



## The gender-neutral bathroom: a new frame and some nudges

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LUC BOVENS, ALEXANDRU MARCOCI

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### Abstract

Gender-neutral bathrooms are usually framed as an accommodation for trans and other gender-nonconforming individuals. In this paper, we show that the benefits of gender-neutral bathrooms are much broader. First, our simulations show that gender-neutral bathrooms reduce average waiting times: while waiting times for women go down invariably, waiting times for men either go down or slightly increase depending on usage intensity, occupancy-time differentials and the presence of urinals. Second, our result can be turned on its head: firms have an opportunity to reduce the number of facilities and cut costs by making them all gender-neutral without increasing waiting times. These observations can be used to reframe the gender-neutral bathrooms debate so that they appeal to a larger constituency, cutting across the usual dividing lines in the 'bathroom wars'. Finally, there are improved designs and behavioural strategies that can help overcome resistance. We explore what strategies can be invoked to mitigate the objections that gender-neutral bathrooms (1) are unsafe, (2) elicit discomfort and (3) are unhygienic.

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