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“Like leaves on the ground”

A Qualitative Study of Practices and Attitudes
Towards Cigarette Filters in Gothenburg.

Bachelor Thesis in Social Anthropology
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Abstract

This work's interest is to achieve a better understanding of smoker's disposal practices, in an effort to better understand how filters delimit public space. Every year billions of cigarette filters are disposed of by smokers onto public spaces. Society regards filters as litter, but does not currently regard them in the same manner as other forms of public waste. Societal perceptions that surround littering suggest that it is immoral, and requests that its members dispose of waste responsibly. Disposed filters represent an object of translation between social worlds, as both commonly understood and yet perceived differently by individual actors. This is demonstrated by both negligent disposal practices which test the boundaries of acceptable waste within public spaces, and smokers who recognize this moral dilemma, who then adjust their smoking and disposal practices to incorporate responsible measures. In this light filters demarcate public spaces, both as identifiers of immoral actions, and as objects that determine smoking spaces, which contravenes the objective of public space.

Observational data was gathered over three months using participant observation to create a general comprehension of smoker's disposal practices in public areas of Gothenburg. Four semi-structured interviews and eleven informal interviews were conducted, where informants shared their perspectives of what disposed filters mean to them when contextualized within urban and natural environments. These conversations also created an understanding of how they defined waste, and how they defined disposed cigarette filters as waste objects.

Keywords: smokers, filter, disposal, public space, object, waste.

Table of Contents

1: Introduction.....	4
2: Aim, Reasoning, and Research Questions	5
Research Questions	5
4: Theoretical Framework	6
Mary Douglas: Matter Out Of Place	6
Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus	7
Susan Leigh Star: Boundary Object	8
5: Earlier Research	9
6: Method	11
Participant Observation	11
Interview	11
On the spot chat	12
7: Ethics.....	13
Professional Secrecy.....	13
8: Ethnographic Discussion: Disposal of Filters as Waste.....	14
Summary of themes.....	14
Disposal of Filters as Waste.....	14
The Correct Way perspective	16
“It's automatic”	19
Disposing filters within natural and urban environments.....	21
Filters as waste have no function.....	24
9: Conclusion	27
10: References.....	29
11: Appendix	32

1: Introduction

Smoking is a behavior, a common enough activity done in public spaces that produces an unmistakable and recognizable waste object called a cigarette butt, herein called *filter*. Some smokers seemingly choose to discard their filters to the ground within public spaces. This disposal moment depends on for example a smokers time constraints, available filter receptacles and waste bins, and also where one smokes. This study makes an effort to understand how filter disposal delimits space, by examining how some smokers contemplate their filters as waste, and how they express their sense of moral responsibility regarding filter disposal.

It is not uncommon to see filters lying in public spaces, nor to watch smokers throw their filter to the ground. Within Sweden's shared public spaces smokers collectively dispose of one billion filters per year (Håll Sverige Rent, 2016), with some areas of Gothenburg having double as many filters disposed in its public spaces than other areas (Karlén, 2016). Filters represent 70% of all annual total waste products in Sweden's urban environments (Shaftoe, 2015), which is not the only place on Earth that can evidence these as commonly discarded public objects (Naturvårdsverket, 2016). An estimated 4.5 trillion of them are discarded globally (Slaughter et al., 2011), which places cigarette filters as the number one anthro-produced global waste product gathered from within public areas (Novotny, 2014). Filter waste is hazardous to the environment and negatively affects all life (Howard, 2015; Novotny, 2009 & 2014). This should be a cause of concern for everyone, including smokers. Therefore, it is argued here that there are moral considerations in understanding how and why some smokers use public spaces as sites of filter disposal, not exclusively, but filters do have a significant and persistent public presence.

2: Aim, Reasoning, and Research Questions

This work's aim is to discuss the moral dilemma that smokers must reason with when discarding a filter to the ground, and how these discarded filters delimit public space. A smokers disposal choice can become a moral conflict when for example time is constrained or when disposal facilities are inadequate. This is complicated further considering that as societies perception of smoking changes, so to are smokers required to change their smoking and disposal practices. For some this is a real learning process. It is of interest in this ethnographic discussion to explore; how smokers discuss and reflect on filter disposal, how and why do different environments affect disposal practices, how do smokers determine what waste is, and how filters delimit public space.

As previously stated, humans have collectively produced a significant volume of filter waste which has caused a negative impact on the environment. Thus, if this problem is to change for the better then it becomes relevant to understand the how's and why's of filter disposal, which includes smokers perspectives of filters as waste objects.

Research Questions

To achieve this, the following questions are asked:

- 1) In what way do smokers develop their practices of filter disposal to address their sense of morality?
- 2) How are filters distinguished by smokers within natural and urban public spaces?

4: Theoretical Framework

To analyze disposal of filters in public spaces, I have created an anthropological framework using Mary Douglas's concept of pollution, and Pierre Bourdieu's Habitus, including phenomenological perspectives of material objects by Susan Leigh Star and Martin Heidegger. Together, these have allowed me to create an analytical perspective to examine how smokers morality reflects and alters interpretations of filters, and how filters delimit public spaces.

Mary Douglas: Matter Out Of Place

Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger* (1966) and her idea of dirt in society as “matter out of place” (ibid: 36) is applicable here because filters represent uncleanliness, a public pollutant, and an entity of disorder to be maintained (ibid: 41). Douglas argues that human society makes attempts to catalog entities we may consider dirty as a pollutant, waste objects like discarded filters are no exception, and historically we determine what is and is not a pollutant through codified ritual (ibid: 2, 29 & 33-38). Smoking as a ritual performance is conducted by smokers in varying ways, how this act is viewed by others is considered more or less the same. Douglas explains that not all rituals have a singular meaning (ibid: 167), and matter out of place gives explanation to why socially accepted symbols can alter. In this case, symbolic perceptions of smoking have changed from a socially acceptable performance, to a health risk. Thus smokers rituals become classified as dirty, and filters as pollutants of public space that remind society of negligent smoking practices.

We re-codify rituals and make determinations of entities that “may be labelled dangerous”, as we learn how they challenge established societal systems and may cause harm (ibid: 40-41). In a sense the more we examine an entity, the more determination we are able to make of it. In this case, society has established that public filter disposal is a form of littering. In an attempt to mitigate potential disorder brought on by filter build up, society provides public waste receptacles as preferential disposal facilities.

Douglas says that society shapes perceptions of order and disorder using symbolic ritualistic acts which “provides a frame” that allows actors to understand shared experiences (ibid: 63-65). Filter receptacles are one such example of this. The knowledge and purpose of how to use a receptacle is broadcast to all who witness its use, even by placing a filter receptacle relays meaning as a symbol of what society wants from smokers is understood. As Douglas says, “There are some things we cannot experience without ritual” (ibid) meaning it is not always possible to learn how to fully comprehend how to act, express, formulate, and analyze our shared experiences without learning first through practiced ritual. Also, by understanding a whole ritual we recognize any abnormalities

or disturbances within it that we can then correct (ibid).

Under this lens Douglas' explanation of ritual allows framing public filter disposal practices as societal disorder, because disorder is something we “recognise that it is destructive to existing patterns” (ibid: 95). In this instance, filters represent a considerable influential symbol of environmental disorder.

Matter out of place has limitations. Despite waste classifications and socially endorsed disposal methods, filters are still often discarded within public spaces. It is therefore not adequate enough to simply classify filters as waste and be done. Understanding that smoking is a ritualized series of recognizable gestures with different meanings for different groups, must still contend with a disconnection of acceptance between how people separate ordinary waste from filters. There are different rules for different waste objects, which is especially true for filters.

Pierre Bourdieu: Habitus

Following on is Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus from *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1995). Actors perform as we learn and repeat what works in a given social context. Habitus is an effective analytical theory in this regard because smokers learn smoking practices from other smokers. It is not enough to only regard smoking as a ritual, albeit a flexible one, because smoking practices change as peoples interpretations of what is acceptable within society changes. This results in smokers altering their smoking and filter disposal practices. For example, smoking outside a bar might initiate different disposal practices than if one is in a forest.

Habitus is a series of deep installed behavioral patterns, learned and practiced throughout life. It is produced and re-produced through repeated exposure to our social worlds (ibid: 72-73), and triggers upon receiving the correct stimuli during social interaction, as both an anticipatory and reactionary behavior one can not force (ibid: 73). Habitus is capable of adjustment, and learning additional motivating behavioral triggers (ibid: 78), allowing actors to objectively adjust to their changing social worlds and environments (ibid: 79). Actors within a social group understand each others behavior because each actor shares a perception of how to behave through sub-conscious orchestration and repetitious social interaction, making group behavior seem homogeneous (ibid). This harmonious and effective coordination strengthens the shared perception which becomes dominant (ibid: 80), which Bourdieu argues is not possible if actors do not share commonalities of world-view (ibid: 82).

Habitus is limited here because humans do not simply reproduce what they already know, they are also capable of changing their behaviors and of making choices. Claiming that filter disposal is only

because of one's habitus, removes responsibility from an actor as such behavior becomes normalized.

Susan Leigh Star: Boundary Object

Perspectives of filters are not always identical, despite being a commonly understood waste object, which is basically why Susan Leigh Stars term *Boundary Object* (1989 & 2010) functions here. Star summarizes Boundary Object as, “a sort of arrangement that allow's different groups to work together without consensus.” (2010: 602). This term fits discard filters well, because most people share the same understanding of a cigarette filter, meaning they recognize it and understand that it relates with smoking. However, not everybody shares the interpretation that filters symbolize dirty negligent behavior. Boundary Object is a term that addresses classification similarly to Douglas, in that people perceive a common entity in different ways based on changing contexts. It explains that some concepts and objects represent entities of translation “across intersecting social worlds” (1989: 393). Which are established within society and organically understood by actors who share a coherency of recognition for said entities. Star asserts that while coherency of an entity exists, there will be those who interpret it differently to suit their needs and constraints (1989: 390-393). In this light, Star's term expands on Martin Heidegger's ideas about objects (1996). To understand an object, one must investigate what it is to somebody, its meaning, purpose, and how people conduct themselves with the object (ibid: 63-69).

In order to explain patterns of filter disposal it is not enough to focus only on ritualized behavioral practices or only as behavior learned through socialization. Hence, Boundary Object is a term that fits this work because it highlights the importance of how individual actors interpret an object differently, despite it having a commonly understood identity by the majority. However, using this term as the only tool of analysis would limit this work and produce inadequate results, because it would highlight the impracticality of addressing every single individual contextual requirement for every single moment of filter disposal.

5: Earlier Research

There are a number of articles that focus on statistical evidence of filters as an environmental problem (i.e. Smith & Novotny 2010; Novotny 2014; Slaughter et al. 2011; Howard 2015; Naturvårdsverket 2016; Håll Sverige Rent 2016; Terracycle 2016; Shaftoe 2016; Karlén 2016). These all present similar findings and they provide clarity in understanding filters as definite global waste problem. However, they add little to discussions on the social formation of waste disposal habits among smokers. Also it is worth noting that some of this data has been the result of both the tobacco industry's own research into smoking related subjects, and independent researchers who interpret, collate, and present this data. That said, the environmental problem that these articles present of filters is very relevant.

Richard Barnes wrote, *Regulating the disposal of cigarette butts as toxic hazardous waste*, (2011), about trying to find a solution for cigarette waste. He identifies that tobacco companies prevent law enforcement related with various smoking and disposal issues. If these companies can not stop interfering, then Barnes proposes that all smokers should just quit. Which is not very likely, and a bit simplistic.

A US study by Jessica M. Rath, et al., *Cigarette Litter: Smokers' Attitudes and Behaviors*, (2012), shows that smokers are aware that they have most likely disposed their filters publicly. This mirrors my informants who shared their thoughts of their own disposal behavior, and also what they believe other smokers do. That said, the work by Rath and her colleagues uses a representative of US smokers, which can not exactly represent the same contexts of Swedish smokers.

Previous anthropological research about cigarettes tend to focus on how smoking delimits public spaces, and also how smokers adapt their smoking practices to changing attitudes about smoking within society. Some of this research shares related themes as my own findings, such as how my informants recognize a smoking space and how their sense of morality influences their smoking and disposal practices. However none of the research I found had particular focus on discarded cigarette filters delimiting space.

Anthropologist Simone Dennis writes about smoking in relation to space in, *Explicating the Air*, (2015). Smokers determine how to smoke in public spaces by understanding how second hand smoke affects other people. This creates hierarchical differences over public space between smokers and non-smokers. Smokers who are aware of this hierarchy, place themselves to avoid imposing their second hand air onto others to alleviate the situation. This work creates a discussion about how

we constitute what 'public' means in public spaces.

Anthropologist Kirsten Bell wrote a similar article, *Where there's smoke there's fire*, (2013), about smokers negotiating public spaces to accommodate their needs as well as considering the needs of others. Bell argues that societal shifts in perceptions of smokers resulted with control measures in the name of public health, meaning that morality plays a central role in public perceptions of smokers, who become demonized to a certain extent.

6: Method

The methods used in this work are participant observation, semi structured interviews and "on the spot chats".

Participant Observation

In *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, (2011), Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, describe participant observation as an act of note inscription based on fieldwork observation. To “capture and preserve indigenous meanings” (ibid: 16), to do so “as they occur” (ibid: 17), allowing an understanding to come from that which “he has been observing in the first place and, thus, enables him to participate in new ways, to hear with greater acuteness, and to observe with a new lens”, (ibid: 19). I chose to observe and engage with people within public spaces of similar character, rather than dedicate my observations to a specific area. Various public areas of Gothenburg used in this work include quieter side streets, small transit areas, popular transit-hubs and plazas that connect with shopping areas. Choosing who to observe depended on who was smoking at the time, allowing a more general perspective of smokers to come forth. I made no special effort to distinguish myself, I stood using my phone like anybody else while making observations. Significant time was invested in this method to build a general understanding, and increase the overall yield of ethnographic results. I recorded one or two observations of smoking practices a day (usually) over three months, including; gestures, stances, smoking spaces, and filter disposal.

This method allows insight into how smokers use public space for smoking, but beyond interpretation it does not address why smokers disposed of their filters to the ground.

Interview

In *Kvalitativa Intervjuer*, (2010), Jan Trost writes, “from simple questions one receives complex answers...many interesting happenings, opinions, patterns and much more” (my translation, ibid: 25), inspiring the use of this method from which four semi-structured interviews were conducted that lasted between two and four hours. During interviews it became a good strategy to relate observations I had made to my informants, this gave us both context that we could relate with during our conversations. In an effort to minimize the power relation between interviewer and interviewee, these conversations were kept light (ibid: 67). I also attempted to encourage the informant to lead, and by exposing my own similar stories and thoughts to keep our relationship equal.

Interview questions were designed with two primary functions. First, to allow the interviewee room

to explore and answer with as much detail as they wish, to allow follow-up questions and reflections (Trost, 2010: 61). Second, triangulate answers given to accurately capture the subject matter. Basically a question has certain elements that one wishes to know, a second question reveals additional elements, and a third question reveals further elements. These questions together reveal a fourth group of elements, creating possibilities for additional questions and gradual clarification (ibid: 34).

In an attempt to avoid discrepancies and increase validity, I repeated what seemed like priority and sensitive talking points back to each interviewed informant so they could clarify and augment their statements.

On the spot chat

“On the spot chats” are spontaneous interviews between myself and Gothenburg's smoking public. A total of eleven were recorded, lasting on average eight minutes. These were very informal, improvised, and often had a type of awkward introduction process because the subject sounded quite odd, provoking simultaneous laughter and confusion, requiring clarification as to why I am even interested in this subject. Once this introduction process was completed the interactions offered valuable material.

Determining who to speak with was intuitive, causing a bit of anxiety, at times this was made worse if I received a negative response, resulting in unsuccessful attempts to engage with people on the street in this way.

I can not precisely determine if by approaching random smokers about their disposal practices provoked changes in their ordinary performances. It is arguable that by speaking with these people they thought more about how usually they do it, often resulting in them using a container of some sort. This is unavoidable, but I have observed enough people whom I have not interacted with, to counter balance this prospect through my observations of others.

7: Ethics

Professional Secrecy

At the beginning of an interaction I was explicitly clear with my intentions, and that anonymity is my priority. This was for my informant's comfort and encouragement to speak freely without repercussion.

To maintain anonymity within this work, disassociated names for my four main informants are: Alice, Stella, James, and Raphael. A written confirmation was sent to each formal informant via email or SMS to convey their interest and acceptance. I made it clear in writing what I was interested in talking to them about. Using email or SMS, each informant could comfortably reconsider their interest in engaging with me.

Due to power imbalances between interview and interviewee, I tried to relax as much control over the interview as possible. My informants chose meeting places and available times. I established that they could answer how ever they wanted, and that they could leave when they wanted.

At no point did I request from an informant to smoke, occasionally an informant would leave the interview to take a five minute smoke break. I was allowed to observe some of them during these moments, but to better understand how they smoked I asked all informants to act it out, so I could observe their usual gestures without them actually smoking. These demonstrations were a bit awkward at first but each informant soon began describing and reflecting on what they were doing.

8: Ethnographic Discussion: Disposal of Filters as Waste

This chapter is arranged by analytical themes regarding smoker's perceptions of filter disposal. These themes are first summarized here, after which follows the full ethnographic discussion.

Summary of themes

Practices of filter disposal within public spaces vary between smokers. Sometimes smokers deliberately dispose their filter to the ground, or they do so to address immediate disposal needs informed by their contextual requirements, such as, inadequate waste disposal facilities, time constraints etc. This has become a dilemma of morality for some smokers, who develop what they call their “Correct Way” perspective. This perspective incorporates efforts by smokers to avoid disposing of filters to the ground, as a display of consideration for others and respect for one's living spaces. The Correct Way is also a response by smokers who recognize their “automatic” disposal behavior and want to address it. Automatic disposal concerns moments where smokers dispose of their filter without actively deciding to litter, rather it is a behavioral pattern one gradually learns as one learns how to smoke.

Such disposal practices are informed by a smokers presence within “natural and urban” spaces. Natural meaning spaces of naturally occurring flora, but also parks and green spaces. Urban meaning human created spaces of concrete and steel. Smokers react more negatively towards filters contextualized within natural spaces, than urban spaces where filters were considered to be ordinary objects despite their status as waste.

The general perception of discarded filters is that they are waste objects, which was determined by informants who identify waste as having no “purpose and function”. This distinction is an important one, because filters do not share the same status as other waste objects many of which can be given a function through transformation via recycling. Assuming that filters are just like any other waste object is an incorrect step in addressing the problems they cause to the environment.

Disposal of Filters as Waste

Filters as waste and a form of litter, exist on Gothenburg's public spaces in far superior volumes than other forms. They can be found beneath benches, between pavement cracks, roadside guttering etc. I found that filters tend to be mostly common around areas of public transport, and also just as Bell (2013) states, filters often gather around building entrances (see Appendix figure.1).

Newspapers, drink and food containers for example are not nearly as numerous as filters. We have

collectively decided that throwing waste objects onto the ground is disrespectful to both one's living space, and fellows. We have decided that waste bins are a good solution to collect it, we employ cleaners to remove waste, and even impose fines on people for littering (Håll Sverige Rent, 2016). So, if indeed filters are waste that is an environmental problem, then perhaps it is a good idea to discuss this connection and to explore why it is happening.

To start building an understanding of filters in public spaces, I chose to begin observing smokers in central Gothenburg, with focus on how they were disposing their cigarette filters. I made notes of the flicks, drops, looks, and so on that people did when discarding their used filters to the ground or in public waste bins and filter receptacles (see Appendix figure.2-5). After watching many smokers it became apparent that methods vary slightly. One smoker sat slouched on a bench opposite a gym, she looked to the ground and spat occasionally as she smoked. When she was done she “no look” threw her filter away to her right, and was still lit as she boarded her tram. I wondered why she chose not to look where she threw it, nobody was hit but the tram platform was not devoid of people.

In another instance, a man stress smoked quickly as he looked off in the direction of his oncoming tram. As it arrived he looked down and assessed the trajectory he would need for his filter, dropped and stepped onto it, brought his head up to look at the opening doors before scuffing his leg back to crush and kick the filter behind him before boarding his tram.

Observations like these were reflected by all informants I spoke with, who shared the sentiment that smokers in general discard filters to the ground as part of normal smoking behavior. An informant summarized this sentiment, *“I'm used to them, everyone I believe is used to seeing them..we're conditioned to seeing them aren't we? And obviously they are everywhere, I mean look here, there, there...people throw them where ever”* (see Appendix Figure.6). Spent filters frequent public areas, smokers themselves identify them, and one need only walk around Gothenburg to see them on the street. For some informants this is a sensitive subject, because to ask a smoker about it is almost accusatory. When I asked another informant about what she thought smokers do with their filters, she instead emphatically asserted her own disposal practice.

Pointing towards a filter receptacle some twenty or so meters away she said, *“That bin has burned out a few times, and it smells awful, really bad”*, she chuckled and secured her shoulder bag in place before leaning over to squat and pretend to extinguish her still lit smoke onto the concrete floor. *“I'm careful to put mine out like this, otherwise it can be dangerous. I always check if its still glowing, even a little glow is dangerous, so its important to check that it's out, utterly out”*. She

inhales again, pauses, looks to the her mobile before stating, “*I throw them away correctly you understand?*”, it seemed to annoy her when I asked her to clarify what she meant, “*In the correct way! never on the ground*”.

The Correct Way perspective

Douglas writes, “the private conscience and the public code of morals influence one another continually” (1966: 130). In essence this means that people within society determine what behaviors are acceptable, and each individual actor measures their own behavior against society, which reinforces determinations of acceptable behavior. As people change their determinations of what is and is not acceptable behavior, so too do society's determinations change. My informant asserted that there is a correct way of filter disposal, which is a reasonable assumption for her to make as she also assumed that we all understand that one should use a waste bin for one's litter. By asking her to clarify, it became apparent this understanding should already be known to me, which caused her to roll her eyes and become irritated with me. She had assumed, like Douglas, that a culture has certain values that all individuals share when they assent to its established categories and values (ibid: 40), in this case she assumed that we both shared the value that one does not simply dispose of litter onto the ground. She had rightly assumed that I was at least capable of understanding that disposing a filter responsibly shows consideration for others, and through her disposal performance she publicly demonstrated her adherence to what she believed to be the Correct Way of disposal. This then reinforces her perspective as being correct.

This is because, Douglas explains, social rules are society's attempt to connect pollutants with morality. Discarding a pollutant such as a filter breaks these rules. Douglas adds, notions of morality are uncertain because people's contexts are often interpreted differently, any social rules about pollutants that attempt to govern morality, must be generally understood if they are to be effective (ibid: 130-132). In this case, pollutants are immoral, which filters become if discarded to the ground, hence the perception that the opposite is the Correct Way perspective. Douglas says that cases like this are useful for a society to define its moral bearing about an entity. If more people identify filters as a pollutant, more investigation is done of them eventually reducing their ambiguous status making them clearly “waste”. This supplements the lack of effective sanctions on those who discard their filters publicly, and filters then gain similar status as other forms of public waste (ibid: 133). If filters did not share this status, then it becomes reasonable to suppose that filters would be as discarded as other forms of waste, and conversely, other forms would be as

discarded as often as filters. In Gothenburg neither of these are accurate claims.

The Correct Way perspective is shared by all of my informants to varying degrees. They also assumed that this perspective was something generally understood. This inspired me to question if filters increase an awareness of spatial boundaries for what is acceptable to discard publicly. My informant Alice in particular compared her sense of responsibility regarding filter disposal with her distaste for those who litter.

“Firstly I put it out, and then I want to remove it from myself properly, but I won't just throw it away because its just as irresponsible if I threw away the wrapping on a packet. I wouldn't throw that onto the ground either. I mean who does that?”

Discarding objects in public spaces breaks social rules of morality, but discarded filters also create and recreate perceptions of smokers as negligent, because each visible discarded filter delimits the public space it is discarded upon. Meaning it is acceptable to dispose of filters there because other smokers have done so. Smokers like Alice wishes to reject inclusion into the perception of them as negligent, and they do this by adhering to a correct way perspective. Douglas says this is people rejecting what opposes one's “normal scheme of classifications” (ibid: 36-37). Alice's own perception of filters as a pollutant, established that she too finds them to be unacceptable, and this is supported by using for example a filter receptacle. Another informant, James, shared this sentiment, *“smoking should be done right, smartly, with respect for all things”*, further solidifying the Correct Way perspective as moral awareness where deviations are immoral, disrespectful to others, and one's shared living space.

My informants would consider the next two examples of smoking and filter disposal by a single smoker as a clear contrast to their Correct Way perspective for two reasons. Exhaling one's smoke around other people is not respectful, nor is neglecting to use an available filter receptacle. I observed a smoker at my bus stop, who smoked and exhaled his smoke past everyone as he walked to the far end of my usual bus stop. The bus arrived, he inhaled one last time before dropping his smoke without diverting his attention from his phone, then stepped on to it. A short time later at the train station, he lit a cigarette and slowly walked up the platform smoking past everybody. As light from our arriving train illuminated the platform I could see him smoking next to a filter receptacle, still looking at his phone. The train halted, the doors opened and people boarded. I saw him rapidly inhale and exhale twice as he walked away from the filter bin before dropping his smoke onto the concrete platform. It was still lit when he boarded.

Smokers who share the Correct Way perspective try to avoid the above behavior, because to them it

is a matter of respect and morality. Dennis (2015) discusses that smokers are aware that exhaling smoke may constitute part of another person's breath, which has negative health implications. So to avoid this they move away from non-smokers in the same vicinity. In this way Bell (2013) argues that smokers negotiate claims to public spaces constantly with non-smokers, because by definition public space is for all, but if a non-smoker occupies a space, then it can be interpreted as a non-smoking space. Filter receptacles can be interpreted as facilities that demarcate smoking spaces, because it is perceived that smokers stand around them to smoke and conveniently dispose of their filters. Hence, smokers constantly negotiate for smoking rights in public spaces where receptacles are identified as designating smoking spaces. My informant, Stella, related filter receptacles to smoking spaces in that way, but also regarded filters as having a similar demarcating role.

“If I saw an ashtray I would go there to smoke, probably. I'm more likely to go there to use it, but filters don't make me want to smoke more either, because if filters are just lying around you know I don't think 'oh I have to smoke', but I might think 'oh I can smoke here' because you know other people clearly do.”

Knowing where one may smoke because of the presence of discarded filters is something that James had thought about considerably. He uses a personal plastic tobacco container to collect his filters, *“It's no great task to carry this around, and look what you can do with it...you could keep like thirty filters in here!”*. By retaining his filters in his container James is no longer reliant on using public filter receptacles for his disposal needs, he can effectively shift his smoking space at will. This is advantageous as it allows James to avoid being regarded negatively by people in his vicinity. He just respectfully relocates his smoking elsewhere to minimize the presence of his smoke around others.

I observed some smokers who stood near to a filter receptacle, only to neglect using it when they were finished smoking. I also frequently observed filters gathered around filter receptacles and waste bins (see Appendix figure.7). When I asked some of these smokers for their comments about why they did not use a nearby receptacle, responses varied; *“it's automatic like it just happens”*, *“the bin is dirty, unhygienic, I don't want to touch it”*, *“other people do it, why would I do it differently?”*. These results are similar to those in a British study researched by Smith and Novotny (2011: i3), where smokers' disposal choices were dependent on their disposal preferences connected with uncleanliness. My informants asserted that many containers make suitable receptacles, but estimated that not all smokers use them. Other smokers who do not use a container or receptacle for filter disposal are a source of frustration for my informants. In this way it is clear that there is a separation within smokers as a group, between those negligent, and those with the Correct Way.

Negligent disposal practices contravene social categories that value waste as pollutants, and as said, defining pollutants is society's attempt to maintain morality. In this light negligent smokers delimit public spaces, testing the boundaries of what is acceptable to waste publicly by discarding their filters to the ground. A Correct Way perspective is an attempt by some smokers to separate themselves from negligent smokers, and in this way they reaffirm society's sense of morality.

Alice summarized her feelings about negligent smokers, *“It feels irresponsible to throw a filter to the ground, and I don't like when others don't have a similar attitude, they are not as responsible, and to an extent..lazy”*.

“It's automatic”

The objective at the end of a smoke, is to remove a filter from one's person. And sometimes this requires immediate disposal. Automatic disposal is a moment of muscle memory where one publicly disposes without actively choosing to litter, it just happens. All of my informants admitted that at some point this type of disposal behavior seemed likely during their smoking lives. This is reflected in the work of Jessica Rath and her colleagues, where 74.1% of smokers admitted having done just that (2012: 2195). James demonstrated for me his automatic disposal technique by flicking away an imaginary filter, an action he had had learned through countless repetitions. He caught me looking off to his right as my eyes expected to see a filter flying through the air, *“Maybe....ten times this year I have thrown a filter away from me, it's just automatic especially when I'm out drinking. I regret doing it. Straight away I feel sort of instant regret, and like, I think that was stupid, or thoughtless. I recognize that I wasn't thinking, that what I did was something smokers do automatically. Like this.”*. Demonstrating one more time, but with some theatrical flourish.

Several of my informants responded to automatic disposal in similar ways. Stella, provided her own hypothetical context to these moments, *“Like, if the tram is coming, I get so focused on the tram that I'm going to get on, and I just...”*, she stretched over our table to demonstrate how she would ordinarily flick away a filter.

However, Alice discussed her automatic disposal as a probability, but not something that she could verify, *“I haven't intentionally done it because I make such an effort to throw my trash in the right way, it doesn't seem like I ever have thrown them onto the ground. But, if I have thrown them onto the ground, and have no memory of it, would I even realize it?”*.

Of this, Pierre Bourdieu writes that an aspect of habitus is an orchestrated “harmonization of agents” (1995: 80), which means as people learn from each other, practices and behaviors become normalized. In this light, smokers learn smoking from other smokers which forms a gradual harmony of smoking and disposal behavioral patterns within society. This relates with smokers well because smokers share recognizable and similar experiences, they perform similar practices, and they interpret acceptable smoking behavior within similar social contexts. This process takes a long time to become established. In sum, smokers disposing their filters to the ground became accepted by society and by other smokers as a viable disposal practice. Over time the practice of disposing filters becomes an automatic one by smokers within their social contexts. In other words, their automatic behavior became normalized within society which allowed the practice to become accepted. As attitudes change towards what is and is not morally acceptable within society, so too must practices and behaviors adapt and change. The Correct Way perspective represents some smoker's attempt at addressing societies moral concerns by avoiding smoking around other people, and is also a response to automatic disposal behavior which my informants would identify as negligent disposal.

Learning to prevent one's automatic disposal is a long and difficult process in comparison to learning not to smoke around other people. This is because it takes time to alter existing behavioral patterns, and requires one to be constantly prudent and mindful of one's usual practices. Informants shared that an awareness of smoking as a health risk they impose onto other people was a concern they took seriously, and meant they adapted their smoking practices to avoid doing this. However, stopping themselves automatically throwing a filter to the ground was far more difficult. Part of avoiding automatic disposal behavior is a learning process of making frequent corrections in an effort to avoid it happening too frequently. For example, Alice revealed, “*I've picked up so many filters. I just can't let them lie there. It bothers me*”. Correcting automatic disposal occasionally means gathering other peoples filters around where their own filter had landed, this helps alleviate the regret of automatic disposal because they are cleaning public spaces. Smokers who adhere to a Correct Way realize that it is not always possible for others to observe and distinguish between automatic behavior and deliberately negligent disposal. However, by making such active corrections to their own moments of automatic disposal, smokers of the Correct Way make a clear and assertive distinction for themselves which separates them from those who are negligent.

Some informants were not as cognizant in recognizing and then correcting automatic disposal behavior. Rather they are currently learning to incorporate their sense of morality into their smoking and disposal practices. In this way Bourdieu would argue that these smokers are objectively

adjusting their behavioral patterns to social stimuli (1995: 72-73). Informants gradually integrate more considerate methods of filter disposal as they become more cognizant of what they consider immoral. Attempting to mitigate one's automatic disposal through such vigilance is integral to the correct way perspective, and is absolutely relevant to how each informant talks about disposal practices. Like James, who regards others in a manner he peruses for himself, *“I don't want other people controlling aspects of my life, so I won't try to influence theirs”*. He and other smokers want to smoke respectfully in public spaces, and by making efforts to mitigate disposal practices and automatic disposal, they avoid delimiting public spaces and influencing other peoples perceptions of them as negligent smokers. This is done through repetitive practices that reshape behavioral patterns attempting to form the Correct Way.

Disposing filters within natural and urban environments

Each of my informants related their discussions of respect and considerations to the Correct Way, which includes recognizing that littering of filters happens, and that this forms a sense of moral responsibility to one's living environment. To learn more about how my informants connected environments to perceptions of filter disposal, I asked them about their smoke breaks at work as it would represent an urban environment for each informant to relate to.

Stella described her work break environment as typically urban, bricks and concrete, smelly and dirty after a weekend, shaded during summer, books she had read there, and strangers interrupting her for directions. She then described the peace of the woods she enjoys walking through, fresh air, birds, nice scenery and so on. Stella, like other informants, contrasted their urban smoking spaces to natural environments. And from this, it was possible to contextualize filter disposal within two different environmental themes, urban and nature.

Stella's thoughts are similar to other informants when comparing urban and natural spaces for filter disposal. *“If there was more grass compared to concrete then maybe I would think more about throwing the filter away. When you're in the city you're just so used to putting it on the ground and stepping on it. You need something external to remind you that you shouldn't put it on the ground, but in the woods you shouldn't put it on the ground, it's obvious despite nothing telling you that you shouldn't. You just don't.”*

Alice similarly rationalized that, *“if a trash bin is in your face then people will use them. It's not that people don't want to use them. Filters don't need to be on the ground if they can be thrown out*

correctly”.

Sharing similar if not identical sentiments about disposing filters in nature is James, who explains the time he began critically thinking about filter disposal. *“I was out in the country and happily smoking, appreciating the moment for what it was. I like to smoke, and this place looks nice. When I finished I was looking around and just started thinking, what to do with this?”*, holding up an imaginary filter for to me to see, *“Normally I would have just thrown it, but now I can't just throw it away onto this land you know? It would spoil how it looked and also spoil this nice moment, so I put it into my pocket. It wasn't a sudden realization but it just started these ideas about respect. It's not pretty to see filters where things are supposed to grow, I mean, it's so nice out there! It would feel wrong to throw them away. Better in my pocket than that..and these are going to mess your pocket up!”*, holding up the imaginary filter again.

There is a perception that filters spoil nature. As Alice says, *“in nature there are no places to put them, there are no nature-trash bins so it becomes clear in this way that filters do not belong there”*. This was expressed by other informants, noted in particular by one smoker who asked me a curious question, *“Why do we in Sweden throw filters on the ground? We are environmentally friendly here!”*.

This sparked my interest in asking my informants what they believed happened to filters after they are left on the street. Alice answered by comparing aspects of urban and natural environments, *“Early when I work the weekend shift I have seen them clean the streets with those machines that they sit in. I guess that is what happens to them. Or birds eat them because they mistake them for food. That's one reason why I don't want to throw my filter on to the ground, especially in nature. I don't want them to lie there because they look nasty, are dangerous, and poisonous, why would I want something to eat poison that I put there?”*.

Stella also spoke about birds eating habits, *“You kinda expect them to go away, you don't really think your doing a bad thing. In nature where filters would just lie there its different. I don't want to kill the birds! even if I know I'm doing it I don't want to do it!”*.

When it comes to discussing smoking spaces, filters contextualized within urban spaces are not pleasing but not entirely unexpected. When filters are contextualized in natural environments, informants prescribed them with negative values ranging from aesthetically displeasing, poison, unnatural, and out of place. In this way, filters are unwanted entities in either environment, but was more emphasized within a natural space context. Douglas argues that we are able to determine an entity in this way because it contradicts our “cherished classifications” (1965: 37). Basically, we

organize entities into classifications and assume these are organized correctly, adjusting them when required. From this we are able to perceive those entities that are out of place within a spatial or figurative context. The more consistently that people adhere to these classifications, the more assured we are in our assumptions being correct (ibid: 37-38). In this case, filters disposed onto the ground are objects that reject society's moral request to be disposed of in allocated receptacles, or otherwise discarded responsibly. They also represent the view that for some smokers, the urban environment is perfectly acceptable to discard their filters in.

Witnessing negligent filter disposal, and experiencing filters in public spaces reaffirms the classification of filters as waste objects, and reaffirms that some smokers are negligent to society's moral. As previously stated, negligent smokers reject the perceived morality that society imposes on its members, and through public filter disposal they then tests boundaries of waste acceptability. Furthermore, in a natural environment a filter becomes a starker example of immorality, because it is an example of social rule breaking, and a violating pollutant which defiles our sacred natural spaces. In this light, filters are rejected by those who follow the perceived social morality, which includes those smokers who adhere to the Correct Way. Recognizing that negligent disposal happens in natural environments is perhaps uncomfortable to accept, because it opposes perceptions of the natural environment as clean and fresh, in contrast to an urban environment which is readily accepted as unclean and dirty.

In response to cases like this, Douglas argues that we often reduce ambiguity towards an entity by altering then establishing our interpretations of it, which is a perception of control. In the context of an urban environment we reconsider filters as acceptable entities because we expect to see them, and we can then control them by cleaning them away. We are then capable of accepting that they will exist, despite classifying them as pollutants (ibid: 40-41). This is in accordance with my informants who made it clear that the urban environment is still an unacceptable environment for filters, despite accepting that they are a part of it.

An example to clarify when filters become unacceptable in an urban environment would be disposal within the stairwell of a train station (see Appendix figure.8). The established rule is that one should not be smoking in interior public areas, and by disposing on the floor one flaunts the established rules, and dirties what is ordinarily relatively clean. Within natural spaces, disposal rules are clearer because filters become more detrimental, and have toxic qualities (Barnes, 2011). In this sense, filters become more natural when contextualized in an urban area, but are still considered as unnatural entities or objects.

My informant Raphael offered his distinctive perspective that shares similarities with this spatial

theme. He argued that filters as an entity within a space could not be considered separate from the action of smoking, “*Yes OK they are of course an object, a substance, but firstly I think about what they are in terms of how they got there. A person smokes and then throws them onto the street. So it's the action that's of interest, I can't separate the thing, from smoking*”. This perspective was unique among my informants. As Bourdieu suggests, each actor has different contextual histories that inform their opinions (1995: 72). In this way, smokers adjust their own understanding of filters to adjust their disposal requirements and constraints, whilst fulfilling the request of their community to dispose responsibly. Raphael's emphasis that filters could not be separated from smoking is a matter of considering one's actions, which directly correlates with one's responsibility and moral consideration of one's actions.

It is a perspective that rather than validates filters as more natural or unnatural in a given environment, highlights that filters delimit public spaces. Thus filters have the capacity to indicate what is and is not acceptable to dispose of publicly. This differentiation can be observed between smokers who practice their Correct Way perspective, and other smokers who test boundaries of acceptability within public spaces through negligent disposal practices. Similarly, Smith and Novotny (2010) discuss a chain of responsibility for filter ownership that starts at cigarette production, to distribution, to buyer. They encourage the tobacco industry to take more responsibility for discarded filters beyond efforts such as sponsoring environmental clean ups, and anti-litter campaigns. Suggesting that the tobacco industry's extensive research into “the complex psychology of butt littering made difficult identifying any message that might change the behaviour” (ibid:i7), revealing that individuals dislike filters as dirty and were ambivalent towards solutions like personal containers or retaining their filters. Not to disparage this work, but my informants demonstrated that they do take responsibility for their filters as part of a gradual learning process. There is no smoking etiquette school or some industry promoted program that helped them to alter their disposal practices. Each informant was consistent in monitoring their filter disposal, and when this consistency lacked they would adapt, learn and consider their filter disposal more.

Filters as waste have no function

Filters are clearly waste objects, litter in other words. This was seemingly obvious to all I spoke with. One informant looked at me with skepticism as if I had just arrived to civilization when I asked her about this, “*These?...yea, they are typical trash...*”, she was not the only informant who

looked at me in this way after being asked the same question.

In defense of my clarification request, and in agreement with Douglas, it is important to firstly establish what people consider as waste, because we cannot problematize filters as a waste problem until we confront our own ideas of what waste is. To do that we need to compare how different people define and interpret similar entities in different ways (Douglas, 1966: 29). To help clarify further it is argued here that disposed filters are Boundary Objects, as termed by Star (1989 & 2010). Essentially, filters act as representations of interpretive flexibility between groups despite generally being understood as having a function that is part of smoking. It is also generally understood that filters exist in public spaces, because disposal practices have been evaluated as being acceptable, and thus standardized. However, not all actors perceive filters in the same way. As stated there is a differentiation of filter perceptions within smokers as a group, between smokers with the Correct Way perspective and other smokers of negligent disposal practices. Thus filters are waste objects that represent an entity of differing perspectives that separate what waste means within society.

To understand further if smokers do distinguish filters from other forms of waste I asked my informants to elaborate and define their ideas of what waste is. Each of them provided their own context to clarify their points. Defining waste, Stella gestured the removal of a fictitious hat, before flicking her wrist to throw it away, *“I would consider filters as trash. Anything that's not nature is made to be trash. If I dropped my hat, then it wouldn't be trash, but if I threw the hat intentionally, then it would be trash, to me anyway, because it has no purpose. So give it a purpose, by changing it into something else, and then it's not trash. Kinda like recycling”*.

Alice identified waste using terms of function and purpose, *“If a thing has a goal, a meaning, then it's not trash. When that goal is done, when it's purpose has been removed, then it is trash”*, I asked if a coffee mug then is never used would it be trash? She laughs, *“No, not really because I might have a use for it at some point. Unlike a filter, which is certainly trash..but not when it's still part of the cigarette, only when it's thrown away because it no longer has a use”*.

James also contrasted filters with other waste objects to clarify when a filter becomes waste, *“Something like a banana peel in a bush is not litter. Everything left on asphalt is trash. Because, nothing breaks down on asphalt. A banana will break down regardless. Look, you don't have to be an expert to use your own container for your filters, which are one hundred percent trash. It's obvious to everyone that trash is bad, so filters are bad”*.

These similar statements demonstrate that in Gothenburg discarded filters are currently perceived to

have no further function beyond being a discarded waste object. This could change as relatively new filter recycling options do exist in the world (terracycle.com, 2016; Howard, 2015), but they are either absent from Gothenburg or have a minimal presence. However, it is important to highlight contrasting opinions to obtain a more thorough understanding of an entity. This is in-line with Star's suggestion that not every entity that has a commonly interpreted understanding also has the exact same meaning for every actor in a social group (1989 & 2010). Raphael insisted that filters can only be understood in connection with smoking, otherwise it is not possible to achieve more than an interpretation of something without first understanding what it is. To demonstrate his point, he held his cup and moved it to his mouth, then back to the table, "*If I am drinking, then it is understood that I could be drinking anything. As this is a cup, then you might interpret that I might be drinking coffee, or tea. However, I could be drinking anything, as it is not known what is inside the cup, but it is clear that I am drinking.*". Putting the cup down he moves his hand to his mouth and imitates smoking, "*You can't confuse the action of smoking with anything else. It is always smoking.*". This determination clarifies that function relates to how one understands an object, because knowing what an object is without understanding its function becomes an interpretative exercise. Hence the relevancy of Heidegger's thoughts on objects in *Being and Time* (1996). In sum, Heidegger says entities like objects are recognizable but require experiencing to comprehend their purpose, even looking at something can be enough (ibid: 64-65). He uses the hammer as a clear example of an object that presents its function by being held, some even look heavy which implies their purpose. However, an objects function can be misinterpreted if its usual context is misunderstood. For example, a hammer may also prevent a door from closing, or weigh down an open book. In Heidegger's view an objects purpose determines its usefulness, without which it is useless. Filters have a use as they help smokers smoke, after which they lose their purpose because they have no other way of being used. In a functional context filters have only one interpretative position because to experience them is to understand them as part of smoking, after which they become waste, but waste itself is not a unitary category.

It is important to distinguish filters from other waste objects in this way because we currently do not regard filters in quite the same way as other waste objects. Waste is an undesirable and unavoidable element of society, those who litter are thus not following the moral request by society to use waste bins. Filters currently have a different social status, one that allows smokers to use public spaces as sites for disposal which is generally accepted within society. If filters were more firmly established by societies in similar ways as other waste, then perhaps this would be a positive step in alleviating the environmental problem they cause.

9: Conclusion

Informants revealed their interpretations of classifications of social morality, through a discussion about filter disposal. These classifications have cultivated perceptions of filters as pollutants, or waste objects. This determination is made on the understanding that filters are an interpretive entity that is perceived differently between social worlds, and also between different spatial contexts which informants describe as either natural or urban. Filters have starker negative connotations in natural environments, when contrasted with urban spaces where filters are an expected component, and in this sense are accepted. Additionally, how smokers interpret filters as waste was determined by how smokers interpret an object's purpose and function. As discarded filters have no further function, they become waste.

Negligent smokers frequently test the boundaries of waste acceptability by disposing their filters that delimit public space. As a response, communities provide filter receptacles, and impose fines on littering individuals. Smokers who adapt and demonstrate their disposal practices in accordance with communal classifications of waste, have developed a perspective of disposal that adheres to the social morality. This perspective is called the Correct Way which is a response by smokers who wish to distinguish themselves from negligent smokers. This perspective incorporates one's sense of responsibility to one's community and living environments, by creating a reflexive and calculated approach to one's smoking and disposal practices. These smokers deviate from socially reproducing behavioral patterns such as public disposal, and this not only alleviates the waste burden placed on a community, but also alleviates their self perception as a considerate smoker. This is achieved through reproduction of disciplined disposal practices. Informants validate this by offering their own reflexive accounts and contextualized explanations for why they thought filter disposal was done publicly.

Automatic disposal behavior occurs during moments of immediate filter disposal, which is learned through experiencing disposal performances by other smokers over time in shared social contexts. This creates an “everybody does it” behavioral pattern. At times, immediacy overrides one's correct way, thus dropping or throwing one's filter to the ground becomes the required means of disposal, which is considered automatic. Informants admitted that this happens and so make corrections such as picking up theirs or another persons filter, This reconciles their Correct Way with the request of society to dispose of filters responsibly. Automatic disposal makes differentiating negligent smokers from Correct Way smokers difficult. In this light, smokers as a group share equal responsibility for filters as an environmental problem.

Solutions to filter disposal suggested by informants, include the placement of more filter receptacles, and the use of personal containers. However, filters are often discarded within the vicinity of receptacles, which demarcate smoking spaces contravening the point of public spaces itself, and personal containers do not yet have any prominence among smokers.

It is understandable that filters are a real environmental burden, but a resolution requires more than simply blaming the tobacco industry and demonizing all smokers as a single group. The Correct Way perspective is an effective measure, but unless it is adopted by smokers early on, learning how to break free from existing patterns of disposal behavior can take a long time and requires dedication. Also, a single perspective must take into account that not all smokers share similar views of filters. However, if the largest anthro-produced trash object is to be resolved, then all smokers must at least comprehend that personal responsibility is an important part towards a resolution.

Further anthropological exploration is needed to better understand how to address filter disposal, and could focus on the stigmatization of smokers with reference to how they wish to consider public spaces.

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11: Appendix

All photos were taken with a mobile phone during observations as part of my field work.



Figure.1, a staff entrance where I observed four cooks smoking, They threw their filters into the street, or dropped them among the others. Five meters to the left is a waste bin like the one in the next picture, which only one cook used.



Figure.2, a newly installed filter receptacle. Is the design supposed to make smokers think about people?



Figure.3, five days later, filters dropped beneath it, and now it collects fruit peelings too.



Figure.4, twelve days. Clear use as a filter receptacle.



Figure.5, twenty plus days. The design has faded away in some parts. Around day thirty this receptacle was removed.



Figure.6, the white and orange objects that dot the ground of this train shelter are cigarette filters. Filter receptacles and waste bins are placed near by.



Figure.7, a waste bin with a filter receptacle lid. These are common in Gothenburg, but so are filters that surround them like this.



Figure.8, disposing of a filter in an interior space such as a stairwell is a clear example of what my informants would consider negligent disposal.