

I HAVE TO PEE!

When the need arises, the bladder pinches or the stomach grumbles, the search for a toilet often becomes an urban adventure. But the seemingly banal act of going to the toilet conceals complex social and urban problems that characterise our society.

You're in the city centre and need to go to the toilet. What do you do?

- I go to the nearest public toilet in the city centre.
- I hold back the urge and try to get home faster.
- I sit down in a café and consume something so that I can go to the toilet there.
- I find a quiet corner and urinate in public.



**TOILETS ARE
FOR THERE FOR
EVERYONE!**

No matter which answer you choose: each of these actions sheds light on social and urban problems in dealing with toilets. Historically grown and still present today, toilets are not only places of relief, but also a reflection of social norms and inequalities.

- > Clara Greed, *Creating a Nonsexist Restroom* (2010).
- > Clara Greed, *Join the queue: Including women's toilet needs in public space* (2019).
- > Kathryn H. Anthony/Meghan Dufresne, *Potty Privileging in Perspective. Gender and Family Issues in Toilet Design* (2009).
- > Leslie Kern, *Feminist City* (2022).
- > Olga Gershenson/Barbara Penner, *The Private Life of Public Conveniences* (2009).
- > Rebekka Endler, *Das Patriarchat der Dinge: Warum die Welt Frauen nicht passt* (2021).

STEREOTYPES AND AVAILABILITY

In contrast to your toilet at home, public toilets are usually strictly divided into male and female according to the binary gender system, which makes it taboo to enter a toilet that does not correspond to the ascribed gender. This categorisation reflects gender stereotypes and limits the availability of toilets for certain groups - especially those with a female gender. While there is space for two sitting toilets and six urinals in a 20 m² men's toilet, there are often only four sitting toilets in women's toilets. In addition, the use of sitting toilets is often subject to a charge, in contrast to the free urinals. Female readers experience a stronger taboo and privatisation of their body (needs), which is known as „potty privileging“ and restricts the mobility of female readers and queer people..

WAITING TIME AND HEALTH RISKS

In addition to the unequal availability, female readers require more time on average due to cramped cubicles and the use of menstrual products. These differences not only contribute to longer waiting times, but also harbour health risks. The fear of infection means that many women urinate in an unhealthy squatting position, which can lead to bladder infections, for example.

PATRIARCHAL IMPRINTS

The different treatment of men and women when urinating in public (acceptance for male-read people and taboo for female-read people) reinforces gender-specific differences in toilet use and influences how we think about physicality and privacy.

SAFETY

Public toilets are often places of insecurity, especially for marginalised people. Remote locations, poor lighting and angled spaces can increase the risk of harassment and assault. The search for a safe place to urinate also makes marginalised groups particularly vulnerable to violence.



**WHICH
EMOTIONS
DO YOU FEEL
HERE?**