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ABSTRACT

In this paper we argue that school toilets function as one civilising site [Elias, 1978. *The Civilising Process*. Oxford: Blackwell] in which children learn that disabled and queer bodies are out of place. This paper is the first to offer queer and crip perspectives on school toilets. The small body of existing school toilet literature generally works from a normative position which implicitly perpetuates dominant and oppressive ideals. We draw on data from Around the Toilet, a collaborative research project with queer, trans and disabled people (aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com) to critically interrogate this work. In doing this we consider 'toilet training' as a form of 'civilisation', that teaches lessons around identity, embodiment and ab/normal ways of being in the world. Furthermore, we show that 'toilet training' continues into adulthood, albeit in ways that are less easily identifiable than in the early years. We therefore call for a more critical, inclusive, and transformative approach to school toilet research.

Introduction

Excretion and urination are things that we all experience; we all shit and piss. Yet, our relations to and experiences of these fundamental processes differ dependent upon social positioning, time, space and socio-cultural-political context. In a recent project, Around the Toilet[1] (AtT) (aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com), academic researchers, along with a group of other researchers including representatives from queer, trans and disabled people's organisations, used arts practices to explore what it meant to have access to a safe toilet space. We were not specifically considering school toilets in this project. Rather, we were thinking about the relationships between toilets, gender and dis/ ability. Yet, despite it not being an intended object of focus, one of the first conversations we had was around school toilets. Some participants who had used the toilet assigned to 'girls' at school talked about 'buddying up' to go to the toilet – either because of enforced school rules, or for fear of bullying. Some of these participants also spoke of seeking solitude, eating lunch and hiding in the school toilets. One participant talked about a childhood competition between those using the urinals to see who could pee over a high-up

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bar. This was perceived as fun at first, but as they grew older they became uncomfortable about what could be perceived as displays of masculinity in the bathroom.

There are some useful studies of the school toilet, such as Ingrey (2012) and Millei et al.'s work based on a 2009 research project in Australia (see Cliff and Millei 2011; Millei and Gallagher 2012; Millei and Cliff 2013; Millei and Imre 2015). However, despite this important work that aims to reposition toilets as a social and cultural space that shapes the quality of children's experiences of schooling, we argue that school toilet literature often fails to acknowledge socio-cultural histories of toilets (school or otherwise), and, relating to this, the intertwined relationships between toilets, embodiment and identity (gender, disability, sexuality, race, faith and so on). For example, although there is an increasing body of academic literature (Browne 2004; Cavanagh 2010; Faktor 2011; Blumenthal 2014) and media attention (Fae 2015; Workman 2015) on trans people's access to bathroom spaces, scholarly work on school toilets rarely thinks outside the gender binary of 'boys' and 'girls'. Ingrey (2012) is a notable exception, and Rasmussen (2009) points to the toilet as a productive place to theorise gender and education, although does not offer empirical work on this subject. We further Rasmussen's thesis by including empirical work with trans, queer and disabled adults to think about school toilets. More generally within school toilet literature, however, where issues of embodiment and identity are considered, these accounts are narrow, and fail to include the diverse range of identities and forms of embodiment that make up lived experience. This is apparent in research and practice. For example, Millei and Cliff (2013) consider the ways in which 'problem bodies' are manifest through adult discourses, which legitimise questionable interventions, including adult surveillance, and highlight that practitioners often fail to connect with the experiences of children themselves as toilet users. Likewise, school toilet literature almost *always* fails to question developmental discourse which expects and prioritises an independent toilet user by a certain age, thus excluding some disabled children and others who may require assistance to use the toilet throughout life (Slater, Jones and Procter, under review). In other words, the majority of school toilet literature perpetuates the dominant structures of 'normalcy' that teach us about the 'right', 'ideal' and 'normal' way of being child/adult/human (Davis 2010; Slater 2015).

We draw on queer and crip theory to trouble these structures and 'resist the contemporary spectacle of able-bodied heteronormativity' (McRuer 2006, 3). Drawing on Kafer (2013, 16), we see the 'critical examinations of compulsory able-bodiedness and compulsory able-mindedness' as 'queer and crip projects'. We recognise that the words we choose to use are important and political – they often reflect and feed into wider issues of power, structural inequalities and oppression (Davis 2011; Mallett and Slater 2014). Following trans, queer and disability activists, both the AtT project and this article work from a politics of self-definition, in terms of gender, disability and other forms of social positioning (Cavanagh 2010). We therefore refer to AtT participants using their own self-descriptions and pronouns, which we explain further in the methodology. All pronouns used are those used by the participants, some participants use multiple pronouns (e.g. 'she' and 'they'), and prefer their full range of pronouns to be used alongside each other within a sentence. 'They' is used throughout the paper as a gender neutral singular pronoun as well as a plural pronoun. It is also important to note that children using the school toilets commonly referred to as 'girls' or 'boys' toilets will not necessarily identify as 'men' or 'women' at the

time or later in life. Indeed, many trans participants spoke of using a school toilet which did not match their present day gender identity. We therefore refer to the expectations often placed upon particular types of bodies (e.g. those with penises) rather than the gender classifications.

This paper makes an intervention in school toilet studies by using data from the *AtT* project alongside socio-cultural accounts of the toilet, most of which do not focus on schools, to offer new insights into ways forward for: (a) school toilet research; and (b) those interested in nuanced understandings of gender, disability, spatiality and embodiment in schools. Most *AtT* data is not explicitly about school toilets. However, we argue that research about school toilets needs to take more account of who the design and use of toilets in/excludes, whose identities it confirms or denies, and the implicit lessons that children learn through the toilet. To do this we consider 'toilet training' as a form of 'civilisation' (Elias 1978), arguing that toilet training also teaches other lessons around identity and embodiment. Furthermore, 'toilet training' continues into adulthood, albeit in ways that are less easily identifiable than in the early years. School toilets, like schools themselves, are troubled by 'unruly bodies' (Erevelles 2000). We suggest that work on school toilets needs to engage more widely with academic and activist toilet work and highlight areas for future study in order to bring school toilet research up-to-date with research around toilets more broadly. We are especially interested in asking questions about how discourses of gender and disability are materialised within the school toilet and how they impact on a child's willingness to use a toilet within a school setting.

Identity, embodiment and civilising spaces

In this article we deliberately draw on Elias' (1978) notion of the civilising process. While 'civilisation' can be a word that makes us feel uncomfortable, especially in thinking about 'child' to 'adult' 'development', we believe that this discomfort is useful. Thinking through 'civilisation' helps us to see the 'Western' specificity of dominant understandings of 'child' and 'adult' as processes of 'civilisation', which can never be separated from a colonial discourse of 'civilising the uncivilised' (Burman 2012). One way in which the colonial 'civilising process' worked was to position people of colour as childlike, a positioning that has and continues to be afflicted upon people of colour, as well as disabled people and women. The discomfort with the word 'civilisation', then, is a useful reminder that understandings of 'adulthood' are tied up in White, Western, masculine, cisgender,[2] able and heteronormative ideals (Slater 2015).

Millei and Imre (2015) write that civilisation relies on the visibility of children's bodies. Paechter (2004) furthers this in a paper that theorises mind/body dualisms and the marginalisation of sex education. Paechter argues that as the mind is prioritised within Western schooling, bodies are policed, rendering them docile 'to the extent that they disappear' (314). Cranz (2000) agrees and argues that the material environment is central to this, going on to describe the school chair as 'a sedative to create a docile population' (60). The main reason that Paechter gives for the prioritisation of the mind within school is the unacknowledged worry that children's (and young people's) bodies are sexual. For Paechter (2004, 317), sex education therefore remains marginalised as it 'threatens the body politic of the school, its good order, its firm separation of mental and physical'.

Furthermore, there is a heterosexual assumption within any (un)acknowledgement of children's sexuality. Using the example of changing rooms, Paechter writes, 'once we start to segregate them to change for PE, they learn that male and female bodies, when unclothed, are to be kept separate' (315). Binary gendered toilets teach a similar lesson: that there are two genders that are polar opposites to one another and must be kept separate when unclothed.

The embodiment of gender through the spatial layout and management of schooling is of central concern to this article. Crossley (2007, 82) states that embodiment 'locates us in the world' and suggests that our embodiment puts us in a 'spatio-temporal relation with other beings and giving us a standpoint, literally, from which to perceive them' (82). It can be argued that space and place shape embodied experience. Trigg (2012), for example, states that it is through the body that we come to make meaning of the world and our place within it – 'being-in-the-world means being *placed*' (Trigg 2012, 4, original emphasis). This work connects with the recent 'spatial turn' (Warf and Arias 2009) within the social sciences. Barad (2003) argues that the material has been neglected within the social sciences, where attention has historically being placed upon the social role of language. In response there is an increasing body of work that considers the 'intra-action' (Barad 2003) between the social and the material, and in doing so re-positions agency as in-between the social and material (traditionally the study of agency has focused on social interaction).

This repositioning of agency offers a lens through which we are conceptualising the civilising process. We argue that this process occurs at the interface between people and the spaces they inhabit. This attention alone reflects our endeavour to extend gender studies beyond a sole emphasis on social actors. Attending to the 'more-than-social' (Kraft 2013) means addressing how 'bodies 'know' the moves and act their place in the choreography of the event but these are not the self-conscious or self-reflective bodies of actors' (Youdell and Armstrong 2011, 146). We also make new connections between new materialism and gender studies, in that we consider how crip and queer theories can allow us to critically engage with the ways in which intra-actions between children, adults and school toilets produce 'problem bodies' through hidden lesson in identity. Drawing on Ahmed's (2004, 117) position that emotions 'play a crucial role in the "surfacing" of individual and collective bodies through the way in which emotions circulate between bodies and signs', we are also interested in the ways in which these intra-actions are imbued with emotion – this is particularly pertinent in our exploration of how some bodies come to be perceived as threatening within school contexts.

Bullying is frequently discussed within school toilet literature. For example, Lundblad, Hellstom and colleagues' widely cited work across Swedish and English schools suggests that students could fear being bullied for making toilet sounds/smells (Vernon, Lundblad, and Hellstrom 2003; Lundblad and Hellström 2005; Lundblad, Berg, and Hellström 2007). Following Formby (2015) and Payne and Smith's (2012) critical interrogations of bullying, we want to argue here that the problem should not be reduced to individual and individualised cases of bullying, but should be thought of more widely in regards to 'civilising' processes of fear, shame and embarrassment that children (to different extents) learn to feel about their bodies (Blumenthal 2014) in space and place. Rather than frame the fear of being heard or smelt in the school toilet as a fear of bullying, our argument is that it would be more productive to think about embodied cultural anxieties of the

toilet and the ways in which lessons in shame and privacy (Blumenthal 2014) vary dependent upon socio-spatial positioning.

Widening the approach of research on school toilets, to move from incidents of bullying to other issues of cultural anxiety and socio-spatial positioning, could have implications in practice. Burton (2013) argues that whole school approaches, which include children and are embedded in the curriculum, should be taken to think about the problems of toilets in schools. Furthering Burton's point, and as we will go on to justify, explicit talk about the socio-spatial politics of toilets needs to be undertaken alongside talking to children meaningfully, continuously, and mundanely about diverse bodies. The ways in which we learn lessons of civilisation about our bodies through the toilet always vary dependent upon social positioning. In the analysis that follows we examine the agentic role of space in lessons of embodiment through the school toilet. It is our intention to reveal how intra-actions between children, adults and school toilet spaces reproduce particular civilising processes, which are oppressive to some. Our analysis reveals how both the social and material are central to re-considering how school toilets can support childhood diversity.

Methodology

AtT took place in north England between April and December 2015, and was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.[3] It was a collaborative project between academic and non-academic partners. A political, ethical and methodological decision was made in the writing of the bid to include paid co-investigators representing three non-academic organisations: Action for Trans* Health (a trans people's campaigning organisation), Queer of the Unknown Arts Collective and Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People. Non-academic co-investigators had responsibilities and worked to different degrees to help design the project (in terms of the overall process as well as individual workshops), recruit participants (often, but not always, from their respective organisations), act as participants themselves, and analyse data. Representatives from the organisations also spoke at events and ran workshops. Other partner organisations joined at a later stage, including The Loiterers Resistance Movement (a collective of artists and activists interested in psychogeography, public space and the hidden stories of the city), disability artist, Gemma Nash, and an arts organisation for people with labels of learning difficulties. There were six main research objectives, three of which particularly apply to this paper: (1) to explore how toilets function as socio-cultural spaces in terms of gender, embodiment, exclusion and belonging; (2) to consider how provision of safe, accessible toilets enables or restricts wider access to space (and community); and (3) broadening and deepening understandings of 'access' and 'accessibility' to include gendered, queer and dis/ability perspectives on what an accessible toilet looks like.

Between April and September the project held six monthly day and half-day long arts-based workshops. Workshops included storytelling, a performance workshop, and an artist-facilitated making/creating workshop. In total 16 people took part in the workshops (some joining for multiple workshops). All participants identified as queer, trans and/or disabled. Most were living in the north of England and were mainly involved in one of the three community partner organisations. There was also a wider call out for queer, trans and/or disabled participants through the project blog (http://aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com), academic researcher networks, and one participant got involved after seeing

coverage of the project in Pink News (Payton 2015). Postcards were made from graphic recordings of the Storytelling Workshop and distributed to encourage further participation.

The project was given institutional ethical approval by Sheffield Hallam University. All participants gave informed consent around issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Consent, however, was seen as an ongoing process, and a 'safer spaces' policy, co-written between academic and community researchers, was re-visited at the beginning of workshops (this can be viewed on on the project blog). Following Cavanagh (2010) and the politics of self-definition, consent forms included a section where participants were asked to self-define in any way they wanted (for example, in terms of gender, disability, race, ethnicity, occupation and so on). These full self-definitions are used with participants consent.

Data from the workshops was recorded in the way considered most suitable for the particular format. For example, audio and graphic recordings were made of the storytelling workshop to document the role and use of narrative and a combination of video and field notes were used to record the performance workshop in order to capture the important spatial and embodied dimensions of the workshop. Photos and video-interviews conducted by a community co-I were used to record the making/creating workshop. All data were transcribed, anonymised and shared with community partners. Thematic data analysis took the form of a workshop to which representatives from university and partner organisations were invited, although only members of the academic team were able to attend. As workshops, rather than individual interviews, were used for data collection, speakers were not always identifiable on audio recordings. Therefore, demographic information has only been given where relevant and possible (and using identifying words chosen by the participant).

Although all participants in AtT were adults, the data tells an important story about the lessons learnt in and through the (school) toilet, and illustrate that 'toilet training' does not end in childhood (Slater, Jones and Procter, under review). This is not to say, however, that the inclusion of children's and practitioner voices would not be beneficial to a study of school toilets. Indeed, the paper highlights the need for more transformative and critical research on school toilets. The AtT project team have begun to conduct pilot sister projects through workshops in schools, which can be read about on the project blog (https:// aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com/storying-school-toilets/). Data from these workshops has not been included as this project is in its early stages. Through the following sections of the paper, therefore, we use AtT data to interrogate 'civilisation' and identity in the toilet, and call for further school toilet research.

Civilisation and lessons in identity from the toilet

We now turn to consider the lessons that children learn through the toilet; a critique which rarely plays out in school toilet literature. To do this, we begin with Blumenthal's (2014) history of the Western toilet. Blumenthal's analysis explores how Western societies since the sixteenth and seventeenth century have come to understand urination and defecation as private affairs. She argues that this distinction was shored-up through socialisation which taught individuals to feel bodily shame and revulsion. She shows how these toileting lessons have evolved from very explicit, public messages, delivered to adults and

children through instruction manuals, schoolbooks, and court regulations from the 1500s, to the much more implicit and private messages that we are accustomed to today. These include phrases such as, 'it is impolite to greet someone who is urinating or defecating' (from *Erasmu's De civilitate morum puerilium* in 1530, translated to English under the title, *A Little Book of Good Manners for Children* in 1532 and cited in Blumenthal 2014, 76) and:

> [It] does not befit a modest, honourable man to prepare to relieve nature in the presence of other people, nor to do up his clothes afterwards in their presence. Similarly, he will not wash his hands on returning to decent society from private places, as the reason for his washing will arouse disagreeable thoughts in people. (from Galateo: or:, A Treatise on Politeness and delicacy of Manners, Dellca Cases, 1558; cited in Blumenthal 2014, 78)

Through this historical analysis, Blumenthal highlights that although learning toilet etiquette is something we associate with children, adults through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were learning new ways to understand, and indeed, be repulsed by, their and others' bodies. Thus, she explains:

> Socialisation into the 'proper' use of these spaces [toilets] and our bodies within them has required communities to become quiet masters of their bodies, learning strict control and management in accordance with social propriety or otherwise risk personal degradation and social embarrassment. This is exemplified in the toilet training process Western parents put their children through today with children having in the space of just a few years to attain the advanced level of shame and revulsion that has developed over many centuries. (Blumenthal 2014, 74)

Blumenthal points out that there is an expectation that adults do not need to consciously learn or have instructions around private/public distinctions, as learning shame of one's body is meant to be done (mainly privately at home) in early childhood. For Blumenthal, learning the importance of privacy (through learning shame and embarrassment of one's body) is part of a process of learning to embody the Western notion of independent adulthood. One argument that we are making as the paper continues, is that this learning of toilet etiquette indeed still happens (albeit in less visible ways) through adulthood today.

Gender is one axis along which 'civilising' lessons of shame and privacy are learnt. An obvious gendered example of the different degrees to which we learn shame and privacy is the common placement of a shared urinal in the 'men's' toilet, whilst the 'women's' is made up of single stall cubicles,[4] or that it is more socially acceptable for men to urinate in public than it is for women. Yet, how the school toilet shapes children's understandings of gender and sexuality is rarely explored within school toilet literature. Trans participants in AtT queered developmental norms about toilet training in early childhood and made the differently gendered etiquette in the 'women's' and 'men's' toilets particularly explicit when they talked about having to re-learn the toilet rules if they transitioned and/or changed which toilet they used part-way through their lives. Rohan, a 22-year-old mixed-race autistic queer transmasculine student and, Jess, a 26-year-old, white, disabled, queer, genderqueer, trans woman Ph.D. student had the following conversation:

> Rohan: […] a weird thing about toilets is like being in the same like 'men's' [Rohan made scare quotes with their hands] public toilet as your Dad for the first time since

transitioning. That's a weird thing! You're both there and you're both just looking at each other [rubs hands to imitate washing them], like, this is totally normal'

Jess: 'I find it really awkward when people talk to me in the toilet. So, I tend to go with whatever toilet I am presenting like … obviously this doesn't really work … but basically if I'm wearing trousers I go to the boys, if I'm not wearing trousers then I'll go to the girls. And, so, I went into the toilets yesterday at work and I'd just had this like really long conversation with another person who works in my office, and then I went to the toilet, and then he came in after me, just to like wash his hands or something, but like whilst I was at the urinal he just had like this entire conversation continuation, and I just like can't cope! … this is a private place for me to pee! Why are we talking about geography?!'

Rohan: 'That's another thing, I just don't know what the rules are!'

Jess also talked about being as noisy as possible when using the 'men's' toilets, compared to the required silence of the 'women's':

> I think … the differences of genders within the different toilets, 'cause I use both of them, I found with the male toilets that people try to pee as loud as they can. It's like, 'I am peeing. I am so manly!' … So I just sort of think, 'Well, now I have to pee as loud as I can so … [It's] competitive. It's like a race. Who can pee the fastest.

The vignettes above demonstrate that lessons of civilisation are always gendered. Whereas discourses of femininity expect neatness, prettiness and silence, discourses of masculinity teach boys to be messy, noisy and take up space (Davies 2003). Although this may not be a new or original point to make, it is one that emerges in significant ways from the dialogue above in the context of trans experience, and is important to explore in relation to children's use of school toilets *and* the gendered messages that children receive in the classroom (Rasmussen 2009; Atkinson 2015).

Other stories shared by participants made clear the gendering that is learnt through toilet training and through institutions such as the school. One participant spoke of their children who were home schooled. In discussing their children's inclination to use the public toilet for the 'wrong gender', they said:

> Both of the twins were like just hanging out in the women's [toilet] because they don't, they're home schooled and they don't get taught things like 'oh, you can't go in there'.

For this participant, the lack of schooling allowed for their twin boys to receive a more fluid and queer understanding of gender, which became particularly apparent when confronted with the binary rules of public toilets. Millei and Imre (2015, 8) highlight that pre-school (or school, if pre-school is not attended) is 'arguably the first place that children's socialisation and "civilisation" (Elias 1978) takes place after the home'. As a participant in AtT pointed out, '[y]ou don't put a [gendered] sign on [your toilet at home] – which of those two signs would you put on your toilet at home?' Furthermore, although Rohan (half joked) about not understanding the rules of the 'men's' bathroom, for participants using the 'men's' toilets in Cavanagh (2010) and Blumenthal's (2014) studies, there was one important rule: 'Definitely [men] don't look at each other's penises' (trans man in, Cavanagh 2010, 91). For these participants this came down to a fear of homosexuality. Indeed, these fears were echoed in Millei and Imre's (2015) study with pre-school children. The authors describe a change from 'open plan' pre-school toilets with no cubicles, visible from the classroom and garden, to single stalls with lockable doors. Although the children

had requested and were pleased with the increased privacy, staff worried about reduced observation of the bathroom:

> I am still struggling with the lack of visual. You know being able to see going from this big wide open space and now we've got one little window and that still concerns me a little bit that we haven't got the supervision aspect of knowing what's going on … .some undesirable things happening in there, ah boys looking at each other's penis and stuff like that. (Staff member quoted in Millei and Imre 2015, 8)

The worry here is particularly explicit – 'boys looking at each other's penises'. Children with penises are taught from an early age to not look at each other's genitals. Furthermore, in cissexist cultures, which are framed by 'the belief that [trans] identified genders are inferior to, or less authentic than, those of cissexuals' (Serano 2007, 12) and appeal to the norms of the gender binary, the person with a penis, is presumed to be male. Such children receive a lesson for safely navigating 'men's' toilets in later life, and through this become socialised into a heteronormative impulse which is fundamental to the process of 'civilisation'. Despite the explicit heterosexual assumption of binary gendered school toilets, arguably there is an implicit fear of homosexuality in these spaces. As children are expected to share spaces (to different extents) with unclothed bodies that have been assigned the same sex, children (especially children with penises) must learn to not look at – or touch – those bodies.

Unruly bodies: bodies that threaten

Drawing on all of the above, we argue that it is not just 'the body' that threatens the school (Paechter 2004), but particularly bodies that transgress boundaries: 'uncivilised' leaky bodies that do not toilet in the ways that we want them to Liddiard and Slater (forthcoming); trans or intersex bodies that do not 'fit', or have moved between binary gendered categories (presumed to be stable); and sexualised, particularly queer sexual bodies (or bodies perceived to be queer) that look at other penises. Yet the ways that these bodies are dealt with, and the subsequent lessons that they learn, differ. Allan et al. (2009) discuss a study where researchers held a conference to discuss 'diversity' with 10–12-year-olds. Although not concentrating on toilets specifically, the children spoke of toilets when 'disability' was the topic of conversation (it is not stated whether any children at the conference were disabled, or whether toilets came up in relation to other 'forms of diversity'). In the following quote from the paper, we see children's awareness around the potential Othering space of the accessible toilet.

> Several girls argued that disabled people might feel left out because they can't go to the toilets with other – 'regular people', as one put it. An interesting gender difference in understanding was negotiated when one boy asked why anyone would want to go to the toilet with others but the girls patiently replied that this '*is what you do'*. This seemed to make sense to one boy who commented: '*If someone sees you going to a different thing, they think you're different'*. (Allan et al. 2009, 118)

Children's nuanced understanding of the relationship between space, identity and belonging is notable. The possibility of disabled children's gendered toilet etiquette is put into question due to the spatial set-up of the school toilets. Children in the study said that there should be accessible toilets in schools, but suggested that these in

themselves could cause segregation. This echoes the views of (adult) participants in a study which explored the provision of accessible public toilets in Ireland (Kitchin and Law 2001, 295). Here, two participants discuss 'the fact that disabled toilets seem to be a separate concern from other public toilet provision':

> 'Laura: […] But the very fact that it is called a 'disabled toilet' – I just get weary of it all.
> Shane: It should just be one word – toilet. After all you don't go into one and see blacks only or whites only. So why should disabled people have a label put on them?'

Shane's distinction here is crude. It is important to recognise the recent histories of toilets separated by 'race' (Penner 2013), the more implicit forms of oppression people of colour may face within toilet spaces, such as the dangers faced by trans women of colour (see Black Lives Matter: http://blacklivesmatter.com/), and the other forms of segregation through racism that continue to occur globally. Despite this, however, the quotation reveals resistance to the label of the 'disabled toilet'. There is very little literature on the toileting experiences of disabled children in schools and yet, toilet politics are active in disability politics (e.g. The Changing Places Consortium: http://www.changing-places.org/), and have been discussed within Disability Studies research (e.g. Kafer 2013). One developmental assumption widely critiqued by disabled people is the link between infantilisation and a discourse that disabled people (like children) are genderless and asexual (Liddiard & Slater forthcoming; Mollow and McRuer 2012). For some, this discourse is perpetuated by the accessible toilet, which is not usually gendered. In a paper considering a rhetoric of 'inclusion' in schools, for example, Armstrong (1999, 78) points out that 'the question of separate toilets for males and females is not addressed' in government guidance around accessible school toilets:

> The same document specifies that schools should have separate washrooms for male and female pupils of 8 years and older, but that 'exceptions may be made for facilities for disabled users' (DFEE 1996[5]). The ordinary requirements of personal dignity, privacy and a degree of comfort are dispensed with in the interests of the efficient use of space and resources, constructing particular discriminatory social relations and identities.

Here Armstrong questions the lack of gendering of the accessible toilet as a marker of *difference*. The difference that is highlighted through the *separate* 'disabled' provision (whether or not it is gendered) has been questioned in other literature (Kitchin and Law 2001), and by participants in *AtT*. For many participants who are trans or queer (including those who are disabled), the lack of gendering on the accessible facility was not a negative, rather it was understood, as Munt (1998, 77) puts it, as a 'queer space' where gendered norms were not enforced. One participant, for example, said: 'I've got a RADAR[6] key and that is like possibly the most useful thing as a trans person … being able to like go and into a gender neutral toilet'. Yet, participants also talked of other forms of 'policing' of the accessible toilet. One participant, Greta, who characterises themself as a 23-year-old, white, physically disabled queer person, described toilet policing as such:

> [Toilet policing is] basically when people see someone who they don't think should be in the loo and then they'll like confront them and be like 'oh, you're not supposed to be in here'. Like if you're in the woman's toilets and they don't think you should be there and they're like 'oh, you're not a woman, what are you doing in the ladies?'. Or if you've not got a wheelchair and they see you coming out of the disabled loo and they'll be like 'oh, you shouldn't be using the disabled loo and you're not disabled', but they might be disabled, they might just not have a

wheelchair but they might still need the extra space for a colostomy bag or like a bunch of other reasons.

This reflects the ways in which autonomy to choose which toilet space to use is constrained through practices of toilet policing. Although not usually conceptualised as such, 'toilet policing' is perhaps particularly active in school where children's and young people's autonomy is reduced through toilet surveillance and intervention (e.g. not being allowed to use the toilet in lesson time). As Millei and Cliff (2013, 260) show 'the preschool bathroom acts as a site through which disciplinary strategies are used to shape, regulate and normalise children's subjectivities and to regularise their bodies and bathroom conduct". However, AtT participants offered an alternative way of seeing the toilet, as a site where personal choice is valued, and where forms of external authorisation or governance are unneeded/ unwanted. In one workshop participants created their 'ideal' toilet space out of large pieces of corrugated card. During this activity, two participants, both of whom identify as disabled and trans, together made two toilet cubicles sitting side-by-side. Both of these toilets were gender neutral, there was a sign that read 'free public loo', and two additional signs reading 'smaller toilet' and 'bigger toilet'. 'Bigger' and 'smaller' signs were chosen over the wheelchair symbol often seen on the accessible toilet, and the 'bigger toilet' sign included additional writing: 'Bigger Toilet. No toilet policing!! Please use this toilet if you need to and do not question if others need to'. Later, in the workshops Greta stated:

> I think having signs on toilet doors that says specifically 'this isn't just for people with a visible disability. It's for everyone who needs it', is good 'cause otherwise everyone just takes it upon themselves to police the toilets.

We could understand the production and conceptualisation of toilets above as queer and crip – both in the rejection of categorisation but also the contestation of a neoliberal drive to privatise space (McRuer 2006). Building on Allan et al.'s (2009) study, participants thought it was important for others to not judge people's choice of toilet, but to allow people to use whichever space was accessible for them ('accessible' being used in the broadest sense of the word). This would mean critically considering the signage on toilet doors in order to understand how toilets do not just illustrate categorisation by gender, disability (and historically, race), but also actively produce such categories. A suggestion from participants was to write on the toilet door the contents of the toilet cubicle, for example, toilets with urinals, toilets without urinals, larger toilet with grab bars. Yet, as we have seen, school policy, disciplinary cultures (including worries around behaviour and bullying), fears of 'unruly bodies' (Erevelles 2000), and wider discourses of childhood based upon normative developmental assumptions (Slater, Jones and Procter, under review), all lead to cultures of toilet policing within the school environment and the lack of 'accessible' toilets.

Conclusion

We have argued that there is much more critical research to be done into the implicit lessons children learn through 'toilet training' and the school toilet. Although critical research is happening around gender, sexuality (e.g. Atkinson and DePalma 2008), disability (e.g. Greenstein 2016), race (e.g. Wright 2010; Abdi 2015) and other social positionings within education, this is rarely taken into account in school toilet literature. Furthermore, although there is an increasing body of research considering toilets as political spaces (e.g.

Munt 1998; Penner 2001; Molotoch and Norén 2010; Kafer 2013), this is not yet in conversation enough with those studying school toilets. Currently, how school toilets shape and impact upon children's identity is largely missing, particularly in relation to disability, and thinking outside of binary understandings of gender and sex. When it does emerge it is peripheral to other arguments. Creatively engaging with children to understand their experiences of school toilets would help to provide a more nuanced understanding of how children's school toilet experiences impact upon identity, and wider experiences within school. The complex relationships between toilets, embodiment and identity are apparent in toilet research and activism about toilets outside of schools. These need to be brought into school toilet research, to be able to inform educational practice, both about school toilets, but also in teaching around wider issues of diverse forms of embodiment. As Jess Bradley, a community co-researcher on *AtT* and member of Action for Trans* Health and Queer of the Unknown commented, trans people and feminists have been arguing for greater toilet access for years. We propose here that some of the more radical work being done around toilets as political spaces which intersect with notions of identity, embodiment and becoming, could and should be infiltrating the currently very 'normative' planes of school toilet studies.

Notes

1. Grant number AH/M00922X/1.
2. The term cisgender refers to somebody who identifies as the gender that they were assigned at birth (i.e. somebody who is not trans).
3. Connected Communities stream.
4. In 1976 Alexandra Kira recommended the common use of 'female' urinals (Penner, 2001).
5. Despite updated legislation this guidance remains in place at the time of writing.
6. RADAR keys, also known as NKS keys, 'offer disabled people independent access to locked public toilets around the country' (Disability Rights UK: https://crm.disabilityrightsuk.org/radar-nks-key).

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