, Agnes had to escape this detection at all costs. In short, this also means that 'passing' is another term for "hiding the fact that you are transsexual and/or transgendered" (Namaste, 2013, p. 590).

Furthermore, passing is split up into three aspects: recognition, categorization, and evaluation (Moriel, 2005, pp. 171-172). Moriel explains recognition as being concerned with how one looks, categorization as revolving around the place one is interacting in, and evaluation as dealing with class, education, and phonetic marks. For gender, this means that the *policing* subject will hold these criteria to conclude whether one is passing as a particular gender, specifically as if one is cisgender (Schiffer, 2022). Another way to define passing is to define it as "a process of *moving* to a place or situation in and from which one can more fully express and fulfill oneself" (Moriel, 2005, p. 167). Thus, passing may be an effect of voluntary gender expression, as well as the product of policing gender. As mentioned earlier, passing comes with the risk of being detected. Then what happens when one is being policed?

The analysis of passing is imbedded in the act of policing; passing is concerned with the acts of trying to appear as a 'natural sex/gender,' policing is concerned with detecting whether one appears as a 'natural sex/gender.' Although Nordmarken (2019) does not mention 'policing' explicitly, he gives a description that fits. He mentions that it is the norm to deduce - deductive because there generally are two options for sex/gender: female and male - one's gender based on their physical appearance, and therefore also deciding on what pronouns to use. Nordmarken (2019) states that one's body is being checked according to how they look and how they behave. This, again, corresponds to Butler's (1990) idea of gender as performative, since one's appearance and behavior are both being reiterated on the body. So, two norms are at play here: certain gendered expressions of bodies and the act of others checking gender conformity and gender nonconformity. In case someone is gender

nonconforming, the standards of bodies and gender expression are not met. So, in the act of policing, there is a moment when one notices that one's gender expression does not correspond with the sex/gender assigned at birth. This is called 'clocking' (Schiffer, 2022, p. 702). The one who is clocking may experience some sort of confusion. Nordmarken (2019) calls this *gender anomie* and describes it like "the uncertainty actors feel when interacting with gender minorities" (p.43). Others have difficulties policing and clocking because the body is used as a criterion for passing and for queer people their body may not be connected to their gender expression. With policing gender and deviating from the normative gender expression comes the risk of being detected, i.e., being clocked, since one may not be passing as a woman or a man. The act of clocking is also referred to as genderbashing (Namaste, 2013, p. 584). Hence, gendered spaces, such as restrooms, are the focus of genderbashing.

Doing Gender in the Restroom

Now that I have illustrated what gender is and what practices come along with it, it is important to consider where those practices are at play. Especially in sex-segregated facilities policing plays a role. In those spaces, people pay attention whether one is passing as the female or male (cis)gender. To check whether one matches the designated gender in that particular room, one checks for example their physical appearance, the place they are in, and their voice (Moriel, 2005). So, to present as female and having a female voice matches the fact that one is in a female-designated space. In other words, boundaries are created in the public space (Molotch & Norén, 2010). Molotch and Norén further claims that the division in sex - female and male - is naturalized. This means that public restrooms contribute to the idea that only two genders exist and that those have to fit inside one of them.[1] Which makes the issue of passing, policing, and clocking more telling.

[1] The same goes for the division between people with and without disabilities. People with disabilities are being excluded from the gendered restrooms and get assigned a separate toilet.

The gendered restroom is *the* place to police who gets access and who does not through the policing of gender. Queer people may differ from the normative ideas of what is feminine and what is masculine. So, when one enters the ladies' room, and one is not entirely presenting as feminine, one's presence could be questioned. Here an issue arises for people who do not identify as woman or man since they do not have an assigned restroom to go to. The emphasis on the body and therefore on passing seems to be the underlying principle which creates these reactions in queer people. When one's gender cannot be predicted, others cannot fulfill their obligation to police and are put in a state of not knowing - this is what Nordmarken (2019) called gender anomie. With gender anomie, passing, clocking and policing in mind, how do queer people navigate the restrooms?

Research method and data analysis

To answer the research question, I conducted qualitative research. This fits the research question, because it focuses on the participants' meaning about the issue (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 258). I adopted a case study approach in order to get an "in-depth examination of a single instance of some social phenomenon" (Babbie, 2016, p. 302). For this study, I aimed for an in-depth understanding of the experiences and practices of EUR-students with non-normative gender identities. Accordingly, I conducted semi-structured interviews. I chose this approach, because I want the participants to fully articulate *their* experiences of using the public toilets at the EUR. A survey on the other hand will not be able to articulate new insights to the research question since it has ready-made answers. The interviews were guided by a topic list, which can be found in appendix 1. At the start of each interview, I let the participant identify themself since I cannot read their gender off their body. This self-identification is steered by a question about the participant's pronouns and what those mean for their gender identity. The interviews were not restricted to the topic list, which gave room to ask questions which will deepen the understanding of the issue (Babbie, 2016). I asked the participants about their experiences and practices within the toilets at the campus of the EUR and I asked follow-up questions to get an in-depth understanding of those experiences and practices. The interviews were audio recorded and thereupon transcribed.

After transcribing, I analyzed the gathered data through inductive coding in Atlas.ti. Inductive coding is a way in which raw data is interpreted to "develop concepts, themes or a process model through interpretations based on data" (Chandra & Shang, 2019, p. 91). Although open coding is a lengthy process, it provides a theory which is rooted in the raw data (Khandkar, 2009). The research ensures its validity since it provides an answer to the intended research question. The coding process will be split up in three steps: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Bryman, 2016, p. 569). The first labeled data, the *in vivo codes*, will

correspond to what the participants said (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). After labeling the in vivo codes, themes were created in which the participants' answers are represented. Those themes may also be called *constructed codes*, which are derived from in vivo codes (Khandkar, 2009). The last step in the coding process focused on finding the core themes (Bryman, 2016).

I combined purposeful sampling with snowball sampling (Babbie, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Therefore I "purposefully selected participants" that will help to answer my research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 262). The focus was on students with non-normative gender identities – i.e., queer identities - at the EUR who use the restrooms on campus. I engaged with any form of gender nonconformity since all nonconforming genders encounter the same issue in the toilet. Moreover, I aimed for someone who is not necessarily queer in terms of gender, but for example appearance and sexuality, because they are also prone to 'being clocked.' I also aimed for someone who experienced the gender-neutral toilets at EUC. These perspectives may deepen the understanding of what is at play in the restroom and therefore give a larger picture of the problem at stake. Participants fit this research if they are gender queer, are a student and have used the restroom at the EUR. I used my personal network to approach some gender nonconforming students. After having interviewed participants from my personal network, I asked them if they know any other queer gender students whom I could contact. I care for diversity in my research; therefore, I will try to have a group of diverse respondents. This means that my snowball sampling did not focus on the first potential respondent. For example, I aimed for different ethnicities in my group of respondents. Since the sample was mainly dependent on my personal network, the results may not be completely representative of the queer student population at the EUR. On that account, I asked Erasmus School of Color to share my research on social media. In addition, I asked the participants whether they knew anyone else who is suitable for my research, preferably gender queer students of color in order to seek a representative sample.

Before I started the interviews, I gave the participants the informed consent form to let them know what the aim is of my research and what will happen with the gathered data. The informed consent form can be found in appendix 2. By signing this form, participants give me permission to gather and analyze their data in general, and their answers concerning their gender identity and conduct in the restroom. If the participants were not able to sign, I asked them verbally whether they gave me permission to gather their data for this thesis. At the beginning of each interview, I reminded the participants that they can stop at any time and are not obliged to answer my questions. This also entails that they can withdraw at any time from the research, until I have submitted the paper. I also asked permission to make an audio recording. To ensure the safety and privacy of the participants, the data will be anonymized by using pseudonyms (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The pseudonyms will be deployed while transcribing the audio recordings. Furthermore, identifying information will be edited so that the participants' identities cannot be deduced from the data. To further ensure the participants' safety, the audio recordings and transcripts will be stored in a OneDrive folder and the documents will be protected with a password. The project in Atlas.ti will also be password protected.

Results

For some using the toilet is commonplace, while for others it is a struggle. Which toilet does one use when their gender is not represented on a door? How does one deal with comments or looks? Or how does one cope with feelings of discomfort? Those questions portray the troubles at stake when queer people have to use the bathroom. Ten participants shared their experiences and their practices in the restroom (see appendix 2 for the participant information). The toilet trouble results in the participants finding ways to deal with it. To elaborate on those coping strategies, I will break down the participants' answers into three sections. In the first part, I will focus on the trouble the participants experience in the restroom. After that, I will locate the trouble in terms of others and the self. Finally, I will elaborate on the ways the participants engage with the toilet trouble.

Toilet Trouble: Having to go

Numerous participants expressed that their experiences are related to the looks of others. The majority expressed such an experience, but some also underlined that it was primarily a fear of others. For some, this fear became reality, and they described how people would look or what comments they would make: "People give weird looks but I receive those in both restrooms" (Jip, 23, they/them, nonbinary). Besides Jip, other participants also received comments in both the female and male restroom. Some only received them in one of the two, because they felt like it was 'clear' which restroom they were supposed to use. The supposed clarity about which restroom one should use, is an essential characteristic of what is called passing and policing. Appearance and practices will mediate others' expectations and beliefs. In one restroom this did not take place, which is the gender-neutral toilet at the EUC. Quinn (24, they/them, agender) describes what makes this neutral space pleasant: "When I enter the female restroom, they look because I look androgynous or masculine. In the gender-neutral restroom this is not the case." In a neutral space, or rather not gendered space, the looks and comments turn out to be absent

which tempers the policing character which is present in gendered restrooms. Nonetheless, people will still look, for example Quinn themself. They say: "You stop talking. It's a question of how the person will interact with you. If they will use the toilet, then it's okay."

Some participants describe that they experience a difference in the looks and comments they get depending on how they dress, such as Beau (24, they/them, nonbinary):

Because I have the privilege to be assessed as a woman, I can go to one of the boxes [the female restroom] and people think it is right. I can go there unseen. Some days I can't, when I look rather masculine.

From this quote, it appears that 'going into a gendered space unseen' is part of passing as a sex/gender. This means that for Beau they fit in the category 'woman' based upon appearance and the place they are in – i.e., the female restroom. There is an unspoken norm which is present in the gendered spaces since Beau would experience nasty looks or comments when they look rather masculine. This norm gets articulated through the act of policing. This gets reinforced when Beau does not meet the standards for presenting feminine, since then they would be stared at.

The feeling and the experience of being watched may cause a strong feeling of discomfort. For some participants, this feeling of being watched was more a fear of being clocked; they were afraid that others would notice that their gender expression would not be in line with their sex/gender assigned at birth, thus that they would not pass. When entering a restroom, you want to pass as someone that belongs in that space, which means that others do not notice you - in the words of Beau 'go there unseen.' This was in particular expressed by Max (23, he/him, trans man). Although some participants expressed that they do not fit in the binary gendered restrooms and had difficulties choosing which one to use, Max expressed that it was not a matter

of choice. He used the male restroom, but in his case, this entails the feeling of not belonging somewhere, in his words:

> Imagine being invited to a party with a dress code. You arrive and you're wearing a clown suit, while everyone is dressed rather fancy. Then you have the feeling like, o my god, I want to leave as soon as possible. Everyone is looking at me, although you do not see them looking. It's a feeling of fight or flight. It's not as intense as a life-or-death scenario, but it is a feeling I want to avoid. (Max)

This quote shows that the desire to pass is serious for the toilet trouble. Not everyone experiences this fear of being clocked, for example Jazmine (21, she/her, androgynous presenting lesbian woman) expresses that she is "a fem in masculine clothing" and people always noticed that she is a woman. She also says that stereotypes may be true: "Women go to the restroom together, it's a stereotype but it's true." This shows that the workings of policing and clocking are primarily present when participants do not conform to their assigned sex/gender at birth.

Max experienced the fear of being clocked while waiting for a stall to be free, since he cannot use the urinal. Sometimes, when waiting for the stall, he would get comments. Angel (24, she/they/he, nonbinary) experienced the same thing while waiting for the stall: "They're like, why are you waiting for the stall when there's a urinal? And it's kind of like they don't ask that. I feel like it's this kind of thing in the air." This again shows that it is not always articulated, but there is something inherent in the restroom which affects one's experiences and practices. Regarding urinals, a number of participants expressed that they are unable to use this kind of toilet. Considering that the urinal is designed for people who can pee while standing upright, some bodies are not able to use urinals. Max, Beau and Jip expressed that they cannot use urinals, which results in them having to wait for a stall. Having to wait goes along with a fear of others questioning your presence, like Angel mentioned. Having to wait for a stall can make

you visible and thus makes you vulnerable to being clocked. Being visible compromises one's process of passing.

When the participants described their experience and practices in the restroom, one thing sticks out: the mirror. Some participants mention that the mirror manipulates their gender dysphoria. Caro (26, they/them, nonbinary) gives an example of such an incident: "The moment I enter the female restroom, I think I'm not that [a woman]. It brings a lot of dysphoria. Especially because there are big mirrors." The mirror also plays a role in how the dysphoria is articulated. Several participants mention that dysphoria is when what you are feeling inside is not in line with how you look. Although at first glance the mirror is of instrumental use, its impact is demonstrated by Max describing the moment he chose to go to the male restroom: "The moment you look into the mirror and think, okay what I see now reflects what I feel inside." For others, the mirror does not play a role in how they express themselves. Daantje (22, nonbinary[2]) states that they think it is harder for male presenting individuals to look into the mirror because of social norms. They say: "Looking into the mirror is generally more normalized in the female restroom than in the male restroom, I think;" "It feels narcissistic, and I don't know. Maybe it is the Sartre feeling I just mentioned[3]" (Daantje). It seems like the mirror is part of certain stereotypes, who can and who cannot look at themselves in the mirror. In short, the mirror affects the participants' practices in the restroom.

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[2] Daantje mentioned that they do not care about pronouns, since they do not believe in an essentialist notion of a nonbinary identity. I use they/them to refer in a gender-neutral way.

[3] The Sartre feeling refers to the Look of the Other. The look makes you conscious of your own being. Daantje compares this to the moment someone catches you watching yourself. Sartre describes it as a moment of shame, which is also appropriate for when one is looking in the mirror (Reynolds & Renaudie, 2022).

Locating the Trouble

Now that the trouble has been uncovered, there seems to be a dichotomy. The trouble is split up in the self and in others. It is hard to completely distinguish the trouble from the self and from others. For some issues it seems that the self and others are two sides of the same coin.

Confronting Others

A visit to the public restroom most likely involves others. Various participants have had an encounter in the restroom with others. Those encounters took the form of looks and comments. Caro gives an example of such an instance: "It is always in the male restroom. It happens when I enter the room, then they would give me weird looks or say something like 'huh.' In the female restroom, you almost see them jump. It just sucks." It does not stop with looks; Beau received a comment in the male toilet: "this is the male toilet." The looks and comments show that people do not know what someone's sex/gender is. It suggests that something is not right in the situation: someone has a particular appearance, a body and is in a gendered space and somehow those three facts do not align. Others are checking who enters the space and whether they fit in there, i.e., policing. Whoever made the comment about Beau's presence in the male toilet, expressed that they thought Beau was not passing as 'man.' By making that comment, Beau is genderbashed. It was made explicit that what was assumed to be Beau's sex/gender did not correspond to their gender expression. This aspect of the trouble was also articulated by Max: "I mean, there are other students, which is normal. If you don't feel comfortable with the restroom, it depends on others being there rather than yourself. You don't make it uncomfortable for yourself."

Something which plays a significant role when talking about restrooms are stereotypes. The stereotypes create expectations of how everyone should behave while entering a gendered space such as the restroom. These beliefs relate to one's use of the mirror, but also one's

practices inside the gendered spaces. The mirror is an instrument which is associated more with women than with men, which was expressed by Daantje and Lou (20, they/them, nonbinary). Lou said: "I don't want to be that 'girl' who is standing in front of the mirror all the time." The mirror should be recognized as something that is confronting others, because it is in the aspect of others watching that the participants do not want to use the mirror. Lou put it like this: "that the other person will think, o there you have another one who is obsessed with themselves." Other people do not have to be present in the restroom for those gendered norms to work. It is something which is present in the restroom. Daantje illustrates this with their experience with the towel dispenser:

> I'm looking at myself in the mirror and then I get startled because I'm standing there for too long. I mean it's not really that long, but just slightly too long so that the dispensers make a hard noise and then I jump up.

Confronting the Self

Where clocking must involve others, it is accompanied by a feeling of discomfort, or a fear of being clocked. These unpleasant sentiments may be induced by others, the feeling or fear is located in the self. Some participants expressed this feeling of discomfort in relation to the restroom, which is not restricted to the space itself, it may already be present before one enters. This is the case for Max, in his words: "It's uncomfortable to go to the loo. In retrospect, I went to the restrooms considerably less at the university. Or in specific buildings, where there are never many people."

Besides being located in others, stereotypes also play part in the trouble located in the self. Along producing expectations and reiterated practices, stereotypes also trigger a feeling of discomfort in the participants. Beau expresses this two-sided feeling:

> For me, a house was built, the gender box woman. I came inside and thought, o no I don't feel comfortable at all. You'll live all your life in that house. If you say you want another home, others will say 'but you have this home.' I wish I had been given a house which was my dream home.

This experience of not feeling at home, or not feeling comfortable might also be a characteristic of gender dysphoria. Dysphoria is something that is not located in others, but in the self. It is about one's perception of their body and their sex/gender identity/expression. Caro phrases it like this: "It's some sort of dysphoria, so how I see myself, how I feel like and how I see myself in the mirror." This also implies that the mirror poses as an instrument which plays a role in gender dysphoria. Looking at yourself and seeing the characteristics of the sex/gender you wish to express, or which are expected of you to express, takes place in the mirror. The mirror makes one face their body - the body they do not feel comfortable with.

Managing the Trouble

Since the participants have several ways of dealing with the trouble, I will illustrate their strategies in three sections. First, I will focus on the motives to settle on a particular restroom. Thereafter, I will discuss the ways in which the participants give meaning to their self-presentation. Finally, I will elaborate on strategies of rebellion.

Eeny, meeny, miny moe, to which Restroom should I go?

When asking the participants why they would enter a specific restroom, various answers would come up. Some of the participants mentioned that they want to make the toilet visit as comfortable as possible. For some this implies that they keep using the same restroom they have always been using, like Lou: "I think most of it is just habituation. That all my life I went to the female restroom." Not all participants are willing to comply with expectations of others and their earlier experiences, others will try to find a way to do away with the feeling of

discomfort they have while entering the habitual restroom. Caro does so by entering the accessible restroom: "It's [the accessible restroom] not specified beforehand that it's meant for a specific gender, so multiple people can use it. And it's not just a urinal, that's also nice. Yeah, it's indeed not gendered, it's a neutral space." Besides Caro, Beau also describes their reason to use the accessible restroom. The feeling of discomfort for Beau is related to gender dysphoria:

> If I have a dysphoric day, that means that I find it very unpleasant that people put me in the box 'woman,' then I prefer to go to the accessible toilet, because the box can be so hurtful, that I really need to *not* go into the female toilet.

In other words, the accessible restroom is a space in which others cannot see you and thus will not see you as a specific gender. Queer people express that the accessible restroom is a place where they do not have to act in a certain way, like Syd (20, any pronouns, nonbinary[4]) mentions: "I don't have to, like, act up in a certain way."

Since the trouble is again partially located in others, they play a role in how the participants pick a restroom. The looks and the fear of confrontation affect which toilet the participants choose. Like I discussed earlier, the looks of others make the participants aware of their presentation and risk of being clocked. So, what does one do when they do not want this to happen? Angel describes her process of picking a restroom:

> Sometimes when I'm in a space where there's a clear choice between male or female or disabled, I do prefer disabled, but if there's people looking and I'm with other people who are not comfortable sharing my gender around, then I might still go for the male toilet

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[4] Syd mentioned that they prefer they/them pronouns, thus I will be using those, instead of she/her or he/him.

because if they see me go into the disabled they might be like, why did you use this toilet? And I'm kind of afraid of that confrontation of like it was just free, it was open.

In this case, the decision to enter a restroom is dependent on *who* is looking at you. If there are students with whom participants do not feel comfortable sharing their gender identity around, they may choose to enter the restroom they are expected to enter. This choice, of Angel going into the male restroom, is an act of passing as man. Going into the accessible restroom makes them visible, since it is not what is expected of her and thus makes him prone to being clocked. Not all participants' choices were regulated by feelings of discomfort, some participants expressed that they let the choice depend on which toilet is nearby or which line is shorter.

Finally, various male presenting participants expressed that while talking about their preferred restroom, they would never pick the female restroom, they would either go for the male restroom or the accessible toilet. Daantje describes that they thought they accidentally entered the female restroom, whereupon they immediately wanted to exit that space. Daantje said: "I wouldn't feel at ease there, because I think it's a space for women." Other participants shared this thought on the female toilet. The reason for this belief comes down to respecting a women's space in terms of safety. Angel also agrees and says: "I never want to invalidate that space. I know how I present, and I know that can be very confronting or, I don't want to invalidate anyone's safety or to be like, o there's a man in our toilet." When talking about the female restroom, it seems to be a matter of safety which is not the case while talking about the male restroom. Beau supports this thought by expressing how their body is safer in the female toilet, since their breasts do not get sexualized in there: "So thereby the female toilet is safer, because everyone there probably has breasts, or at least many people."

Fitting the Restroom

Earlier I mentioned that several participants pointed out that they have a feminine or masculine look. They would elaborate on those presences by describing their outfits or by describing their practices inside the restrooms. The chosen outfits may also involve body modifications, such as a gaff or a binder. It seems that clothes can take the role of what those modifications tend to do. Caro mentioned: "Just big clothes, they hide the contours of my body. Binders don't work for me, they don't make my breasts smaller. I would also really like to have a mustache, but I wouldn't dare to wear it to uni." With gender dysphoria in mind, clothes have a significant impact on how the participants experience their discomfort with their body. Bigger clothes tend to hide the body and thus appear to make the participants who experience dysphoria feel more comfortable, especially when being in a gendered space which puts expectations on their body. Caro even states: "the outfit of the day decides how relaxed I feel in the toilet." For some, clothing postulates the image of 'the nonbinary person.' According to Lou: "The idea of being nonbinary or androgynous is a female body in tomboy clothes. And still people are like 'you're a woman.'" In summary, dressing in a certain way is a way to feel comfortable in one's body, while it does not mean that others will read your appearance differently.

Another way to modify one's appearance is by physically customizing one's body. Various participants mentioned that they have done this or have the desire to adapt their body. An instrument which can help to change your appearance is a gaff. Angel describes this tool:

> Like one thing I do that affirms my gender is sometimes I wear a gaff. I don't know if you know what that is. It's basically like, kind of what a binder does, but for down there. So, it kind of smooths it out and makes it more that less of a kind of a bulge which men have. And for me that's very gender affirmative.

Other participants expressed their desire to physically change their body. Two participants brought up top surgery. Max mentioned that he got top surgery. For him, this made the discomfort, which he felt before, disappear. It enabled him to comfortably enter the male restroom, since in his words "the female features began to disappear." Top surgery in Max's case helps to pass as man, since men are not expected to have breasts. Beau however expresses their desire to get top surgery, because of their discomfort:

> If the pain is so persistent, maybe then I just have to change my body so that the wrong characteristics are no longer placed on me. I think this is so hard, because I recognize that I got [gekregen] those breasts and they're functional, there's nothing wrong with them and they don't hurt me.

Earlier, Beau expressed that they would use the accessible toilet on a dysphoric day. Although the accessible restroom may help to alleviate the dysphoria by gender stereotypes and expectations that come with it, it does not dismiss the discomfort with one's body.

Another way to fit the restroom one is entering, is by following certain practices. Some participants have mentioned that they use a certain restroom out of habit. This is already a part of a gendered practice. With this habitual practice, some participants describe that they exaggerate the things they do inside the restroom. Syd gives an example: "Okay, well, in the male bathroom I suppose I act a bit more masculine. Yeah, I try to act really masculine. I don't know. I have a puffed-up chest. I walk with a straight back." Besides having a masculine appearance, Syd thus tries to 'fit in' by acting in a way that is normalized in the male restroom. This blending in is described as something that protects you in the gendered spaces.

> So it, essentially, I don't know what it means to me in my mindset, the way I refer to it or think about it. It's kind of like a protective behavior in a way. It's a way that I use the fact of how I look to my privilege, and I kind of amp it up to the max. (Syd)

Adding to the Trouble

Another way to engage with the toilet trouble is by heightening the trouble. Instead of complying to expectations and norms, some participants expressed that they would go against it. Those acts of rebellion are located within the toilet practices but also when one is picking which toilet they will enter. Jip describes such an act. Generally, Jip is assessed as a woman, so for them the male toilet is considered to be 'the wrong space.' Jip expresses their urge to provoke others by entering the male restroom. Jip does this by switching toilets with a friend: "Every now and then, I will perform tiny acts of rebellion with a friend. Then we switch toilets, then I'll go to the male toilet, and he'll go to the female toilet." This may cause others to question Jip's presence in the male restroom. They explain the confusion in the bathroom as "having difficulties with categorizing." This creates a confusion in the observer; the acts of policing and clocking are being disrupted. Others cannot figure out what is going on with Jip: they are in the male restroom while they look rather feminine, it confuses them.

Like Jip, Lou does not follow the norms inside the gendered spaces, but instead tries to confuse others. Lou gives an example of such a confusing act:

> Then I leave the toilet seat up. When I exit the stall and I see that someone enters it then I know they'll be like 'hmmm.' I think it's nice. A small toilet method to fuck with people, so they don't know what's going on in my pants.

Leaving the toilet seat up is considered to be a masculine toilet practice. It is not assumed to happen in the female restroom. Most of the time, Lou uses the ladies and when they leave the seat up it is not expected to happen. It seems that in order to pass as a woman in the ladies, you must put the toilet seat down. If you put the seat up, you stand out - you will become visible. This act of Lou purposely goes against the ideology of passing. They highlight that with this act others do not know what's going on in their pants. In other words, toilet practices can

disclose something about your body or specifically genitalia. This information may create expectations concerning your gender (identity). Even the moment you open the stall, and someone sees how you supposedly have used the restroom may result in someone trying to figure out what your sex/gender is. In short, acts of rebellion might summon gender anomie in others.

Conclusion

To answer the question how non-normative gender identities engage with the toilet trouble, it was fundamental to illustrate the toilet trouble. This toilet trouble was characterized by the practices of passing, others, the body and its abilities, the inherent norms and the mirror – predominantly produced by the binary gendered toilets. Toilet trouble means that as someone with a non-normative gender identity, one might experience a desire to pass, might fear looks or comments, might feel uncomfortable because you cannot use a urinal or might feel uncomfortable because the body becomes visible in the mirror. This paper acknowledges the fact that the violence inflicted on queer people in the restroom is not restricted to the physical form, but it is also verbal or visual (Bender-Baird, 2016; Patel, 2017), this thesis adds an understanding of gendered practices. From this toilet trouble two things were remarkable. In the first place, some participants talked about 'going in the toilet unseen.' This expounds the idea of passing. Passing was considered to be the practice that makes someone look naturally like a certain sex/gender (Garfinkel, 2013). Passing was split up in recognition, categorization and evaluation (Moriel, 2005). This paper contributes to those notions of passing by marking that it is about being invisible – which adds the notion of looking *naturally* like a sex/gender (Garfinkel, 2013). Going into the toilet *unseen* means that others do not pay attention to you because they think you belong there, there is nothing 'off.' Secondly, some practices in the restroom are related to gender norms. For example, waiting for a stall might make you visible as male presenting student, since 'men' are expected to use a urinal. People who focus on passing as a specific gender do not want to be visible.

This location of the trouble can be split up in two domains: others and the self. Of course, the acts of policing and genderbashing involve others, though it is important to differentiate between the trouble in others and the trouble in the self. The trouble in others is illustrated by the numerous looks and comments the participants received in the restroom. Those acts

represent policing and sometimes even genderbashing (Namaste, 2013). Looks and comments point out that one is not unseen, they are in fact visible. A visit which for most of the participants is something they do without thinking twice, is for non-normative students otherwise. This potential disruption of one's toilet visit shows the violent workings of gender and thereby supports Patel's (2017) notion of 'violent cistems.' This potential disruption resonates in the toilet practices. Toilet practices get redefined, for example participants would not use the mirror too much, because it is associated with being feminine. The toilet trouble in others is thus characterized by stereotypes and policing and/or genderbashing. When uncovering the toilet trouble in the self, it becomes clear that it is about a feeling of discomfort. This feeling can be divided into discomfort with stereotypes and gender dysphoria. Although the policing of gender stereotypes is located in others, the feeling of discomfort with stereotypes is located in the self. Participants express that they do not feel at ease with the expectations that come with the gender stereotypes. Gender dysphoria is not related to others or to stereotypes, but it was described as a feeling of discomfort with one's own body. For some participants, a visit to the restroom contributes to a feeling of discomfort.

The participants point out diverse ways to engage with the toilet trouble. The first step to engage with the toilet is to pick one of the restrooms. Some participants go to the one they have always been using, while others look for an alternative, like the accessible toilet. The accessible toilet is regarded as a neutral space, so for some participants it helped to reduce the pain when they experience discomfort with either their body or stereotypes they are subject to. Other participants mentioned safety in the female restroom as a motive to enter the ladies or to stay out of it as male presenting student. Once the toilet choice was out, the participants describe their practices in the restroom. The participants state that outfits have an impact on their mood in the toilet. Besides, clothing may hide one's body which may help with feelings of discomfort concerning their body. The way the participants dress does not necessarily change the

expectations others have about them. Another way to change one's appearance is by reshaping the body. Some participants mentioned tools to modify their body, such as a gaff. Other participants mentioned that they got top surgery or would like to get top surgery. Those practices make the participants feel more comfortable with their body and therefore makes the toilet visit more pleasant. Besides clothes, some participants mentioned that they alter the way they act inside of the restroom. This adaptation involves exaggerated gendered practices in order to be invisible in the restroom.

Last but not least, some participants speak of acts of rebellion. They articulate their disagreement with the binary gender system. This system does not provide a toilet for people who are neither a woman nor a man in public spaces. The system comes with expectations and to go against it means one goes against expectations, one intentionally does not pass, which leaves other toilet users confused. This finding contributes to the notion of gender anomie, marked by Nordmarken (2019). With those rebellious acts, it becomes clear what is at play in the restroom. If you look feminine, you must be a woman with a female body and you should not be in the gents. If you look feminine, you therefore should pee with the toilet seat down. If something is off, others do not know what is going on and you become visible. Being visible may cause confusion in others. While visibility is something to be avoided in passing, it seems to be at the root of rebellion - being visible and making visible. Now the question is, when are those students visible enough in order for the demand for gender-neutral toilets to be met?

Discussion

After having formulated an answer to the question of how gender queer people engage with toilet trouble, it has taught us several things. The study tells us something about *what* toilet trouble is. The trouble revolves around others and the self. Others manipulate what is going on in the toilet by making visitors visible or letting them go unseen. This tells us something about gender and what happens when one passes. Passing is now an issue of visibility, or rather fitting in and not standing out. Some people intend to be visible, because they want to refute the workings of the binary gender system and its roots in the toilet facilities. The trouble in the self involves feelings of discomfort or gender dysphoria. The discomfort may be a result of stereotypes; toilet visitors may feel uncomfortable with the expectations that are put on them upon entering a gendered space. This tells us that the policing of gender is not limited to people with bodies, but it is also present in spaces. This discomfort can cause a desire to modify the body, whether it be with tools or physical changes. This data identifies embodied practices of gender. Those two sites of the toilet trouble, others and the self, have a shared object: the mirror. The mirror seems to be a phenomenon where the different aspects of trouble meet. Seeing yourself in the mirror, others watching you via the mirror and you watching others via the mirror. Now the question arises: is it the space that polices or the mirror because of its ability to make you visible? Brunow (2018) deepens this characteristic of the toilet trouble, since Brunow writes on queer visibility and its effects, such as vulnerability and policing.

This study shows that people with non-normative gender identities have many ways of engaging with the toilet trouble. The trouble is already present when one thinks about the loo. The study identifies several motives, like habituation, neutrality of the accessible restroom, to avoid confrontation with others or the self, to reduce the discomfort derived from gender dysphoria or to ensure safety. This last incentive resembles the argument given by trans exclusionary radical 'feminists', like Jeffreys (2014) and gender critical 'feminists,' like

Lawford-Smith (2021). Various male presenting participants expressed that they would not enter the female restroom, because it is a space designated for women. This thinking might be interesting to further elaborate, specifically the notion of safety in gendered spaces with regard to queer people. Two other participants drew attention to topics I did not touch upon. First of all, one participant mentioned that the EUR is not only the institution they study at, but also the institution they work for. They explained that the people that are around them matter for their gender expression. For this reason, it might be interesting to look into how people navigate toilets at the workplace. Secondly, one participant introduced two other dimensions of the toilet trouble, her example did not apply to my case but is of utters importance to take notice of her experience. Jazmine expressed that outside of the EUR she would get looks and shared her thoughts in that moment: "do you look at me because I'm black or do you look at me because I'm gay?" It demonstrates the intersectionality of the toilet trouble and thereby makes it crucial to study those complex issues. Future research on the toilet trouble should focus on the intersections of sexuality, sex/gender and race.

To revise my research, I want to elaborate my role as a researcher and the sample of this study. Most of the sample consists of personal contacts, the sample is not representative for the queer community at the EUR. This method of sampling however is appropriate since the targeted group may not be open to outsiders. I was able to get one respondent through snowball sampling. Since I actively sought to interview people of color, this enabled the study to be more representative, although the research would be more valuable if the sample was less based upon my own network. It is also important to be critical about my role as a researcher. I consider myself part of the queer community at the EUR, which makes that the study concerns me. Although my sentiments and involvement might influence the research, it helped me to reach the targeted group and understand them.

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Appendix 1: topic list

Introduction	Introduce myself + the research; name, age, study, background, _pronouns_!
	Agreements on usage of tape recorder
	Agreements on anonymity
Opening questions	Let the participant introduce themself; age, name, study, gender and _pronouns._
	Do you have any more questions regarding the study? _No_: start the recording.
Transition questions	When using 'x' pronouns, which restroom do you use?
	Have you always used the same toilet during your studies at EUR?
	Why (not)?
	If not,
	How did you experience the different restrooms?
	Do you feel more comfortable using bathroom 'x' over 'y'?
	Why did you decide to use a different restroom?
Key questions	How do you go to the loo?
	Can you describe your general experience of the toilets at campus?
	What has the biggest impact on your toilet experience/visit?
	How do you express your gender identity in the restrooms compared to outside of them? Is there a difference?
	Follow-up: how does 'x' make you feel? How does 'x' impact your daily life/gender identity? Can you live with 'x' or does it bother you, and why?

	How could 'x' be solved? What would help with 'x'?
Concluding questions	Overview, summary and final wrap-up. Summarize main points. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences of the toilet that we have not talked about?
Closure	Repeat agreements: audio recording, quotes, gender identity. When the recording is transcribed it will be anonymized. I will use (anonymized) quotes to formulate an answer to my RQ. The recording will be deleted when I pass my thesis.

Appendix 2: participant information

Table 1 Participant information

Participant	Age	Pronouns	Gender	EUC/EUR
Daantje	22	N/A	Nonbinary	EUR
Jip	23	They/them	Nonbinary	EUR
Max	23	He/him	Trans man	EUR
Caro	26	They/them	Nonbinary	EUR
Beau	24	They/them	Nonbinary	EUR
Angel	24	She/they/he	Nonbinary	EUR
Lou	20	They/them	Nonbinary	EUR
Syd	20	Any	Nonbinary	EUR
Jazmine	21	She/her	Woman	EUR
Quinn	24	They/them	Agender	EUC

Information and consent form

Information form

Introduction

Under the supervision of dr. I. van Oorschot, I am researching restroom experiences of gender nonconforming students at Erasmus University Rotterdam. This research is carried out to complete the MSc Sociology (Engaging Public Issues) degree at Erasmus University Rotterdam. With the help of your participation, this research can be realized. I am curious about your experiences on this topic.

For any queries, please use the following contact details:
- Mail: 476150mh@student.eur.nl
- Phone: +31637544752

Data collection

To collect the data, several interviews will be conducted, which will take about an hour. These will be recorded and then transcribed. The recordings and transcripts will not be shared. The interview will focus on your experience with toilets at the campus of Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Potential inconveniences and risks

During the interview, personal questions will be asked about potentially upsetting events, depending on your experiences. These may trigger unpleasant memories and emotions. You are not obliged to answer all questions. Your participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time.

Confidentiality and data protection

The collected data will be used for aggregate data analysis and confidential information or personal data will not be used in the outcomes of the study. The data will be stored in a secure location for two years.

Sharing data

The data will only be shared with my thesis supervisor dr. I. van Oorschot and if necessary with Erasmus University Rotterdam, for the reason of researching and writing my master's thesis, which is mandatory for completing a degree at the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Erasmus University.

Voluntary participation and individual rights

Your participation is voluntary and it is possible to stop at any time. During your participation in the study, you have the right to ask for more information about the data collection and analysis. In addition, you have the right to withdraw your consent and request the deletion of your data before the dataset is anonymized or the manuscript is submitted for publication. You can accomplish this by contacting me, Mandy Hendriks.

Do you have a complaint or concerns about your privacy? Please email the Data Protection Officer (fg@eur.nl) or visit www.autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl. (T: 088 - 1805250).

Consent form

By signing this consent form, I confirm that:

- I have been informed about the purpose of the study, data collection, and storage of data as described in the information form;
- I read the information sheet, or it was read to me;
- I have had opportunities to ask questions about the study; the questions have been adequately answered;
- I voluntarily consent to participate in this study;
- I understand that the information will be kept confidential;
- I understand that I can terminate participation at any time and can refuse to answer questions without any consequences;
- I understand that I can withdraw my consent before the dataset is submitted for approval.

	Yes	No
I give permission to record audio of the interview		
I give permission to use quotes from my interview		
I consent to the researcher's collection, use, and retention of the following data: gender identity.		

Name of study participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 4: checklist ethics and privacy

CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

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

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

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

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Undoing gender in the restroom: Bathroom experiences of non-normative gender identities at the EUR

Name, email of student: Mandy Hendriks, 476150mh@student.eur.nl

Name, email of supervisor: Irene van Oorschot, vanoorschot@essb.eur.nl

Start date and duration: January 9 2023, 6 months.

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

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1.   Does your research involve human participants.   YES

        If 'NO': skip to part V.

        If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research?   NO
        Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

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

        If 'YES': skip to part IV.

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

        If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1.   Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them?   NO

2.   Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study?   NO

3.   Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants?   NO

4.   Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants?   NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).

5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants?   `   YES

6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)?   YES

7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent?   NO

8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study?   NO

9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured?   NO

10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study?   NO

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

I will be asking participants information about their gender identity and their experiences of the restroom. The experiences of the restroom may be negative and therefore cause negative emotions. This is unavoidable because in the study, the experience of the restroom is centred. Thus negative experiences and emotions are part of the aim of this study, if they occurred.

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

Before the interviews, I will inform the participants about the topic of the study. I will inform them about the anonymity in their results and data. I will be using participant numbers/pseudonyms to make it anonymous. Participants will be informed that they can withdraw at any time. After the interviews, participants will receive information about how to receive psychological help (and possibly how to report incidents).

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

Participants may experience negative emotions due to negative experiences concerning the visit of the restroom.

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

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

I will collect and obtain data at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR).
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

The sample is expected to be in between 10 and 15 participants.
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

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

My population is gender nonconforming students of the EUR. This will be around 900 students. I calculated this by comparing the amount of students studying at the EUR, to the average of students being gender nonconforming (Ficheroux, 2021; Beemyn, 2022).
Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

References:

Beemyn, G. (2022, August 19). College students are increasingly identifying beyond "she" and "he." The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/college-students-are-increasingly-identifying-beyond-she-and-he-187338.

Ficheroux, T. (2021, February 10). Number of EUR students exceeds 30,000 for the first time ever. Erasmus Magazine. https://www.erasmusmagazine.nl/en/2021/02/10/number-of-eur-students-exceeds-30000-for-the-first-time-ever/.

Part V: Data storage and backup

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

I will store my data in a OneDrive folder and protect the documents with a password.

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

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

I, Mandy Hendriks, am responsible for these tasks.

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

Once every two weeks, I will back-up my research data.

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

I will either use pseudonyms. Only the pseudonyms will be used to refer to the participants.

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

PART VI: SIGNATURE

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

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

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

Name student: Mandy Hendriks   Name (EUR) supervisor:

Date: 21-03-2023   Date: