

## At the bathhouse: Municipal reform and the bathing commons in late imperial St. Petersburg

# An authoritarian state and form of commoning in commercial bathhouses in late imperial St. Petersburg

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### Abstract

This paper seeks to explore a variant model of hygienic modernity exemplified by late imperial Russia. It describes describing commercial bathhouses in St. Petersburg as a kind of urban 'quasi-commons', and examines the interplay between their cultures and practices and attempts by the city government to subject them to scientifically and technologically progressive regulation. This interplay reveals a social and political order that contrasts sharply with the 'liberal' form of governmentality at work in the bathhouse movement in the West. The failed implementation of the Petersburg Bathhouse Ordinance of 1879 is emblematic of the city government's systematic attempt to secure public health and shape citizens through the regulation of bathing institutions. In contrast to the West, however, commercial bathhouses in imperial St. Petersburg were well-established institutions, rooted in a rural tradition of common bathing, whose provision of 'livelihood qualities' extended well beyond bathing and ablution. Furthermore, the city government's autocratic approach to funding reforms and its paternalistic view of bathhouse visitors contrasted with the municipal bathhouse movement in Victorian England, for example. Over almost four decades of negotiated non-compliance, amendments to legislation, unsuccessful petitions, and subtle adaptations by owners and attendants, commercial bathhouses retained their place in the city. The drive to extend governmentality to the city's commercial bathhouses was ultimately abortive, as legislation passed to launch reforms failed to elicit the support of the stakeholders whose cooperation would have been essential for its implementation. The re-negotiation under legislative pressure of the terms of cooperation among urban bathing's stakeholders thus belies the supposedly general trend in bathing from the communal to the private or municipal during the period.

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The history of St. Petersburg, its very mythology, is inseparable from the waters that surround, underlie, and interpenetrate the city. Control of water has been essential to the Russian 'imperial projection of power' in the capital, from Peter the Great to Putin.<sup>1</sup> Built on a swamp, furrowed by the many rivers flowing into the Gulf of Finland, St. Petersburg has, for all the decrees of tsars and presidents, continually been confronted with the uncontrollability of water, most notably in the threat and the reality of regular floods. However, one aspect of the city's aqueous cultural history – bathing - has received limited attention from historians and geographers.<sup>2</sup> Despite the apparent abundance of water, St. Petersburg's rivers have typically been inaccessible for bathing and washing from October to May, when they are frozen over or covered with moving ice. Since fuel was also at a premium, Russians turned to another property of water to keep themselves clean. Rather than washing primarily with directly heated water, steam offered the most economical solution, for one can sweat and subsequently wash with water of a temperature barely above freezing point.<sup>3</sup> This technology requires cooperation and implies economies of scale. These could be harnessed most effectively in the form of communal bathhouses, which were a prominent feature of the St. Petersburg cityscape, long before the modern era of bathing in the West. Dating back to the city's earliest years, their subsequent history demonstrates a governmentalisation of water and health that both contrasts with and complements the progress of sanitary reform in Western Europe and North America, as well as its so-called 'conquest of water'.<sup>4</sup> The bathhouse, this article argues, was a distinctive space of St. Petersburg's urban modernity and of its 'modernism of underdevelopment'.<sup>5</sup> What made it so significant is the persistence of elements of what is called here a bathing commons, and the development within commercial bathhouses of a hybrid 'quasi-commons' of bathing practices that effectively escaped the eye of authority, together with the associated failure of municipal bathhouse reforms. By resisting incorporation into the equivalent of the West's ideal of liberal governmentality, St. Petersburg's bathhouses represent a form of hygienic modernity that owes as much to the vitality and flexibility of the urban commons as to commercial capitalism or governmental authority alone.

It is important to make this argument as the recent history and historical geography of bathing is still dominated by essentially 'liberal' governmental narratives that tie the modernisation of bathing to its privatisation. This is most clearly represented by studies of the material technology of pipes and sewers that made the fixed private bath and the 'water closet' possible.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the move from the communal to the private is offered as a compelling index of this water modernity. Matthew Gandy, for example, has recently written that 'the movement from collective worlds of communal bathing in the early modern era to the private realm of the modern bathroom or the controlled space of public baths involved several processes, including the gradual standardisation of technological networks, the spread of new tastes in architecture and design, the rise of greater corporeal self-consciousness, and the emerging biopolitical emphasis on health and sanitation'.<sup>7</sup> However, the generalization of this trend belies Gandy's own very persuasive emphasis on the highly differentiated cultural and material appropriation of water in disparate locales and historical trajectories. Vanessa Taylor and Frank Trentmann have pointed out, just as recently, that the 'liquid politics' of everyday life were diverse and highly localized. That even for the English middle classes this 'privatisation' and 'individualisation' was as much an ideal as a reality in the Victorian age,

and that the municipal and private provision of water overlapped.<sup>8</sup> The analysis presented here follows this critique of a general movement from communal to private, and from commercial to municipal, by tracing the practices and conflicts over bathing and water in nineteenth-century Russia's capital city. In the 'liquid politics' of St. Petersburg it was the commercial bathhouse and its seemingly paradoxical protection of communal bathing that was central. Furthermore, this dominance was never successfully challenged by the public bathhouse movement.<sup>9</sup> Instead, aspects of common or communal bathing survived and developed under the umbrella of private enterprise rather than municipal authority, albeit in altered or even deformed ways. What emerged is perhaps best described as a hybrid, a 'quasi-commons' as I would term it, nestled between commercialisation and municipalisation, one that was subject to but adapting successfully in response to government regulation.

In order to present this argument the first section of the paper describes the city's commercial bathhouses as the modern, urban offspring of Russia's rural communal bathing traditions: an urban bathing commons. The second section positions these modern bathhouses in the context of public health movements and bathing governmentalities observed in both Western and non-Western cities, but argues for the specificity of the Russian experience. Building on these framing arguments, the third section examines the specific case of St. Petersburg, providing a detailed analysis of the city's bathhouse ordinance of 1879 and its later amendment, to demonstrate that the city government's attempts to draw commercial bathhouses into an emerging public health movement followed a paternalistic authoritarian model, rather than the liberal individualistic one observed in nineteenth-century Western cities.<sup>10</sup> Finally, the paper tells the story of the commercial bathhouses' resistance to legislated reforms and its successful cultural and economic adaptation to the new era's constraints. Crucial to this process was the development of a hybrid that I call the 'commercial bathing commons'.

Overall, this paper contributes to a portrayal of urban modernity that is broader than the usual Western norm, exploring the intersection between a commercialized tradition of communal bathing in St. Petersburg and the career of sanitary reform in the city. In general terms, it questions the dominance of the Foucauldian conception of liberal governmentality by describing an alternative model, in which both proposed sanitary reforms and their ultimate failure can be understood in terms of the interplay between an authoritarian state and a functioning and well-established commercial bathing commons. The paper describes these modern forms or variants of commoning and demonstrates that in many ways they remained beyond the reach of city authority, precisely because they were, seemingly paradoxically, nestled *within* the commercial sector. The social, affective, and even sexual 'commons' of St. Petersburg's commercial bathhouses, invitingly accessible for a relatively small fee, simply did not conform to the injunction that bathing be relegated either to the 'private realm of the modern bathroom or the controlled space of public baths', which would have precluded the inappropriate mixing of people and pleasures.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the survival and flourishing of a bathing commons in the imperial capital right up until the Revolution of 1917 suggests not, perhaps, how unusual Russia was, but rather the singularity or oddity of the Western experience.

## 1 The imperial bathhouse and the commercial bathing commons

Anton Chekhov's 1885 short story *At the bathhouse* consists of a fictional dialogue between two men, a visitor and a bathhouse attendant, about the short-sightedness of young women on the hunt for 'an educated groom'.<sup>12</sup> The concise narrative contains no detailed description of their encounter, but implies that up to this point the two men had been complete strangers. The friendly exchange of private views between strangers and members of different social estates might have seemed quite exceptional (the visitor is a merchant). To Chekhov's contemporary readers, however, the setting for this conversation in one of St. Petersburg's large commercial bathhouses would have been explanation enough: in such a space, complete strangers could meet and speak intimately. Bathhouses were emphatically, 'common places', a term that Svetlana Boym uses to refer to the organization of space and speech in Russian everyday life, although my borrowing of the phrase sees more vitality and persistence in the idea of the 'common' than Boym's history of aestheticized derogation and nostalgia.<sup>13</sup>

Can we understand St. Petersburg's bathhouses as a communal social space or 'common place' of this stripe, as places where communal practices persisted despite the forces of capitalist modernity? In the case of St. Petersburg's commercial bathhouses, their ancestry in the form of village bathhouses supplies a connection to the ideal and idealized 'commons'. Indeed, village bathhouses in Russia provide a surprisingly accurate analogy to the historical English and American village commons, so familiar to advocates of common right and commoning. Like those village commons, the Russian village bathhouses constituted 'property with no rights allocation and regulation, and as belonging to everybody and hence to nobody'.<sup>14</sup>

What, however, of the urban version of these village bathhouses and their communal traditions? It is important to note, first of all, how intrinsic the urban bathhouse is to the history of the Russian city. Communal bathing in St. Petersburg dates back to the city's earliest days, when, soon after the founding of the city in 1703, numerous bathhouses were built on the Neva banks. Construction workers, forcibly recruited from the villages, built bathhouses in the manner they had observed and employed in the countryside. Not only were bathhouses physically familiar, but bathing practices had not yet substantially changed. Indeed, as described by contemporary historian Andrei Bogdanov, the earliest bathhouses in St. Petersburg were small wooden huts in which men and women bathed together and which were collectively maintained and used.<sup>15</sup> In this way, St. Petersburg's citizens translated the norms and traditions of village bathing cultures to the city, and in so doing implicitly asserted their right to such amenities.

This urban strand of the Russian bathhouse tradition began, however, to develop along its own trajectory. As early as 1704, St. Petersburg's bathhouses came under the direct influence of the imperial and municipal governments, when Peter the Great noticed the small wooden bathhouses cropping up along the riverbanks and decided to regulate and tax them.<sup>16</sup> The construction of bathhouses was henceforth restricted to certain parts of the riverbank, and they had to be built of stone and brick, rather than wood. In addition, Peter the Great instituted a *bannyi nalog* or bathhouse tax, adding yet another element to the production of the city's bathing spaces.<sup>17</sup> The burden of taxation necessarily favoured commercial bathhouses, since it reinforced economies of scale. By 1751, Bogdanov claimed that there were nine frequently visited commercial bathhouses in the city, all of them quite large and imposing.<sup>18</sup> By 1783, moreover, unisex bathing was outlawed

in the city's commercial bathhouses, severing yet another link to village bathing traditions, though reinforcing the distinctive character of urban bathing in the young city.<sup>19</sup> Finally, in 1843 price regulation was implemented, which had a defining effect on the subsequent evolution of commercial bathhouses.<sup>20</sup> Price regulation incentivized bathhouse owners to combine differently priced sections, offering different levels of service, under one roof with a single source of water and, in some cases, heat. As a result, by the mid-nineteenth century St. Petersburg's commercial bathhouses notably replicated the 'differential architecture' and its 'segregational imperatives' noted by the historian Tom Crook for these bathhouses' equivalents in Victorian Britain.<sup>21</sup>

Reminiscent of Foucault's conception of discipline and disciplinary power, the largest bathhouses were divided according to classes or levels of service with male and female sections within each class (see Fig. 1).<sup>22</sup> The division of bathhouse spaces according to service levels made it possible to satisfy the needs of customers according to their means and preferences, to create a more homogeneous social environment in each section, and to maximize income for bathhouse owners. To borrow Peter Bailey's useful neologism, the commercial bathhouse was 'segregarious' – that is, providing a communality tempered by disciplinary separation.<sup>23</sup> In the third-class section, the *prostaia baniā* (or simple bathhouse), for instance, the washing facilities usually doubled as a self-service laundry. The steam room was often heated *po-chernomu*, that is, without a chimney, as in the villages, and with predictable results. A contemporary physician described one such section as covered by 'a thick layer of soot'.<sup>24</sup> With a relatively low entrance fee, fixed by city regulations initially at 3 and later 5 kopeks, the poorest urban residents, including coachmen and unskilled workers, patronised these facilities. The second-class section was tidier, altogether less crowded and more comfortable, and had an entrance fee fixed by city regulation initially 8 and then at 10 kopeks. It offered options such as a full-service laundry, a cafeteria, and a hairdresser, each with additional fees, of course. Merchants and members of the petty bourgeoisie could afford to visit this section. Finally, the first-class section offered a decidedly luxurious experience, with 'soft rugs' and 'good copper wash-basins' and a price regulated at 15 kopeks. The same services tended to be offered here as in the second-class section, but fittings and furniture would have been far more opulent.<sup>25</sup> The production of these bathing spaces thus went hand-in-hand with price regulation, the ban on unisex bathing, tax incentives, which promoted economies of scale, and the increasingly sophisticated system of formalized class divisions ('social estates') in the imperial capital.



Fig. 1 The layout of Voronin Bathhouse. First floor. Source: P.Ju. Sjuzor, *Torgovije (narodnie) bani*.

The gradual adaptation of rural bathing traditions to the new city produced, therefore, a significant divergence from the various forms of village bathing commons, but not their wholesale displacement. One might be forgiven for thinking that whatever communal elements they preserved were destined to be wholly eradicated by the advent of large commercial establishments, and their subjugation to municipal authority. Nevertheless, urban commercial bathhouses continued to be the purveyors of what Efrat Eizenberg calls 'a set of livelihood qualities over which rights are negotiated'.<sup>26</sup> As Chekhov's story indicates, these qualities included not only those directly related to ablution and laundering, but also social and communal ones. This pronounced social function of commercial bathhouses is amply corroborated by archival sources, as well as by published diaries and newspaper articles.<sup>27</sup> The negotiation over these qualities also involved the city government as the owner of the water used for bathing (by the end of the nineteenth century, the basis for taxation was the number of buckets of water consumed), bathhouse owners, attendants and, finally, members of the bathing public.<sup>28</sup> Notable too were the myriad of supplementary services offered in the city's commercial bathhouses. Contemporary publications contain references to barbers, laundresses and gynaecologists all offering their services in commercial bathhouses, as well as restaurant-style kitchens and laundries being operated by bathhouse owners or franchisees.<sup>29</sup>

There are two elements of communal negotiation that are worth emphasising here – two new features of the urban commercial bathhouses, rather than merely vestiges, that attest to the complexity of social practices involved in going for a bath. One is the role of the bathhouse attendant. Attendants, or *banshchiki*, took over many of the chores previously fulfilled by the village or family community in the rural prototype to urban bathing. In addition, urban bathhouse attendants interacted with visitors and assisted them in washing. Their role is precisely indicative of the negotiation of rights over the urban bathing commons. In what is likely to be an indirect result of price regulation, bathhouse attendants were seldom

paid and relied solely on tips.<sup>30</sup> Services such as washing, soaping, scrubbing, rinsing, massaging, and assistance in the steam room were rendered on the basis of a conversation between visitor and attendant, and tips were constrained only by convention. The attendant's services would have been highly tailored to the individual visitor in the first- or second-class bathhouse sections.<sup>31</sup> Nikolaï Leïkin, a contemporary journalist, reported for instance that 'one [visitor] likes to be scalded with boiling water, another would prefer cooler water'.<sup>32</sup> The physician, Vessarion Znamenskii, recommended that all bathhouse visitors make use of attendants, since only they knew how to wash each visitor in the manner he or she required (see Fig. 2, which, although a staged and stylized photograph, illustrates the role of attendants in bathing).<sup>33</sup>

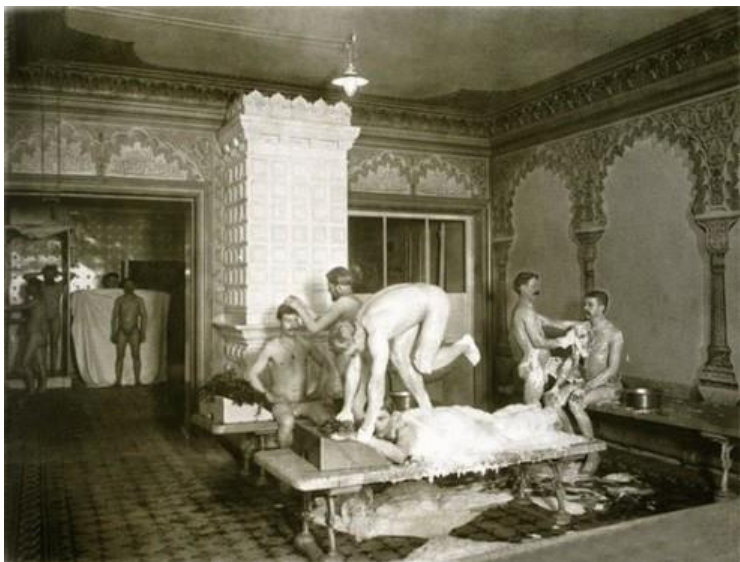


Fig. 2 The washing room with bathhouse attendants doing the washing. Source: Tsentral'nye bani (byvsh.) Yegorova, Sankt-Peterburg, 1897.

The second distinctively urban feature of St. Petersburg's commercial bathhouses is the addition, during the nineteenth century, of so-called *nomernaia baniā* or *semeinaia baniā* ('bathing rooms' or 'family baths', terms used interchangeably).<sup>34</sup> More than any other aspect of urban bathing, this feature encapsulates what Richard Dennis describes as the 'on-going dialogue between past and present' in modernity, since its family-sized rooms, the opportunity for legally condoned unisex bathing and its freedom from price caps or other regulation all harked back to rural bathing practices, even while providing an altogether new format.<sup>35</sup> The *nomernaia baniā* consisted of individual rooms, each equipped with a tub, arranged along a corridor as in a hotel or boarding house (see Fig. 3), and offering a more intimate bathing experience.<sup>36</sup> Owing to the absence of a steam room, this section could remain open throughout the week. Since the ban against unisex bathing did not apply, entire families could bathe together. All this sounds perfectly respectable. However, in what was a distinctly urban twist, the *nomernaia baniā* was also used by visitors in search of privacy for sexual encounters of various kinds. As I will go on to discuss, this section of the baths became indelibly associated in the public mind with promiscuous sex, prostitution and homosexuality, and as such can be considered an important multi-functional supplement to the large open areas of the bathhouse sections described above.<sup>37</sup>



Fig. 3 Voronin bathhouse. Nomernaya baniā (section H). Source: as for Fig. 1.

These features suggest the aspects of the ‘actually existing commons’ that Eizenberg defines as necessitating communities ‘to operate through collaboration, cooperation and communication rather than through private interest and competition’.<sup>38</sup> While I do not aim to make a case for altruism or community to be the governing principles of commercial bathhouse operations, it is worth stressing that their commercial nature was interrupted as well as complemented by the role of mutuality in several important ways. First, in the *prostaia baniā*, the cheapest bathhouse sections, attendants were few and far between and visitors had to assist one another in maintaining the proper humidity in the steam room, washing each other and carrying water from tanks and receptacles.<sup>39</sup> These are the practices most obviously analogous to the social reproduction involved in the traditional bathing commons, as transplanted to the social practices and biopolitics of the metropolis.<sup>40</sup> Second, as mentioned, there was an element of voluntarism in the role of bathhouse attendants, since at least up until the introduction of the bathhouse ordinance of 1879 many of them worked for their lodging alone and received whatever income they earned in tips. Their work exemplifies the ways in which the cooperative social reproduction of the ‘common’ or ‘commons’ is supplemented by entrepreneurial activity and by commercialised non-monetary forms of ‘affective labour’. Third, regulated prices actually constrained the ability of owners and operators to compete on price alone, leading to attempts to maintain profitability through both commercial improvisation and a reinforcement of informal cooperative and self-regulating activities, both licit and illicit.<sup>41</sup> We might see this as the full or fuller commercial co-option of commoning and affective labour.

In the case of St. Petersburg, this collision between village traditions and urban realities combined to establish the city’s commercial bathhouses as a kind of ‘quasi-commons’, that is, one in which traditional rural commons practices persisted but were also supplemented and coopted by commercial imperatives, all of which evolved in response and resistance to the changes in municipal legislation to which I now turn.

## 2 Government regulation of public bathing in St. Petersburg

Bathing practices were situated at the intersection of two important trends during the second half of the nineteenth century: firstly, advances in the field of public hygiene and, secondly, the development of urban infrastructure – the large-scale deployment of pipes and pumps for water provisioning.<sup>42</sup> Each advance reached St. Petersburg. Water quality was identified as an important factor in the spread of diseases by the physician I. Eremeev, and the bacteria count became one of the most widely recognized indicators of water quality. Government authorities, including bathhouse inspection commissions in St. Petersburg, frequently referred to this indicator in their inspection reports.<sup>43</sup> Technologies for water filtration and cleaning were also developed and deployed, with the first municipal water filtration and chlorification plants opened in 1889 and 1911, respectively.<sup>44</sup> Significant progress in the use of pipes and pumps was made during the second half of the nineteenth century, with steam engines utilized as early as 1871.<sup>45</sup> Steam-driven pumps enabled water to be lifted into dispersed reservoirs and released under pressure in bathhouses, factories and residential apartments.<sup>46</sup> These developments meant that bathhouses could be built further away from sources of water (principally the city’s many rivers). They could also be operated more efficiently and could offer more and fresher water for bathing. Private water pipes and networks built by corporate utilities coexisted from 1862 until the creation of a municipal network in 1892 via the city government’s acquisition of St. Petersburg’s two largest water companies.<sup>47</sup>

Outside Russia these two trends spurred governments to intervene in sanitary bathing through public investment and regulation. In Liverpool, London and New York, to name the most prominent historiographical examples, the lead was taken at the municipal level, with municipal bathhouses created at the public expense.<sup>48</sup> In the West, more generally, measures targeting improvements in communal bathing fit neatly enough into the context of rationalist reforms designed to endorse and enable the hygienic self-improvement of citizens. As Chris Otter explains, the late nineteenth century was alive with enthusiasm about the ability of science, technology, markets, private initiative and rational government to act upon the citizen and make him (the discourse is undoubtedly masculinist) more reasonable, fit and healthy to pursue both his own happiness and the public good.<sup>49</sup> Ideas of cleanliness and self-reliance, health and ‘character’, manliness, racial

superiority, and class emancipation all informed discussion about bathhouse reforms in British cities. Tom Crook has specifically considered Victorian public baths in Britain as ‘elaborate, if decidedly functional, institutions designed to produce clean, disciplined subjects’.<sup>50</sup> The knock-on influence of colonial governmentality is also acknowledged in Colin McFarlane’s discussion of infrastructure and water usage in British Bombay, where the regulation of urban infrastructure can be seen as ‘attempts to conceive and influence agency and subjectivity, in this case through the enrolment of infrastructure in sanitary discourses’.<sup>51</sup> There were, of course, commercial bathhouses, including the famous (sometimes notorious) Turkish baths, in the West, with numerous options for the well-off and the not so well-off, and for the sensual as well as the sanitary-minded.<sup>52</sup> But whilst the commercial sector has certainly been neglected by historians, the point to make here is that bathing in Britain (to take the most prominent example) was a mixed economy, and it was the public bathhouses that, in all probability, provided more people with bathing facilities and opportunities, especially into the twentieth century. In Russia, by contrast, it is the predominance of the commercial bathhouses, and the complete absence of a municipal sector, that is so noticeable.

Whilst the link between regulation, science, technology and a desire on the part of government actors for the imposition of private and public models of behaviour is also apparent in St. Petersburg’s bathhouse regulation, and may in part explain the resistance it encountered from the existing bathhouse commons, the outcome of government attempts to regulate urban bathhouses largely depended on the strength or weakness of that bathhouse culture. This was not, therefore, just a matter of technology defined in terms of material infrastructure, nor the implementation of hygienic science and public health orthodoxies. It was also the stuff of politics – or, rather, biopolitics. As Otter puts it, with British liberalism in mind, ‘liberal government was not just government of technology, or the organisation of, and action upon, a set of machines, networks and devices. It was also government *through* and *by* technology, which returns us to its indirect target, the liberal subject’.<sup>53</sup> Given this biopolitical and governmental frame to use Foucault’s influential way of describing the interplay between government action, community and the self we are necessarily in the business of considering historically and culturally inflected sanitary regimes.<sup>54</sup> It is St. Petersburg’s established urban culture of bathing and its marked resistance to attempts at municipal governmentalisation that deserves detailed emphasis.

### 3 Bathhouse reform and regulation: communal bathing and disciplinary modernity

The precursor to the launch of systematic bathhouse reforms in St. Petersburg was a major round of bathhouse inspection visits organized by the city’s chief of police. In March, 1871, Fëdor Trepov assembled a commission composed of doctors, policemen, firemen, and architects to inspect all forty-six commercial bathhouses. The conclusions of this report on the physical and sanitary state of St. Petersburg’s commercial bathhouses, as well as their mode of operation, were published in an official government newspaper in May 1871.<sup>55</sup> Its authors argued that the city’s bathhouses suffered from several shortcomings. Firstly, the water supply was a major concern: badly constructed piping led to water shortages and poor water quality. Secondly, improper heating resulted in the frequent presence of carbon monoxide in the steam rooms. Thirdly, the authors concluded that bathhouse buildings were, as a rule, poorly maintained and constructed, which led to insanitary and potentially unsafe conditions across all sections. Draughts, poor ventilation, slippery or grimy floors, and the lack of evacuation routes were among the problems noted.<sup>56</sup>

While the documentary evidence does not suggest a direct link between this report and the passage of municipal bathhouse reform legislation six years later, many of the shortcomings mentioned by the bathhouse commission were addressed by the first comprehensive piece of city legislation drafted specifically with regard to urban commercial bathhouses. This legislation (*Obiazatel’noe Postanovlenie ob Ustroistve v Sankt-Peterburge Obshchestvennykh Ban’* or ‘Binding ordinance on the organization of common bathhouses in St. Petersburg’), which I refer to as the ‘Bathhouse Ordinance’, or simply the ‘Ordinance’ of 1879, set out the city government’s requirements pertaining to the construction, physical maintenance and operation of city bathhouses.<sup>57</sup> The goal of the Ordinance was to standardize the physical characteristics and services of the commercial bathhouses, and thereby to improve sanitary conditions for their customers. It represents a boldly systematic attempt to extend the government sphere deep into St. Petersburg’s commercial bathing commons, with an attention to architectural detail every bit as insistent as in comparable spaces of disciplinary modernity.

The first part of the Ordinance set out, for instance, a set of exacting standards for the construction and internal layout of bathhouses – avowedly to ensure proper ventilation and to avoid draughts and other health and safety risks. It specified, for example, that commercial bathhouses must have brick walls of a certain minimum thickness to ensure proper insulation, a ceiling height of at least five arshines (3.5 m) to ensure sufficient air circulation, double pane windows to protect visitors from the cold, and floors of certain specifications to prevent the build-up of deep-seated grime. Restrictions were also imposed upon the ventilation system, the cleanness and sufficiency of the water supply, and steam room heating. Construction standards were supplemented, moreover, by planning restrictions intended to enforce gender-separate bathing, with separate entrances to male and female sections to ensure that men and women did not so much as see each other at the bathhouse, let alone bathe together.<sup>58</sup>

The second part of the Ordinance regulated the use of internal spaces, opening hours, entrance fees and the conduct of bathhouse operations, in what was undoubtedly an attempt to standardize and commoditize the bathing experience. Regulation severely restricted the provision of auxiliary services and regulated the working conditions for bathhouse attendants. Medical services (such as doctors, nurses, and gynaecologists) now had to be licensed by medico-forensic police. Other services also became subject to onerous restrictions. For example, any kitchen operating in a bathhouse now had to pass the same stringent inspections to which restaurant kitchens were subject – a requirement that would significantly increase costs. The role of bathhouse attendants was also extensively addressed. Attendants were no longer permitted to sleep in the bathhouse when off duty and had to pass regular, free medical checks. Moreover, the Ordinance again explicitly created gender-specified working spaces in commercial bathhouses: male attendants could only work in male bathhouse sections, while female attendants could only work in the female sections. That said, the Ordinance did not set a minimum wage for bathhouse attendants, therefore leaving intact the former system by which attendants relied mainly or exclusively on tips from visitors for their livelihood. Indeed, the reduction in working hours and the need to pay for a lodging elsewhere left attendants as reliant on gratuities as ever.<sup>59</sup> This part of the Ordinance also specified that entrance fees for the third- and first-class sections were to be raised by a third and those of the second-class section by a quarter.

The third and final section of the Ordinance specified deadlines for compliance and the consequences of failure to comply. Two years were given to bathhouse owners to implement all necessary changes. In 1881, city officials were to re-inspect all bathhouses, and those that did not comply would be temporarily or permanently closed and sealed.<sup>60</sup>

All this sounds stringent enough, but judging by the limited historical evidence available, the attempt to regulate St. Petersburg's commercial bathhouses was not remotely successful. In July 1881, after the inspection of all of the city's sixty commercial bathhouses, officials concluded that only eleven of them were compliant.<sup>61</sup> Several of the remaining forty-nine were closed, but clearly the city administration could not dispense with the vast majority of institutions. The majority of commercial bathhouses merely operated under the constant threat of forced closure. Nevertheless, the city administration, seemingly impervious to the reports of failed implementation, subsequently expanded the list of restrictions in the second part of the Ordinance. An 1887 amendment stipulated that bathhouses had to remain closed during the night, with the *nomernaia baniia* shutting half an hour before the other sections.<sup>62</sup> In 1903, four paragraphs of the 1879 Ordinance were revised to address overcrowding, limiting the number of visitors based on the size and parameters of a bathhouse, and restricting bathing in bathhouse courts (many bathhouse owners had absorbed courtyards into their operations as an inexpensive measure to expand capacity).<sup>63</sup>

A full assessment of the effectiveness of the Ordinance of 1879 is impossible, since no evidence of subsequent inspections seems to have survived. However, in 1910, in a scheme 'for the establishment of municipal bathhouses' (*Ob ustroistve gorodskikh narodnykh ban*'), the city administration directly commissioned the construction of model bathhouses at public expense, much as in Liverpool or Manchester.<sup>64</sup> Although this scheme was never realized, its adoption by the city administration's contains an inherent admission of the ineffectiveness of the previously attempted reforms.<sup>65</sup> In fact, the sanitary commission's expert report prepared for city council (*Gorodskaiia Uprava*) in support of funding the first municipal bathhouse described commercial bathhouses as unsanitary places fraught with immoral activity and characterized bathhouse owners as ruthless businessmen prepared to optimize income to the detriment of their customers and by breaching the law.<sup>66</sup> Had they been built, such institutions would potentially have reduced the gap between St. Petersburg and the Western bathhouse movement. As the partially surviving tender documentation makes clear, city officials had decided to create sanitized and standardized 'factories for washing' combining the merits of recent innovations in construction technologies and hygiene.<sup>67</sup>

In March 1910, the city council chose the Vasilievkiĭ city borough (in the north-west of the city) as the site for the construction of the first public bathhouse.<sup>68</sup> The engineer A. Rozenberg won the tender with a project cheerfully entitled *S legkim parom!* or 'Enjoy your bath!'. The new model bathhouse was to be functional, spacious and low cost. A well-ventilated and well-lit two-storey building with separate male and female sections on the first and ground floor, respectively. The size of the building was generously calculated on the basis of the target capacity set out in the tender documentation to provide services to over a thousand bathers at a time, with changing, washing, and steam rooms in the male and female sections. A separate laundry room and gynaecologist's cabinet were the only spaces dedicated to auxiliary services, and every other function seems to have been deemed superfluous, including those where enjoyment or leisure was the main draw. There was, for example, no kitchen in the municipal design. Even the habitual dipping pools had been excluded as an unnecessary and unsanitary fixture of the commercial bathing commons. The design for the utilitarian washing facilities, however, met the highest specifications, including state-of-the-art ventilation and heating, and a layout specifically designed to optimize the movements of visitors without creating crowds or bottlenecks. As a statement of a re-moralized, entirely functional, bathing institution, the municipal bathhouse could hardly be bettered.<sup>69</sup>

The city council allocated over 200,000 roubles to fund construction of the winning project.<sup>70</sup> This sum would have constituted around 5% of the city's ever-growing annual budget for health and sanitation, which is a measure of the importance attached to this project, bearing in mind that it was supposed to be the first of many.<sup>71</sup> The project, however, as we have already noted, never came to fruition. The archives reviewed for this paper do not contain direct evidence of the reasons for its abandonment or cancellation, but financial constraints must have been of the first importance, since the start of Russia's costly war effort coincided with a 40% increase in the estimated project costs, reason enough to stop the project.<sup>72</sup> That said, there were other, more structural and entrenched, problems that beset the attempt to bring communal bathing within the framework of municipal regulation.

## 4 The bathing commons and the failure of municipal reform

Why then was St. Petersburg's culture of communal bathing so intractable to the kinds of municipal regulation and reform that would have aligned the city more closely with the Western experience? Most importantly, forms of regulation such as the 1879 Ordinance and its subsequent amendments would have disrupted the intricately negotiated relationships that made up what I have called the city's commercial bathing 'quasi-commons'. Compliance with the first part of the Ordinance, in particular, would have required significant reconstruction in all but the newest of St. Petersburg's bathhouses. The restrictions set out in the second part – together with price controls – virtually ensured that the investment required to make these changes could never be recouped. Not surprisingly, the prospects for the construction of new bathhouses were even worse. Indeed, despite accelerated population growth, from 1881 to 1890 not a single new bathhouse opened its doors, which stands in sharp contrast to the preceding decades, when on average five to six new bathhouses were opened each decade (Fig. 4). Bathhouse owners were not silent, and vehemently opposed the 1879 Ordinance, seeking relief from individual requirements and lobbying the city government for tax relief and/or further increases in regulated entrance fees.<sup>73</sup> The result was a long period of negotiation and adaptation, during which bathhouse owners relied for their financial survival on the one section that was not subject to price controls and which was less heavily regulated, the *nomernaia baniia*.<sup>74</sup> Just as importantly, prostitution became an ever more prominent feature of the bathhouse commons after the Ordinance came into effect. It is likely that by promoting or tacitly accepting prostitution as a feature of St. Petersburg's urban bathhouse culture, the various parties to the commercial bathing 'quasi-commons' could re-negotiate the terms of their cooperation and jointly re-established the sector's viability in the face of inept legislation.

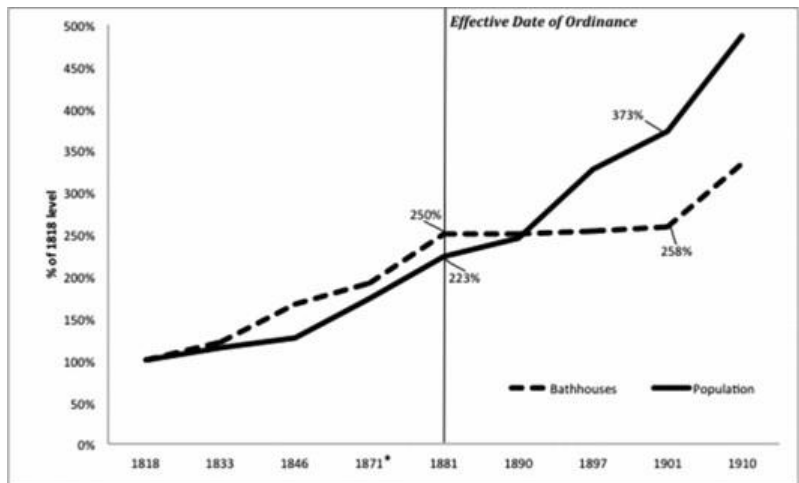


Fig. 4 The city population and number of bathhouses as a percentage of their respective 1818 levels. Sources: On population: ed. B. Kochakov, *Ocherki Istorii Leningrada, Period Kapitalizma, Vtoraya Polovina XIX veka*, Volume II, Moscow-Leningrad, 1957; ed. B. Kochakov, *Ocherki Istorii Leningrada, Period Imperializma i Burzhuzno-Demokraticeskikh Revolyutsii*, Volume III, Moscow-Leningrad, 1956. On bathhouses: F. 792, o. 1, d. 3337, Po zayavleniyu glasnogo V.I.Likhacheva, TSGIA SPb; F. 479, o. 22, d. 1479 O materialakh za 1900 (Spiski Vladei'tsev ban'); I. A. Bogdanov, *Tri Veka*, 63. \*1869 for population.

The archival record contains traces of direct negotiation, although most of the files of the sanitary commission responsible for implementing the Ordinance have been lost. An 1883 petition from a group of bathhouse owners has survived because it was addressed directly to the mayor's office. Its authors requested tax relief for the *nomernaia baniā* sections.<sup>75</sup> Only this section remained profitable – a claim corroborated by letters from bathhouse owners.<sup>76</sup> A second petition from a group of bathhouse owners filed in 1900 refers explicitly to the year 1879, emphasising the financial burden of implementing regulatory requirements and the rising cost of construction materials. The emphasis on construction materials indicates that the bathhouse owners felt the financial burden of the reconstruction measures required by the Ordinance to be particularly burdensome. Its authors petitioned for an increase of entrance fees by a fifth in the *prostaia* and *grivennaia* bathhouse sections and by a third in the more expensive *dvugrivennaia* section in order to pay for these changes.<sup>77</sup> Notably, the requested increases mirror those implemented by the Ordinance and would have brought prices for all bathhouse sections up by the same 60% against the pre-1879 level. Both of these petitions were rejected, but their submission indicates that bathhouse owners attempted to directly negotiate the terms of bathhouse regulation. Interestingly, the authors of neither of these petitions sought relief from or openly questioned individual measures, preferring instead to seek economic compensation for their implementation. This suggests that either they recognized the requirements of the Ordinance as appropriate, or wished to avoid questioning government authority even on matters intimately familiar to them.

It is clear, however, that most bathhouse owners sought safety in numbers, rightly assuming that given the non-compliance rate of 82% of bathhouses in 1881, the sanitary commission would find it challenging to take broad action. Indeed, the Ordinance itself did not anticipate this collective response, containing only one level of non-compliance and stipulating closure as the only governmental response. Several letters from bathhouse owners whose bathhouses had been shut down following inspections, dating from 1890 to 1900, nevertheless indicate that negotiated non-compliance was an option. Thus, certain sections could be reopened even in the event of non-compliance elsewhere, and agreement on measures to address the most consequential breaches sufficed to warrant partial reopening.

The economics of building new bathhouses were also fundamentally altered by the Ordinance. Non-compliance created significant additional investment risk, since any newly constructed bathhouse subsequently falling foul of the inspectors could by law be forced to remain shut. Secondly, the cost of compliance for new bathhouses was even higher than for existing ones, since additional requirements applied, including the minimal ceiling height of 3.5 m. Thirdly, new bathhouses were now restricted to areas in which Neva water was available. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that bathhouse construction ground to a halt in the decade following the introduction of the Ordinance. In fact, the regular pattern of bathhouse construction did not resume until the first decade of the twentieth century (see Fig. 4). Given the roughly parallel pattern of bathhouse construction and migration-driven population growth up until 1879 and the city's uninterrupted growth thereafter, the complete halt and sluggish resumption of bathhouse construction between 1879 and 1901 corroborates the view that the requirements set out in the Ordinance rendered compliant bathhouse construction and operations significantly less profitable. It is unlikely that this hiatus in construction can be sufficiently explained by a boom-and-bust cycle that happened to coincide with the passing of the Ordinance, as the degree by which the pace of bathhouse construction exceeded population growth between 1818 and 1879 (a cumulative 150% vs. 123%) is likely to be more than explained by bathhouse construction catching up with explosive population growth from 1800 to 1818 (75%) (see also Fig. 4). This, however, cannot be definitively tested, since reliable data regarding bathhouse construction for the period preceding 1818 has not been found.

Faced with these twin financial and regulatory challenges, the city's commercial bathing 'quasi-commons' – including patrons, attendants and owners – demonstrated a surprising resilience. Besides commercial lobbying and negotiated



non-compliance, its primary stakeholders and the city government re-negotiated the terms of the cooperation that enabled the provision of communal bathing and its indispensable ‘livelihood qualities’. A signal example of this re-negotiation was the expansion of the *nomernaia baniā* sections, where prices were not regulated, allowing owners and operators to increase the share of this section in their business whilst avoiding economically crippling investment. These sections competed freely for customers and successful competitors could pass on costs to customers – with a healthy margin on top. In two characteristic letters from 1887, bathhouse owners wrote that the *nomernaia baniā* sections of their bathhouses were the only ones still achieving a positive net income, offsetting losses from the bathhouse sections subject to price controls.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, bathhouse owners sought to expand the capacity of their common sections and to reduce the average time each visitor spent in the bathhouse. Some even imposed time-limits on bathing in order to enable a faster turn-around. Moreover, capacity was increased by appropriating outdoor spaces that could be closed off and used all the year round – in the summer for washing, and in the winter for cooling off - which had the added benefit of decreasing the amount of ‘leisure time’ visitors spent between steam room sessions.<sup>79</sup> Others resorted to even more innovative ideas, such as serving beer and a buffet in the entrance hall.<sup>80</sup>

Perhaps the most important adaptation, however, was linked to the role of bathhouse attendants. Following the introduction of the Ordinance, the number of shifts was reduced in line with shorter opening hours and attendants could no longer remain at the bathhouse when not on duty. In the absence of any other changes, these restrictions would have reduced attendants' income while increasing their cost of living, as they now had to pay for lodgings elsewhere. Like bathhouse owners, their response was to expand in the most profitable areas of their business. As indicated by a wealth of circumstantial evidence, this seems to have been achieved by recourse to the sexual and prostitudinal economy. Sexual encounters between individuals might well suggest the resilience, even reinvigoration, of the communal aspects of bathing. But even where payment was made from one partner to another, aspects of what are called here a ‘quasi-commons’ are at work, nested informally as it was within the commercial bathhouse sector, and correspondingly resistant to municipal regulation. Of course, prostitution was hardly new to St. Petersburg's bathhouses, as demonstrated by the 1866 trial of Vassilii Ivanov, a 20-year-old bathhouse attendant engaging in homosexual sex with visitors for tips, which were then shared with fellow-attendants in a kind of cartel system.<sup>81</sup> Attendants were well known to participate in prostitution and to engage prostitutes on behalf of bathhouse visitors.<sup>82</sup> There are several indications, however, that the link between prostitution and bathhouses became closer during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. One such indication is the city police's decision in 1887 to open a dedicated file on cases involving prostitution and sex at bathhouses.<sup>83</sup> Protocols and case logs in this file are complemented by correspondence from anonymous visitors complaining about ‘debauchery at the bathhouse’ (*razvrat v baniakh*). One such letter writer concludes that the city's commercial bathhouses have ‘turned into dens of debauchery, which has reached its utter limits and is expressed in an entire series of phenomena of the most immoral character’.<sup>84</sup> In several cases, responses from bathhouse owners or managers have also survived. Many of them, unsurprisingly, point the accusing finger towards bathhouse attendants.<sup>85</sup> Another indication of the rising prominence of prostitution in St. Petersburg's commercial bathhouses is a much-publicized study by the venereologist Veniamin Tarnovskii on the subject of homosexual prostitution in the city's baths, published in 1888 after extensive interviews with bathhouse visitors and attendants over the preceding two years. Tarnovskii estimated that ‘three quarters of male attendants were willing to engage in “active” anal intercourse with this category of pederast [bathhouse visitors] for cash’.<sup>86</sup> The contemporary poet Mikhail Kuzmin attests to this culture, describing his own experiences of homosexual cruising at commercial bathhouses. He records payment for sexual encounters with bathhouse attendants in diary entries relating to the period from 1905 to 1907. Two of Kuzmin's long-time lovers were bathhouse attendants, and he repeatedly expressed his fondness for the *baniā* and the opportunity for sexual intimacy they provided.<sup>87</sup>

Understood in the context of the bathing commons and its commercialised counterpart, these practices likely constituted an economic and cultural adaptation by its members and stakeholders. For attendants, prostitution, whether by direct or indirect participation, provided much needed compensation for lost income and privileges. Visitors made full use of their services. But bathhouse owners with an eye on the bottom line also had good reason to acquiesce in this activity. As the recipients of a higher income from the operations of their *nomernaia baniā*, functioning as a ‘hotel by the hour’ for intimate encounters, they benefited from sex and sexual commerce at the bathhouse.

The association of commercial bathhouses with prostitution became especially deeply embedded in St. Petersburg's urban culture. In 1908, for example, the semi-official daily newspaper *Peterburgskii Listok* published a front-page editorial on sexual practices at the city's commercial bathhouses, under the headline ‘many forms of outrage – we know full well what goes on behind these walls’.<sup>88</sup> In the decades following the passing of the Ordinance, prostitution firmly established itself in the public mind and in the police logs as a fixture of the city's commercial bathing ‘quasi-commons’. Its prominence firmly underscored the role of the bathhouse as an accepted ‘practice of pleasure’, not just a ‘factory for bathing’, as city authorities may have preferred.<sup>89</sup> Thus, Foucault describes the European baths in the Middle Ages, and their vestiges in nineteenth-century France, as a ‘place of pleasure and encounter, which slowly disappeared in Europe’.<sup>90</sup> They were a ‘sort of cathedral of pleasure at the heart of the city, where people could go as often as they want, where they walked about, picked each other up, met each other, took their pleasure, ate, drank, discussed...’.<sup>91</sup> Rather than being ‘cleaned up’, in late imperial St. Petersburg, commercial bathhouses seem to have been reinforced in their role as places of a semi-public ‘panopticon’ of sexual practices, a ‘place of pleasure and encounter’, in part precisely because of the failure of regulation.

## 5 Conclusion

This seemingly perverse outcome of governmental legislation, which was passed with the explicit intention of making bathhouses cleaner, safer and morally uplifting, reveals an important feature of St. Petersburg's urban modernity and its connection with a rural, communal past. On the face of it, the Ordinance failed because it contained insufficient elements to gain the support of the very constituency that had to fund the measures it mandated and make them work. The experience of bathhouse attendants and the *nomernaia baniā* demonstrates that the more or less self-organizing principles of the commons contributed to its survival in the face of commercially potentially crippling legislation. The source of this resilience, I argue, can be traced to the cultural heritage of the bathing commons, which provided the basis for the modern urban adaptation of rural communal bathing practices and challenged the disciplinary ambitions of governmental

regulation. An autocratic-paternalistic Russian model of governmentality, armed with a scientifically well-informed understanding of sanitary and hygienic requirements and the technologies available for meeting them, signally failed to extend the sphere of enlightened government influence into the confines of St. Petersburg's bathing culture – either by regulation or by providing municipal alternatives to the commercial bathhouses. As Foucault put it, 'it became apparent that if one governed too much, one did not govern at all – that one provoked results contrary to those one desired'.<sup>92</sup> Far from a successful penetration or appropriation of the city's bathing spaces by progressive regulatory control, the degree of government influence over these spaces, if anything, declined, as the rise of a prostitution economy in the bathhouses suggests. St. Petersburg's bathhouse 'quasi-commons' emerged stronger still, by emphasizing aspects of the bathing experience other than ablution, as it shifted its resources towards the *nomernaia baniia* and various auxiliary practices, which were in their adapted, anonymous form distinctively urban, but at the same time harked back to the village roots of communal bathing as both a necessity and a pastime. These were the rocks on which governmentalisation of bathing foundered. Perhaps these adaptations of the urban bathing commons and its hybrid forms are partially responsible for its survival over the following decades and help explain why communal bathing was never crowded out by private bathing as it has been in the West. The career of commercial bathing in St. Petersburg constitutes a striking counter narrative in the historical geography of the water revolution, hygienic modernity and liberal governmentality.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>D. Randall, Cracks in the granite: paternal care, the imperial façade, and the limits of authority in the 1824 St. Petersburg flood, *Journal of Urban History* 40 (2014) 480.

<sup>2</sup>With the exception of Ethan Pollock, see K. Kashin and E. Pollock, Public health and bathing in late imperial Russia: a statistical approach, *The Russian Review* 72 (2013) 66–93.

<sup>3</sup>A. Dubrovskiaa and V. Dubrovskii, *Russkaia Baniia i Massazh*, Moscow, 2008; N. Tolstoj, *Slavianskie Drevnosti: Étnolingvističeskii Slovar' v 5-ti Tomakh*, Volume 1, Moscow, 1995.

<sup>4</sup>J-P. Goubert, *The Conquest of Water: The Advent of Health in the Industrial Age*, Cambridge, 1989; S. Mosley, Common ground: integrating social and environmental history, *Journal of Social History* 39 (2006) 915–933; M. Kaika, *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*, London, 2005; M. Kaika and E. Swyngedouw, Fetishizing the modern city: the phantasmagoria of urban technological networks, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 24 (2000) 120–138.

<sup>5</sup>M. Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*, London, 1983, 173.

<sup>6</sup>T. Crook, 'Schools for the moral training of the people': public baths, liberalism and the promotion of cleanliness in Victorian Britain, *European Review of History/Revue Européenne d'Histoire* 13 (2006) 21–47; C. McFarlane, Governing the contaminated city: infrastructure and sanitation in colonial and post-colonial Bombay, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 32 (2008) 415–435.

<sup>7</sup>M. Gandy, *The Fabric of Space: Water, Modernity, and the Urban Imagination*, Cambridge MA, 2014, 13–14.

<sup>8</sup>V. Taylor and F. Trentmann, Liquid politics: water and the politics of everyday life in the modern city, *Past and Present* 211 (2011) 199–241.

<sup>9</sup>The term 'commercial bathhouse' was and continues to be used to refer to a publicly accessible, privately owned bathhouse. Such institutions could be found in every Russian city and they were usually operated for profit (some were attached to factories and or other institutions). I use the definition proposed by Kashin and Pollock, Public health and bathing, 70.

<sup>10</sup>D. Glassberg, The design of reform: the public bath movement in America, *American Studies* 20 (1979) 5–21; C. Otter, Making liberalism durable: vision and civility in the late Victorian city, *Social History* 27 (2002) 1–15; T. Osborne and N. Rose, Governing cities: notes on the spatialisation of virtue, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17 (1999) 737–760; A. Renner, A nation that bathes together: New York city's progressive era public baths, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 67 (2008) 504–531.

<sup>11</sup>Gandy, *Fabric of Space*, 13.

<sup>12</sup>A. Chekhov, V bane, in: A. Chekhov, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii i Pisem v Tridtsati Tomakh. Rasskazy. Ūmoreski, 1884–1885*, Volume 3, Moscow, 1975, 178–186.

- <sup>13</sup>S. Boym, *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*, Cambridge, MA, 2009.
- <sup>14</sup>E. Eizenberg, Actually existing commons: three moments of space of community gardens in New York City, *Antipode* 44 (2012) 765; see also E. Eizenberg, *From the Ground Up: Community Gardens in New York City and the Politics of Spatial Transformation*, Farnham, 2013.
- <sup>15</sup>A.I. Bogdanov, *Istoricheskoe, Geograficheskoe i Topograficheskoe Opisanie Sankt-Peterburga ot Nachala Zavedeniia Ego, s 1703 po 1751 god*, St. Petersburg, 1779.
- <sup>16</sup>I.A. Bogdanov, *Tri Veka Peterburgskoi Bani*, St. Petersburg, 2000.
- <sup>17</sup>Bogdanov, *Tri Veka*, 27.
- <sup>18</sup>Bogdanov, *Istoricheskoe Opisanie Sankt-Peterburga*.
- <sup>19</sup>Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, *Ustav Blabochiniia*, Vol. 27, xxi 468, no. 15379 (8 April 1782), paragraf 71. [Complete Collection of Laws and Regulations of Russian Empire, *Police Ordinance*, Vol. 27, xxi 468, no. 15379 (8 April 1782), article 71.
- <sup>20</sup>This regulation is mentioned in the archival file: Fond 792, opis 1, delo 7705 [hereafter F.#, o.#, d.#], Po Khodataistvu Banevladel'tsev Otnositel'no Uvelicheniia taksy Vkhodnoi Platy za Pol'zovanie Baniami, 1900, Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv, Sankt-Peterburg, (Russian State Historical Archive in St. Petersburg) [hereafter TSGIA SPb].
- <sup>21</sup>Crook, 'Schools for the moral training', 30, 32; M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, London, 1991.
- <sup>22</sup>V. Znamensky, *O Russkikh Baniakh v Gigienicheskom Otnoshenii*, St. Petersburg, 1861, 3; *Illustrirovaniia Gazeta*, 22 (10 June 1871) 324–325; *Vedomosti Sankt-Peterburgskoi Gorodskoi Politsii* [or Police and City Council Information Bulletin, hereafter *Vedomosti Policii*], 119 (28 May 1871) 1–2.
- <sup>23</sup>P. Bailey, Entertainmentality! Liberalizing modern pleasure in the Victorian leisure industry, in: S. Gunn and J. Vernon (Eds.), *The Peculiarities of Liberal Modernity in Imperial Britain*, Berkeley, 2011, 126.
- <sup>24</sup>Znamensky, *O Russkikh Baniakh*, 34.
- <sup>25</sup>There are 100 kopeks in 1 rouble. Entrance fees were introduced at this level in 1879. *Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gradonachal'stva i Sankt-Peterburgskoi Gorodskoi Politsii* [hereafter *Vestnik Gradonachal'stva*, a continuation of *Vedomosti Policii* under a new name] 172 (29 July 1879) 1–2.
- <sup>26</sup>Eizenberg, Actually existing commons, 766.
- <sup>27</sup>F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, *Delo o Zakrytii Ban'*, *Dopustivshikh Besporyadok i Razvrat*, 1887–1890, TSGIA SPb; M. Kuzmin, *Dnevnik, 1905–1907*, St. Petersburg, 2000; *Peterburgskii listok*, Bani i obshchestvennaia npravstvennost, 3 (4 January 1908).
- <sup>28</sup>F. 479, o. 22, d. 1479, *O Materialakh za 1900, 1899–1900*, TSGIA, SPb, where the number of buckets of water used per year is specified as basis for taxation.
- <sup>29</sup>*Peterburgskii listok*, Pisma v redaktsiiu, 32 (2 February 1900); I. Ereemeev, *Gorod S.-Peterburg s Tochki Zreniia Meditsinskoii Politsii*, St. Petersburg, 1897; P.Ju. Sjuzor, *Torgovije (narodnije) bani Voronina*, *Zodchij* 11 (1872); V. Znamensky, *O Russkikh Baniakh*.
- <sup>30</sup>The working day of an attendant could last as long as 15 h, and the first shift started as early as 4am, while the last one ended well past midnight. Attendants might spend up to 30 sessions in the steam room during a single shift. Ereemeev, *Gorod S.-Peterburg*, 262–264, 515–516.
- <sup>31</sup>Znamensky, *O Russkikh Baniakh*.
- <sup>32</sup>N.A. Leykin, *Stseny iz Kupecheskogo Byta*, St. Peterburg, 1871, 113–115, 113.
- <sup>33</sup>Znamensky, *O Russkikh Baniakh*, 39.
- <sup>34</sup>Ereemeev, *Gorod S.-Peterburg*.
- <sup>35</sup>R. Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representation and Production of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930*, Cambridge, 1; F. 792, o. 1, d. 7705, Po Khodataistvu Banevladel'tsev, 1900, TSGIA SPb; The law of 1783 forbade unisex bathing in common sections only; see Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, *Ustav Blabochiniia*, Vol. 27, xxi 468, no. 15379 (8 April 1782), paragraf 71. [Complete Collection of Laws and Regulations of Russian Empire, *Police Ordinance*, Vol. 27, xxi 468, no. 15379 (8 April 1782), article 71.].

- <sup>36</sup> *Nomernaia baniā* came at all price levels. Cheap ones were very simple with only a tub, a bench and some hooks on the wall. The most expensive looked like a luxurious hotel rooms and had private steam rooms attached. There are detailed description of *nomernaia baniā* in Ereemeev, *Gorod S.-Peterburg*; The Voronin bathhouse had a *nomernaia baniā* with luxurious apartments consisting of several rooms, see Sjuzor, Torgovije (narodnije) bani.
- <sup>37</sup> F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, Delo o Zakrytii Ban'.
- <sup>38</sup> Eizenberg, Actually existing commons, 766.
- <sup>39</sup> Znamensky, *O Russkikh Baniakh*.
- <sup>40</sup> Here, and in the rest of this paragraph, I am following the spirit if not the letter of arguments in M. Hardt and A. Negri, *Commonwealth*, Cambridge MA, 2009.
- <sup>41</sup> Sjuzor, Torgovije (narodnije) bani.
- <sup>42</sup> N.A. Gol'denberg, *Bani dlia Voisk i dlia Narodnykh Mass*, St. Petersburg, 1898; I.T. Spasskii, *Kratkii ocherk vrachebnykh otnoshenii ban'*, *Drug Zdraviya* 1 (1835) 44–45; M.G. Kurlova, K voprosu o lechenii ozhireniia goryachimi vannami i russkoi parovoī baneī, *Vrach* 42 (1884) 715–716; S.Īu. Fialkovskii, *Materialy k voprosu o vliianii bani na zdorovyi i bol'noi glaz cheloveka*, *Vrach* 9 (1881) 137–143; A. Fadeev, *K Ucheniū o Russkikh Baniakh*, doctoral dissertation, University of St. Petersburg, 1890; I.A. Karvasovskii, *Kratkii Ocherk Istorii Ban' i Znachenie ikh v Gigiyenicheskom i Terapevticheskom Otnosheniakh*, Kiev, 1884; K.V. Markov, *Voiskovye Bani i Prachechnye*, St. Petersburg, 1900; C. Otter, Cleansing and clarifying: technology and perception in nineteenth-century London, *Journal of British Studies* 43 (2004) 40–64; Renner, A nation that bathes together; Crook, 'Schools for the moral training'.
- <sup>43</sup> Ereemeev, *Gorod S.-Peterburg*, 559; St. Peterburgskaia Gorodskaia Obshchaia Duma [hereafter Gorodskaia Duma], Po voprosu o prinuditel'nom ozdorovlenii goroda S.-Peterburga. *Izvestiia St. Peterburgskoi Gorodskoi Obshchoi Dumy* [hereafter *Izvestiia Dumy*], 173 (1909) 1443–1449; F. 515, o. 1, d. 6702, O. Zaloge Imushchestva, N.N. Gavrilovoi, N.I. Vul'fson, E.O. Ivanovoi po Suvorovskomu Prospektu, 69, ĩaroslavskoi ul.2, i ĩaroslavskoi pl.2 1890–1914, TSGIA SPb; This file contains detailed descriptions of several bathhouses in the city provided by the City Credit Society, which organized bathhouse inspections for loan securitization; F. 210, o. 1, d. 319, Ob Osmotre Domov, Dvorov i Drugikh Mest Stolitsi, 1908–1909, TSGIA SPb.
- <sup>44</sup> Gorodskaia Duma, Vodostabzhenii v Peterburge, *Izvestiia Dumy* 193 (1914) 2993–3000; Gorodskaia Duma, O korennom uluchshenii vodostabzheniia S.-Peterburga, *Izvestiia Dumy* 181 (1911) 577–587.
- <sup>45</sup> F. 515, o. 1, d. 6702, O Zaloge Imushchestva, TSGIA SPb; F. 210, o. 1, d. 613, Ob Organizatsii i Deiatel'nosti Gorodskoi Sanitarnogo Nadzora, 1914, TSGIA SPb.
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- <sup>47</sup> Gorodskaia Duma, Vodostabzhenii v Peterburge.
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- <sup>51</sup> McFarlane, *Governing the contaminated city*, 418.
- <sup>52</sup> See the recently published monograph by Malcolm Shifrin, *Victorian Turkish Baths*, Historic England, 2015. Also available at <http://www.victorianturkishbath.org/thebook.htm>, last viewed on 4th November 2015.
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- <sup>56</sup> *Vedomosti Politsii* 118 (27 May 1871) 1–2; *Vedomosti Politsii* 119 (28 May 1871) 1–2.
- <sup>57</sup> *Vestnik Gradonachal'stva* 172 (29 July 1879) 1–2.
- <sup>58</sup> *Vestnik Gradonachal'stva* 172 (29 July 1879) 1.

<sup>59</sup> *Vestnik Gradonachal'stva* 172 (29 July 1879) 2.

<sup>60</sup> F. 792, o.1, d. 3337, Po Zaiavleniui Glasnogo V.I.Likhacheva o Neispolnenii Upravoii Izdannogo v 1879 Obiazatel'nogo Postanovleniia o Baniakh, 1882–1887, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>61</sup> F. 792, o.1, d. 3337, Po Zaiavleniui Glasnogo V.I.Likhacheva, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>62</sup> F. 792, o.1, d. 3337, Po Zaiavleniui Glasnogo V.I.Likhacheva, TSGIA, SPb, 10.

<sup>63</sup> F. 792, o.1, d. 8532, Ob Izmenenii i Dopolnenii Obiazatel'nogo Postanovleniia ob Ustroistve v S.-Peterburge Obshchestvennykh ban' i o Poriadke Proizvodstva Bannogo Promysla, 1902, TSGIA, SPb; *Vedomosti Gradonachal'stva*, 132 (20 June 1903) 1.

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<sup>65</sup> F. 210, o. 1, d. 484, Ob Ustroistve, TSGIA SPb; see also F. 569, o. 11, d. 426 Delo o Zakrytii ban', TSGIA SPb.

<sup>66</sup> F. 210, o. 1, d. 484, Ob Ustroistve, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>67</sup> Gol'denberg, *Bani dlia Voisk*.

<sup>68</sup> F. 210, o. 1, d. 484, Ob Ustroistve, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>69</sup> F. 210, o. 1, d. 484, Ob Ustroistve, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>70</sup> M. Fedorov, Finansovoje polozenije Peterburga, *Gorodskoje Delo* 1 (1909) 13.

<sup>71</sup> F. 210, o. 1, d. 484, Ob Ustroistve, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>72</sup> F. 210, o. 1, d. 484, Ob Ustroistve, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>73</sup> F. 792, o. 1, d. 3682, Po Pros'be Soderzhatelei Somernykh Odnosemeinykh ban' ob Otmene Trebovaniia s nikh Aktsiza v Dokhod Goroda, 1883, TSGIA SPb; F. 792, o. 1, d. 7705, Po Khodataistvu Banevladel'tsev, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>74</sup> *Vestnik Gradonachal'stva* 172 (29 July 1879) 2.

<sup>75</sup> F. 792, o. 1, d. 3682, Po Pros'be Soderzhatelei, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>76</sup> F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, Delo o Zakrytii ban', TSGIA SPb.

<sup>77</sup> F. 792, o. 1, d. 7705, Po Khodataistvu Banevladel'tsev, TSGIA SPb.

<sup>78</sup> F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, Delo o Zakrytii ban', TSGIA SPb, letter from Timofei Kriukov, 28–28v or from Ivan Petrov, 35v.

<sup>79</sup> Sjuzor, Torgovije (narodnie) bani.

<sup>80</sup> *Peterburgskii Listok*, Pis'ma v redaktsiui, 32 (2 February 1900).

<sup>81</sup> V.M. Tarnovskii, *Izvrashchenie Polovogo Chuvstva, Sudebno-Psikhiatricheskii Ocherk*, St. Petersburg, 1885, 69.

<sup>82</sup> See V.I. Chugin, Zametka o russkikh banykh v saniterom otnoshenii, *Vrach* 35 (1880) 577–578 and *Vrach* 36 (1880) 585–587; Tarnovskii, *Izvrashchenie Polovogo Chuvstva*; V.O. Merzheyevskii, *Sudebnaia Ginekologiya. Rukovodstvo dlya Vrachei i Iuristov*, St. Petersburg, 1878, 238–241; V.P. Ruadze, *K Sudu! Gomoseksual'nyi Peterburg*, St. Petersburg, 1908; I.B. Fuks, *Gomoseksualizm kak Prestuplenie*, St. Petersburg, 1914. For modern commentary see D. Healey, *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent*, Chicago, 2001; M.D. Steinberg, *Petersburg Fin de Siècle*, New Haven, 2011. Regarding the homosexual milieu in Victorian England see also J. Potvin, Vapour and steam the Victorian Turkish bath, homosocial health, and male bodies on display, *Journal of Design History* 18 (2005) 319–333.

<sup>83</sup> F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, Delo o Zakrytii ban', TSGIA SPb.

<sup>84</sup> F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, Delo o Zakrytii ban', TSGIA SPb, 5r.

<sup>85</sup> F. 569, o. 11, d. 426, Delo o Zakrytii ban', TSGIA SPb, for example, letter from Ivan Gustov, 22r–22v.

<sup>86</sup> Healey, *Homosexual Desire*, 28.

<sup>87</sup>Kuzmin, Dnevnik.

<sup>88</sup>*Peterburgskii listok*, Bani i obshchestvenaia nravstvennost, 3 (4 January 1908).

<sup>89</sup>*Vedomosti Policii*, 119 (28 May 1871).

<sup>90</sup>P. Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader*, London, 1991, 251.

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#### Highlights

- Analyses commercial bathhouses and bathing culture in imperial St. Petersburg.
  - Adds to the literature on hygienic modernity and its water revolution.
  - Describes communal bathing and the development of a hybrid form, a 'quasi-commons'.
  - Contributes to the historical geography of governmentality and social regulation.
  - Challenges the centrality of Western experience in the discussion of urban modernity.
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