

Treating, slumming, courting: social interaction in public entertainment venues

Throughout the 20th century, Western cities provided a range of entertainment venues that were governed by distinct conventions. Pubs accommodated male sociability, while late 20th century wine bars set the scene for a more genteel night out. Mid-century dance halls encouraged heterosexual courtship, whereas discotheques furthered displays of “coolness”. Established entertainment spaces like the cinema or variety theatres lost parts of their audiences to television, which altered their character; new formats like rock festivals established their own codes of conduct. A thesis in this area of research could focus on one particular type of venue, trace its change over time and explore the effects on behavioural conventions and social relations among its patrons. How did, for instance, the rise and decline of dance halls affect gender relations? Where did homosexuals meet and how did they socialize in the mid-20th century? Valuable sources for such a study include newspaper articles, guidebooks, reports by the police, welfare institutions and other official bodies, social-scientific surveys or interventions by the churches and civic organisations. For the case of Oslo, sources are available at the “Byarkivet”. (For an introduction to the topic, see Elizabeth Clement’s “Love for Sale” (2006), Chad Heap’s “Slumming” (2009) or Matt Houlbrook’s “Queer London” (2005). You may also want to look out for Klaus Nathaus, Why “Pop” Changed and How It Mattered, Parts I and II, forthcoming in July 2018.)

Theses may be written in English or Norwegian, and local projects making use of Norwegian sources are strongly encouraged.