

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

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The Biopolitical Bar: Governmentality, Sexuality, and The Regulation of the Homosexual Tavern 1934-1971

Bars and taverns have been central to the geographies of urban queer folk through the 20th Century. Thus they became prime locations where local state agencies attempted governance of these marginalized bodies and spaces. Yet most urban queer historiography has focused on familiar aspects of urban politics: the police, city hall, the gayborhood, etc. A recent trend in urban political geography to consider licensing as a mode of biopolitics prompts us to look beyond these aspects and into the bars themselves. As part of a larger project exploring the neglected, quotidian and prosaic state-community spaces, this research focuses on the ways the Liquor Control Board governed homosexual bars and taverns in mid 20th Century Seattle, Washington. Drawing on archival records of enforcement and violation-hearings, he will show its importance in biopolitics, as well as unique aspects of that governance. Findings stress the need for queer historical geographies beyond certain well-researched cities, the variegated nature of the local state, the closeting aspects of this governance, and how intersectional anxieties mattered to the governance of homosexual bodies and spaces.

Friday, October 24, 2014
Derby Hall Room 1080
3:30-5:00 p.m.



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