

Title page

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Banning the barmaid: time, space and alcohol licensing in 1900s Glasgow

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Abstract

This article examines the decision of Glasgow's magistrates at the beginning of the twentieth century to prohibit the employment of barmaids in the city's public houses, tracing the origins and advocates of the ban as well its effects on the licensed trade and the women who worked behind bars. It responds to Mariana Valverde's recent work on the relationship between time and space in the operation of law, analysing the ways in which the magistrates sought to differentiate between licensed premises and practices so as to police the gendered boundaries of urban work and leisure culture. By attending to these vital processes of differentiation, in conclusion, it argues for research in social and cultural geography that explicitly connects the experience and management of the temporality of drinking practices to the production and regulation of licensing's perhaps more obviously spatial geographies.

Key words

Licensing; barmaid; Glasgow; public house; chronotope; parasexuality

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Introduction

Inspired by the work of Russian literary scholar Mikhail Bakhtin, Mariana Valverde (2014; 2015) has recently called for critical studies of law that do not privilege space at the expense of time. This article specifically responds to Valverde's challenge, considering the implications for social and cultural research on alcohol consumption and pub governance of a more insistent analysis of the relationship between time and space, examining the prohibition of barmaids in the pubs of the Scottish city of Glasgow. Valverde argues that Bakhtin's notion of the 'chronotope' can usefully be employed to 'designate spatially and temporally specific units of governance'. Read in this way, she argues, the pub is 'both a space and a time in which it is permissible to engage in an activity (selling beer) that would be illegal in another space (a park) or another time (after last call)' (Valverde, 2003, p. 148 (fn) and p. 149). Following Valverde's assessment of licensing as a 'time, place and manner' form of regulation, I will argue that the decision of Glasgow's Edwardian magistrates to ban barmaids was enacted through a consideration of the particularity of that 'pub' chronotope, a space marked by distinctive temporalities (Howell & Beckingham, 2015). And the management of temporality, I will suggest, was and remains of vital significance in the impress of licensing's spatial geographies on urban work and leisure culture.

Central to Valverde's account of licensing is the devolution of regulatory controls under central legislation onto local authorities. In Britain today this power now rests with elected councillors; historically, it was unelected licensing magistrates who held annual meetings to renew the certificates of credible applicants. Valverde terms these annual licensing meetings a kind of 'safety net', noting that this annual reckoning of accounts allows the state effectively to govern at a distance without necessarily having to be involved

in the day to day management of premises. Indeed, such control is carefully and cleverly devolved onto the private sector, investing it with everyday powers to prohibit and shape behaviour that rarely attract comment but are now beginning to be subjected to analysis (Valverde, 2003, p. 144 and p. 149; Johnson, 2005, p. 187). For example, in his study of a licensee's attempts to prohibit displays of same-sex intimacy in pub in London's Soho, Phil Hubbard (2012) applied the work of Valverde (2009) to demonstrate how municipal licensing powers enabled the operation of 'heterosexist' notions of public order on the premises in a way that trumped national equalities legislation (Hubbard, 2012, pp. 224-226 and 230). In this way, the regulation of problem behaviours through municipal-level licensing is implicated in important jurisdictional geographies (also see Blomley 2012).

By explicitly considering the role that time might play in that coding of problem behaviour, I want to bring the concern about licensing's spatial geographies together with cultural research on alcohol consumption and its effects that has been sensitive to concerns about time. In large part, research has focused on the distinctive spatialities of the so-called night-time economy, considering the patterning of arrests for drunkenness, for example, or the geographies of leisure and pleasure (Beckingham, 2012; Bromley & Nelson, 2002; Bromley, Tallon & Thomas, 2003; Eldridge & Roberts, 2008; Jayne & Valentine, 2014; Jayne, Valentine & Holloway 2008; Waitt, Jessop, & Gorman-Murray, 2011). But there is something particular about Valverde's (2015, pp. 41-43) claims to the pub as a specific chronotope: that is, a challenge to examine how readings of behaviour in the time-space of licensed premises *liaise* in the logics of law. In such a reading, we are not thinking simply about responses to events in the same space at different times, or even in different spaces at the same time, but rather more about how legal interventions might be shaped in relation to

differing ideas and experiences of time and temporality (Valverde, 2015, pp. 17-18; also see Moore & Valverde, 2000, p. 514).

Such experiences can certainly be shaped by alcohol's effects on the body: as Gordon Waitt and Anna de Jong (2014, p. 116) put it, '[a]lcohol transforms the experience of time through the ways that bodies connect with other bodies, objects, spaces and ideas' (also see Bøhling, 2015; Duff & Moore, 2015; Hubbard, 2013; Latham & McCormick, 2004; Shaw 2014). The emphasis on the experience of time, here, can usefully be connected to research on that of space. In her book *Queer Phenomenology*, for example, Sara Ahmed (2006 p. 8 and p. 14) styles space as a kind of second skin: bodies, she says, 'do not dwell in spaces that are exterior but rather are shaped by their dwellings and take shape by dwelling'. Space is thus 'sensational' – 'a matter of how things make their impression as being here or there, on this side or that side of a dividing line'. The experience of smells, sawdust or even ripped furniture, Taylor and Falconer (2015, p. 48) have recently suggested, shapes affective responses to bars and clubs, as well as their clientele, helping to define those dividing lines. This has also been a clear concern for regulators, and here Ahmed's (2006, p. 168) emphasis on furniture as a 'technology of convention' can usefully be applied to bar space to consider attempts to regulate behaviour. Michael Brown and Larry Knopp (2015) have, for example, shown how in its regulation of gay bars the Washington State Liquor Control Board enforced a complex set of protocols around bar-room furniture. Unwanted sexual activities were tackled through regulations that prohibited drinking standing up. Drinks could only be consumed by a drinker seated at a table, and if customers wanted to move between tables then the bartender had to be called to move their drink. This was combined with a rigorous enforcement of the minimum drinking age, allowing the

Board publicly to claim to guard against the corruption of youth without having to target directly homosexuality on licensed premises. Drinkers were encouraged to self-discipline, to embody the spatial, and by extension, social conventions of properly-functioning premises (Brown & Knopp, 2015).

Adopting Ahmed's emphasis on the role of furniture in the management of sensation, the dividing line that made the barmaid is, of course, the furniture of the bar itself. In his classic account, Peter Bailey (1998) describes the bar as a framing and containing device for the look-but-don't touch relationship between barmaid and customer, a knowingly commercialised sexuality. This he termed 'parasexuality': famously, 'sexuality that is deployed but contained, carefully channelled rather than fully discharged; in vulgar terms it might be represented as "everything but"' (Bailey, 1998, p. 151). The barmaid and pub were part of a 'heterosocial world of sex and sociability' that Bailey concluded was 'inadequately mapped by historians' (Bailey 1998, p. 173). While there were objections that women working in pubs might reduce the social stigma around women drinking in them, to many opponents it was the barmaid's very sociability, her influence on men, that proved decisive (Beckingham, 2015). They were 'decoys', employed to encourage men to drink more, said future Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald as parliament debated banning barmaids in 1908:

their employment increased the consumption of drink, because where women were employed there was a great deal of dalliance in the bar. There was a certain class of customer who went and wasted his time there, and the quarters and half-hours went, and all the time a steady consumption of liquor went on. The atmosphere was

abominable, the conversation that went on was disgusting and disgraceful.

(*Hansard*, House of Commons, 1908, November 2)¹

Importantly, MacDonald's protest draws our attention to the role of time in managing sensation, which is the focus and contribution of this article. Concerns about acts of familiarity – those 'dalliances' (*Evening Times*, 1902, April 23) – and *dwelling*, as those segments of time ticked by, triggered anxieties about the barmaid's borderline status, *irrespective* of the physical protection of the bar furniture. Regulators in Glasgow sought to identify and isolate the barmaid. Stretching the term, perhaps, they reproduced *chronotropes*: if the barmaid stood for a much broader 'sexualized, degraded urban culture' (Mullin, 2014, p. 85), I will argue that by removing her from drinking bars and individuating the chronotopes of pubs, restaurants and railway refreshment rooms regulators sought to control that landscape of sociability. The broader claim, here, is that these vital processes of differentiation highlight a careful choreographing of conventions around behaviours that were deemed to be out of time as much as out of place, with important implications for how we consider the shaping influence of temporality on the geography of licensing.

1 Temperance politics in Glasgow

The devolution of licensing to local magistrates enabled licensing outcomes to be shaped by local interest groups. There were plenty of volunteers for that work in turn of the century Glasgow; temperance feeling – much of it, Bernard Aspinwall (1984) argues, inspired by Progressive-era prohibition campaigns in the United States – produced vocal and firmly political action.² Lobbying by reformers had already brought about the demise of singing pubs and so-called 'free and easies', such that by the 1870s the city's pubs were apparently

largely male and homogeneous in terms of class (Fraser 1996, p. 326, also see Cooke 2015, p. 131). Their number had fallen from 1,546 in 1876 to 1,400 in 1900 as civic authorities continued their efforts to tackle the perceived problems associated with heavy drinking in this city of heavy industry beside the River Clyde. Fraser and Maver (1996, p. 387) suggest that drinking remained linked in the popular imagination – both of an older Liberal middle class, and the emerging labour movement – to crime and prostitution. As Linda Mahood has shown, Glasgow had pioneered a notably repressive policing policy towards prostitution in the 1870s and 1880s, such energy being mirrored in philanthropic attempts to rescue ‘fallen’ women. While this may have resulted in a decline in pub use for soliciting, as publicans apparently sought to defend their licences, attitudes towards working-class women and alcohol more generally reflected what Mahood terms an ‘assumed female sexuality’ (Mahood, 190, p. 151 and 164). We can, perhaps, see the legacy of such *assumptions* in campaigns against women in bars, notably amongst women’s temperance groups keen to define and defend an idealised femininity and domesticity (Smitley, 2009, p. 129).

Experiments in licensing could be tried in Scotland that would, as one MP put it, be ‘too far in advance of public opinion’ south of the border (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, August 1). Indeed, David Gutzke (1994, p. 371) has gone as far as to suggest that it was ‘only in patriarchal Scotland, where pub culture acquired its most misogynous aspect, where [barmaids were] banned completely’. Glasgow politics had seemingly been captured by temperance interests: we might note that in 1896 the city’s council had a majority of ‘dry’ councillors, some of whom had travelled extensively in the United States (Aspinwall, 2008, p. 114). In 1899, for example, the Liberal politician Samuel Chisholm was elected as Lord

Provost (or senior magistrate); a member of the Progressive Union and ardent prohibitionist, Kenna and Mooney describe him as initiating ‘something of a “McCarthy era” in terms of temperance militancy and intolerance’ (Maver, 2000, p. 159; Kenna & Mooney, 1983, p. 71). But while the barmaid problem offered a ready opportunity to press reform, it would be too neat to blame this on male misogyny, women social reformers being important voices in the debate. As Elspeth King (1993, p. 121) has noted, as well being an important aspect of local Liberal politics, temperance was important to many Glasgow feminists ‘who saw male abuse of strong drink as being a major factor in the continuing oppression of women’. Female delegates at a World Temperance Congress in Edinburgh in 1900, for example, thus made a positive pitch about their ‘moral superiority’, their temperance reflecting and representing ‘their formative role in the making of family and nation’, says Aspinwall (2008, p. 115). We can get a sense of just how they set about doing this from a minute in the Glasgow branch records of the British Women’s Temperance Association for February 14, 1902. Discussing petitioning parliament for the abolition of barmaids, one of the ladies read a letter from Samuel Chisholm ‘shewing that such a law was embodied in the Police Act applying to Glasgow; and that if we could prove that this law was being broken we might then make a representation to that effect to the Magistrates’ (Glasgow City Archives (GCA), TD955/15/1, British Women’s Temperance Association, Glasgow Central Branch Minute Book 1895-1905). A barmaid ban beckoned.

2 Banning the barmaid

Glasgow’s magistrates had for some time actively been seeking greater control and uniformity in the layout and management of licensed premises. At their general meeting for granting and renewing licenses, in April 1900, they decided to start keeping permanent

plans of licensed premises, not simply details of alterations. These were conventional manoeuvres for the period, part of a regulatory concern with the surveillance of what James Kneale (1999, p. 333) has termed the microgeography of the public house. Licensees would have a year to deposit two copies of plans, coloured to show seats and tables and marked with the height of counters and partitions – perhaps to indicate their service function or supporting role for drinkers leaning on them (GCA, B8/1/1, Glasgow Burgh Licensing Minutes, pp. 81-82, 1900, April 10). One contemporary account, written by three Glaswegians under the collective name James Hamilton Muir (1901, p. 176), affords an important insight not only into the ways licensed premises related to the street, but also how they were connected to each other. The trio emphasised that the magistrates had turned the city's pubs into 'purely shops for perpendicular drinking'. 'So rare are seats', they observed, that publicans possessing 'a sitting-room' were likely to advertise the fact in their windows. In 1900 the magistrates also directed the removal of any snibs or bolts to sitting room doors that prevented them from being opened from the outside (GCA, B8/1/1, Glasgow Burgh Licensing Minutes, pp. 81-82, 1900, April 10). Indeed, a committee of magistrates later explicitly recommended that publicans should be encouraged to alter their premises so as to 'provide for the taking away of sitting-rooms' altogether (GCA, DTC 6/520, Report of the Sub-Committee of the Magistrates who visited Liverpool in March 1902).

James Hamilton Muir's collective account also offers an important insight into the relationship between premises. Indeed, it is central to my argument about differentiation that these plans were also the process by which the magistrates set about distinguishing between types of premises in Glasgow's 'publand' – that is to say how different pubs were fitted together in the contemporary imagination and material experience of commentators,

regulators and drinkers (Howell & Beckingham, 2015, p. 931). The effect of regulatory hostility towards sitting rooms, James Hamilton Muir concluded, produced a certain kind of problem at the bar: 'after a while standing grows wearisome, and the frozen stare of the barman at your elbow makes you unwelcome if you do not drink up and have another'. What followed next allows us to glimpse the rhythms and routines of drinkers, if only in the social imagination of that publand. The 'desolation of the rainy night' would soon force the drinker from the street into the next pub, and so the process would continue 'till the clock strikes eleven' for last orders (James Hamilton Muir, 1901, p. 177). But Glasgow's pubs did not all close at 11pm, for the magistrates had also introduced measures to shut premises at 10pm in quayside Broomielaw and, less controversially, a southern suburban area around Queen's Park (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 12), a conscious attempt to use time to demarcate and differentiate. Taken together, the changes led one paper to conclude that the magistrates were 'so altering the geography of the public-houses' that people could not walk to their favourite pub 'without fear that it may not be there' (*The Bailie*, 1902, May 14).

This rather depressing view of pubs as high-throughput drinking dens highlights just how out of place was the barmaid who encouraged drinkers to linger. But, to be clear, in that lingering she embodied a problem of temporality as much as spatiality. And so, in April 1900, the magistrates recorded their 'hope that the owners of public houses may see their way to discontinue employing females to serve behind bars' (GCA, B8/1/1, Glasgow Burgh Licensing Minutes, pp. 81-82, 1900, April 10). Such changes, I would like to suggest, reflected a desire to demarcate the pub from the city beyond and differentiate within that publand, to mark out particular kinds of licensed premises: to control the 'flow of sexuality', to follow Barbara Harrison (1996, p. 119), as much as the flow of the drink (Kneale, 2012).

The first device was to make an exception for female relatives of licensees – familial ties presumably being taken as a guarantee against errant behaviour – and then for licensed restaurant businesses, which would prove decisive to attempts to distinguish the barmaid from other women working in premises selling alcohol (GCA, B8/1/1, Glasgow Burgh Licensing Minutes, pp. 81-82, 1900, April 10). This was confirmed the following year, though with a subtle shift in language as ‘may see their way to’ became ‘should not employ’ in the revised instruction:

That certificate holders should not employ females as attendants behind the bars of public houses, excepting always females who are license holders attending personally to their own shops, or wives or daughters of license holders assisting in such shops, or female assistants in licensed premises where a bona fide restaurant business is carried on. (GCA, B8/1/1, p. 128, 1901, April 9)

The magistrates also issued a series of ‘recommendations’ to applicants covering everything from the provision of urinals to the use of clear glass in windows. They could then use police evidence to identify non-compliant publicans before dictating what changes would be needed for the licenses to be renewed. To give just one example of how this worked, at the April sessions in 1901 Richard Blanche sought the renewal of his license for 7-13 Brunswick Street and 164 Trongate. Blanche argued that the girls worked a buffet bar, serving stew and roast beef and vegetables, following a previous magisterial directive encouraging bars to serve food. The Chief Constable estimated an apparently modest number of 35 snack transactions a day, arguing that the girls were generally employed in serving liquor. The magistrate Bailie Cleland handed down that as the premises were not a *bona fide* restaurant Blanche would have to dispense with the girls, which Blanche was happy to do as he was

allowed to get rid of the buffet bar (*National Guardian*, 1902, April 12). It suited both parties for Blanche's to be drink-centred premises.

Insert Figure 1 here, GCA, B8/13/1, Burgh of Glasgow, Ward Maps Showing the Licensed Premises within the Burgh, May 1902 (Glasgow City Council: Archives). Bounded by the Clyde to the south, the Broomielaw early closing district ran for approximately one mile to the west of the Caledonian railway, with Argyle Street its northern limit (Glasgow Herald, 1902, April 12).

These 'recommendations' were reiterated in 1902 (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 4 and April 9), the same year in which the burgh magistrates had produced a series of maps of licensed premises in the city's different wards (see Figure 1 for the main city centre area). They were under pressure from various social reformers including members of the British Women's Temperance Association (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 22a). At the April licensing sessions Mr Lees, KC, representing the Chief Constable, quoted evidence that they had given to the magistrates:

From the labour point of view, the hours of a barmaid's attendance are so long, the wages earned are so comparatively small, and the conditions of service are so severe that those most fully conversant with the life of a barmaid would desire ardently that finally prohibition of such employment should be aimed after and arrived at. From the moral point of view, the dangers and temptations can hardly be exaggerated, it having been stated that the average respectable life of a barmaid lasts only three years.

Summarising, Lees argued that girls were ‘exposed to language, to jests, to suggestions which they could not escape, and which might, and, in fact, in time had been, found to end most disastrously’ (*Evening Times*, 1902, April 22). This was vociferously opposed. ‘One of Many’ used the *Glasgow Herald* (1902, April 25) to query why magistrates had allowed 100 barmaids to work at the Glasgow Exhibition in 1901, the kind of demonstration of advancement and civility so typical of aspirational cities (Maver, 2000, pp. 180-1). The *National Guardian* (1902, April 25), a trade paper, condemned the ‘wicked lies’ of the charitable ladies, while ‘K.M.’ more pointedly advised these ‘interfering Pharisees’ to leave ‘other people’s business alone, and attend to the manners and morals of their own families’ (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 25). Implicitly the chronotope of the drinking bar, with its apparently debilitating daily rhythms and long term risks, was out of synch with the ideals of Edwardian womanhood and what Judith Halberstam (2005, p. 4), in her study of queer time and space, strikingly terms the ‘middle-class logic of reproductive temporality’ centred on the home.

The magistrates dealt with 48 public houses where barmaids were employed. They continued their policy of coercion, making renewal conditional on getting applicants to ‘dispense with the barmaid’ (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 22b). It seems that about 10 agreed to do this. Another license was renewed only after it had been shown that women’s employment was restricted to cleaning, presumably after hours (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 30). Contemporary returns showed that there were 106 barmaids in Glasgow, 69 in the central district of the city (*The Scotsman*, 1902, April 15). The total numbers may seem low, given the 1,400 odd licensed hotels and public houses in Glasgow – indeed, a report in 1893 had found 331 women unrelated to licensees working in 27 Glasgow hotels, restaurants and

public houses (Parliamentary Papers, 1893-4 [C.6894] XXIII, p. 197) – but they mattered precisely because they embodied moral judgments about the trade and the women it employed. Significantly, reports also anticipated a kind of moral mission creep (*National Guardian*, 1902, May 2). *The Scotsman* (1902, April 23a), for example, reckoned that the moral righteousness of the magistrates might subsequently be turned on other kinds of female workers and pleasures. ‘It would be unfair’, it went on, ‘to make the barmaid the one scapegoat for the mischief by or to womankind’. But not every woman working on licensed premises was in line to lose her job; instead, the magistrates were investigating distinctions between different types of licensed premises to adjudicate on the appropriateness of – and in certain circumstances maybe even underpin the respectability of – female work in them.

3 Alternative chronotopes

The magistrates were seeking to enforce a division between venues that specialised in drink and those where drink was provided alongside food, though these were different again from unlicensed tea rooms such as the famous Mackintosh-decorated premises of Kate Cranston, which were popular with men and women (James Hamilton Muir, 1901, p. 167; Kinchin, 1998). Identifying these divisions effectively defined the barmaid, marking her out from other women who worked in apparently less problematic premises. Interestingly, in this process, problem *male* drinkers were not the direct target. In premises such as Richard Blanche’s – where it had not had a kind of civilising influence on drinkers – the best course of action was to scrap the food, ban the barmaids and, by extension, turn the bar into a more exclusively male drinking environment. But in restaurants, where the main function was eating, and the environment more domestic, the roaming waitress was apparently

neither threatened nor threatening, a situation criticised by the *National Guardian* (1902, April 4):

The dividing line is said to be that which exists between the restaurant and the drinking bar. That is to say, if a waitress is at liberty to dispense biscuits and cheese, penny pies, or pigs' feet and parsley along with the liquor ordered, she becomes one of the municipal elect without further ado. If not, she has got to go and give her place to a male who, somehow or other, is adjudged by the magistrates to do the work ever so much better.

For those regulating barmaids the apparent danger was that act of familiarity, the 'dalliance'. Food, it seems, helped ameliorate the danger, in part, I think, because it defined the conventions of the premises. The *Glasgow Herald* (1902, April 23) was not impressed; if the barmaid ban was designed to protect women from male wolves, why were those menaces not to be punished? And if men were deemed to need protection, why was this only from barmaids in pubs and not 'the Circes who serve in the tea-rooms and act as waitresses in restaurants'? So what of those other types of licensed premises?

Theatres

Bailie King had been adamant that banning barmaids was good for the women, good for the men, good for Glasgow, good for Britain. Perhaps betraying the kinds of transatlantic progressivism that Aspinwall and Gutzke have identified, King asked Mr Crabb Watt, who was representing the Empire Theatre (marked as the Gaiety Theatre on the top left of Figure 1): 'In any civilised country in the world, do you know of barmaids being employed? ... Do you know anything about America?' 'I do not want to take my lessons in civilization from

America', Watt snapped back, to applause in the courtroom. This candid exchange had followed a rather tempestuous hearing. Tackling the three year claim head on, Watt explained that the Empire Theatre's four bars employed ten maids, who were well-supervised and perfectly respectable. 'He repudiated the imputation upon these girls with scorn, knowing what he did. (Applause.)' Now I don't know what he knew, but it is clear that many in the gallery did, as Bailie King piped up to decry 'any expression of that kind'. King threatened to clear the court were such a comment repeated. Watt is reported to have replied that 'he did not wish to go beyond what was common knowledge upon this subject, but with regard to these girls, the statement was entirely contrary to the fact' (*Evening Times*, 1902, April 22). But the whole point about licensing is that all parties should have been able to work out what constituted a licensing infraction – not for nothing does Valverde (2003) consider it in a book called *Law's Dream of a Common Knowledge*. Licensing was not the province of 'experts', of formal legal training bearing down on drinkers; instead, everyday encounters at the bar were determined according to definitions, say of drunkenness, that were at once discretionary while simultaneously apparently being obvious to all (Valverde, 2003, p. 178). Any desire for a commonly shared understanding of the barmaid problem, however, appeared rather more like a dream than a reality. Reading the reports in the newspapers, it seems critics of the ban were deliberately making the most of the inconsistencies and inequities of the policy. The 'barmaids are going out everywhere', quipped the *Herald*, 'though in some cases apparently to come back as waitresses' (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, May 2).

Railway refreshment rooms

These inconsistencies can be explored through venues with apparently distinctive chronotopes. When considering the employment of women in railway refreshment rooms the magistrates had to balance food and drink sales. Appropriately, given its importance to the departing trains, these hearings explored more explicitly how refreshments rooms were shaped by different facets of time. Mr Wyllie, appearing on behalf of Glasgow and South-Western Railway Company who wanted a license for the bar at St Enoch Station (see Figure 1), suggested that if men would make rude remarks they would make them regardless of whether the girls were barmaids or waitresses. The head barmaid was called to answer questions on their busiest times of the day and the amount of loitering on the premises. 'There were no loungers', she told them. Another female employee, this time at a Spiers and Pond Refreshment Room at Queen Street Station (also shown on Figure 1), made the point that 'there was no difficulty in putting loungers down if they were not talked to'. They could put bothersome men in their place, in other words. Mr McQuiston, for Spiers and Pond, said that the Queen Street barmaid 'had not the seductive charms for young men', having to wear plain uniforms and, to reported laughter, he told the court that they were prohibited from wearing or accepting flowers. They worked nine hour shifts, he said, and had Sundays off. The construction of the regularity of this work, in terms of apparel, time and even customer-base – promoted, it has to be said, by a company which Peter Bailey (1998, p. 165) describes as 'widely respected as model employers' – pointedly contrasted with those BWTAs claims regarding barmaids' hours and respectability (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, April 22c). Remarkably, it seems, the time that men spent drinking in refreshment rooms also played its part in defining the apparent respectability of the women who worked there, though the barmaids in these cases seemed pretty adept at managing their male customers.

Ever-alert to these distinctions, the novelist George Gissing (2008) tapped into the anonymity of the railway station in his 1893 novel *The Odd Women*, where Virginia Madden's use of the refreshment room at Charing Cross Station in London helped sustain and simultaneously keep secret a destructive drinking habit. The refreshment room was imaginatively detached from the city, a suspended space whose rhythms followed the station clock rather than the hurry of the street outside. 'She went straight to the door of the refreshment room, and looked in through the glass. Two or three people were standing inside. She drew back, a tremor passing through her', writes Gissing. Yet her resolve was seemingly steeled after 'A lady came out'. The significance here, perhaps, is less the fact that this unnamed, *unaccompanied* woman would not now witness her drinking, but rather that she was there at all – as much as the lady's, Virginia's use of the room, around noon, is legitimated by the station's particular chronotope. 'With a hurried, nervous movement, she pushed the door open and went up to a part of the bar as far as possible from the two customers'. Here, with perspiration on her pallid face, she whispered to the anonymous *barmaid* for a brandy who, concluding that Madden 'was ill', supplied the drink (Gissing, 2008, p. 23 and p. 333; also see Müller-Wood 2014, p. 111). To return to Glasgow, the station licenses stood in contrast to other imaginaries that shaped pub governance, notably spaces where such ambiguity and anonymity seemed to beg regulation. King pushed Wyllie to agree that there was a difference between terminating stations like Glasgow Central and a through station in a town like Preston, south along the mainline, asking Wyllie if Glasgow's station refreshment rooms weren't practically drinking bars. Wyllie defended his clients and, ultimately, King and his colleagues decided not to extend the prohibition on women to these kinds of licensed premises (*The Scotsman*, 1902, April 23b). The tone of Glasgow's railway rooms – reflected and reinforced materially such as through uniforms, the absence

of flowers and the high throughput of customers – was taken as protection for the barmaid. Apparently, the clue was in the name: they were for refreshment only, not for drinking sessions. The particularity of the ban was not altogether accepted by *The Bailie*:

As for the youths who “spoon” with barmaids, the average type usually talk for an hour over a single glass of beer. The average man who means drinking goes where barmaids are not. And barmaids of the Station variety are not as a class alluringly attractive, except to some favoured hangers-on. The latter ought to be chivvied off as the real nuisance, but it seems to be now too late. *The Bailie* (1902, April 30)

Restaurants

The magistrates were trying to maintain a clear distinction between a male world of drinking and a more mixed one of refreshment, and with it clamp down on Glasgow’s more *parasexual* premises. The bench decided to renew William McKillop’s license for the Royal Restaurant on West Nile Street, for example, on condition that he remove the bar and replace it with tables and chairs; Mrs Hamilton at 35 and 41 Queen Street, meanwhile, was told to remove one of her bars and restrict another to a service bar – that is to say where the drinks poured were passed only to waiting staff. More controversial cases involved William Lang and Daniel Brown’s restaurants. William Lang had applied for licenses for his restaurants in Queen Street and West George Street. These cases had been delayed, in part so more information could be gathered. Lang’s counsel Mr Blackburn went through the service arrangements from the four different counters, on which stood food and drink. There was no girl devoted specially to working the bar, he said, and no money was paid across the counters. Instead, customers would pay on their way out. Plans for alterations to Lang’s Queen Street premises, including what must have been the offending bars, can be

seen in Figure 2 (they are marked to the left of the 'S' in 'Street' on Figure 1). Daniel Brown Limited had applied for two refreshment rooms in St Vincent Street and Queen Street that were popular with women customers. In the first, which employed 40 women, the staff took turns at the bar, cleaning and serving as ordinary waitresses; in the second, which employed six, they were employed 'at the service bar' in order to supply customers who called by. But the women also prepared drinks for customers who were eating. Though these women were described as respectable and had long service, they were either to be dismissed or the bars pushed 'against the wall of the shop, so that there can be no females behind the bar.' When this was greeted with laughter, Bailie King retorted that it was not reasonable for refreshment houses to carry out a public house business. Lang had been willing to co-operate by moving his bar counter. Now King told Blackburn that the licenses would be renewed on condition that the bars in the premises were used for service only. King was particularly forceful here, the newspaper reports recording that he twice told Brown's agent that they had had two years to act. Responding, Daniel Brown's counsel, Mr McClure, complained that the original edict was for public houses, 'and [they would not act] with a pistol against their heads' (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, May 1; *The Scotsman*, 1902, May 1). They would defy the magistrates.

Insert Figure 2 here. Figure 2, GCA, B4/12/1/6030, Dean of Guild Court Lining Plans and Sections, proposed alterations to Lang's Restaurant, 73-79 Queen Street, (H.D. Walton, architects), April 1897 (Glasgow City Council: Archives).

The industry paper the *National Guardian* had attacked what it saw as the Glasgow trade's 'wretched pusillanimity' for not taking the fight to the magistrates (*National Guardian*, 1902, May 16). But clarifications and appeals were to follow. In August 1902 the

magistrates received letters sent on behalf of two publicans at Gordon Street and Princes Square and Buchanan Street, disputing the designation of their female employees as barmaids. This prompted a sub-committee to visit the premises. They wrote to John Forrester, whose luncheon rooms were among the most popular in the city, among men, at least – like Lang’s, they apparently did not welcome women customers (Kenna & Mooney, 1983, p. 41; Kinchin, 1998, p. 15). Forrester was told that during the committee’s visit to Buchanan Street, ‘the bar was attended by two females, and the trade being done *at the time* was purely a drinking business’ (GCA, B8/1/1, p. 211, 1902, August 20, my emphasis). The choice was clear: abide by the recommendations or risk losing the licenses.

Daniel Brown Limited refused to lie down. The company appealed to the Quarter Sessions over conditions attached to the license for their St Vincent Street refreshment room. They also contested the right of the magistrates to impose conditions that were ‘unknown to the law’. This is an important point for how we understand licensing: even factoring in the privilege of magisterial discretion, which was well-established, the possibility of appeals to higher courts meant that licensing never was a neat application of central legislation at the local level. Brown’s counsel, Mr McClure, was effectively contesting the jurisdiction of the magistrates to make such a ruling, arguing that the license was for the whole premises. He told the court, again to reported laughter, that the magistrates were bent on pushing counters against the walls ‘so that the girls could not get behind them’. And he argued that turning maids into waitresses subjected them ‘to immoral influences in a far more grievous form’. Anticipating Bailey’s line on the bar as a kind of *cordon sanitaire* he went on:

They were not to have the protection of a wooden barrier, as they had before. (Laughter.) They were to move about freely among the people who were on the outside of the counter, and therefore they would be liable in a way they never were before to any contaminating influence that might be found in Messrs. Brown's premises. (Laughter.) (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, May 13a)

Not for the first time, the courtroom was a chaotic scene. Was it a reasonable reform, he asked, when the place had a record of good conduct stretching back 30 years? McClure's way to demonstrate that respectability was to appeal to the chronotopic difference separating the restaurant and its clientele from the pub, noting that these premises shut at 8 rather 10pm – eating, we might assume, was more time delimited than drinking. Bailie King, struggling to be heard over shouts of 'vote' from other justices, argued that Brown's was the only business not 'to meet them in the matter'. Persistence paid off, however: the bench sustained the appeal by 59 votes to 38 (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, May 13a).

4 The barmaid beaten?

It is absurd, said the *Glasgow Herald*, 'to assume that a young woman who is in danger or may be a source of danger when serving liquor across a counter is harmless and beyond the reach of harm when serving liquor at a table in an open shop' (*Glasgow Herald*, 1902, May 13b). Satirising Lord Provost Samuel Chisholm, *The Bailie* suggested a reinterpretation of Glasgow's motto:

Let Glasgow Flourish by the early closing of public houses, the reduction of licenses, and the banishing of barmaids; by preaching and trading according to the utmost

rigour of the law; and by the municipalisation of everything but the liquor traffic.

(*The Bailie*, 1902, May 21)

It seems that many of Glasgow's electors resented this direction in the city's politics, the tenor of which was attacked in a cartoon that saw Chisholm dressed as a barmaid offering a customer a slice of corporation building works, to be washed down with a measure of liquid gold extracted from ratepayers' pockets (*The Bailie Cartoon Supplement*, 1902, May 14).

Some students taking part in a torchlight procession to celebrate the end of the Boer War in June also dressed up as barmaids, being received by Chisholm in George Square (*The Scotsman*, 1902, June 4). The barmaid ban, though affecting small numbers, took on symbolic significance as a marker of the apparent arbitrariness of magisterial measures. The licensed trade celebrated the widespread defeat of several teetotal councillors in the municipal elections of November 1902, including Samuel Chisholm being 'immolated on the altar of justice' (*National Guardian*, 1903, January 2). Chisholm had been attacked by *The Times* for pushing a municipal socialism on Glasgow and, it seems, his political opponents amongst the drink trade, property owners and landlords of the city all had an interest in his defeat (*The Times* 1902, September 30, as cited in Maver 2000, p. 161). The *National Guardian* claimed that the new council was without five of the magistrates behind the 'historic crusade against licence-holders'; with their defeat, it crowed, the barmaid was 'avenged' (*National Guardian*, 1902 November 7 and 21).

The trade clearly hoped that the new bench would step back from the barmaid ban (*National Guardian*, 1902, December 19). Though the very opposite – an extension of the recommendations to *all* licensed premises – had been contemplated, in the run up to the 1903 licensing sessions the magistrates decided to stick with their existing policy. 'Where a

bar is principally for drinking purposes', they said, 'male attendants only must be employed there', and they proceeded to maintain that distinction between premises whose primary functions were drinking and eating (*Glasgow Herald*, 1903, April 9; *The Scotsman*, 1903, April 25). This uncertainty had not impressed the trade, with critics accusing the magistrates of acting like legislators not administrators of the law, drafting policies that looked liable to change on the capricious instincts of individuals such as Chisholm or King (Citizen, as cited in *National Guardian*, 1903a, February 20). It seems that the magistrates thought that alcohol served with food was a 'lesser evil – moral no less than physical – than drink taken alone'. But, to return to Peter Bailey, what of women not protected by what Lord Beaconsfield termed "a substantial piece of furniture"? A female assistant, said the *Glasgow Herald*:

may not hand over the bar a modest quencher of that infuriating beverage delusively and euphemistically designated "old and mild" to some one who is possibly – nay, probably – young and wild on the other side. But no power, magisterial or other, can apparently prevent her from taking it to him if he is seated in a quiet corner, or having the old, old story of alcoholised Don Juanism – compulsorily chastened, it is true – by roast beef or Irish stew – poured into the ear without being heard by any one. (*Glasgow Herald*, as cited in *National Guardian*, 1903, February 20b)

We can see how easily these distinctions were being satirised. But Brown's successful appeal had dealt a blow to the magistrates' ability to operate through their system of 'recommendations'. The *National Guardian* felt the actions marked an illegitimate interference between bar managers and their staff:

If such interference is justifiable the trifling consideration of sex can be no bar to it; but if the magisterial “recommendations” – i.e. the bullying – ever go so far as to include, say, the nationality or physical attributes of waiters and barmaids, their absurdity and Satanic despotism will be at once apparent. (*National Guardian*, 1903, January 30)

The barmaid question came to the fore in early twentieth-century debates about the control of the licensing system and the nature of women’s work. Though they held their existing line, I think the success of Brown’s appeal had probably dealt with any magisterial temptation to extend the policy. Indeed, proposals to confirm the discretionary powers of magistrates to enforce prohibitions on the employment of women as barmaids in the Scottish Licensing Bill of 1903 were defeated. Both the Lord Advocate Andrew Murray in the Commons and the Secretary of State for Scotland Lord Balfour of Burleigh in the upper house condemned the absurdity and inconsistency of the Glasgow system (*Hansard*, House of Lords, 1903, August 4). The Lord Advocate was so forceful in his condemnation that in some respects it may seem a surprise that objections to barmaids were not buried forthwith. Not only would such a measure interfere with people’s ‘ordinary discretion’, it would upset ‘the honest employment of women’, he said. Revisiting the ‘perfectly illegal’ policy of Glasgow, Murray had noted that ‘the prohibition was against a barmaid if she was behind a counter where nobody could get at her – (laughter) – but there was no prohibition against her if she moved to and fro among the tables and served people with drink to lunch’ (*National Guardian*, 1903, June 26).³

The *National Guardian* welcomed the politicians’ straight talking. ‘It is made quite clear now’, the paper concluded, ‘that it is beyond the scope of any body of Magistrates to

dictate what class – male or female – should be employed in the conduct of a licensed restaurant’ (*National Guardian*, 1903, August 7). Nationally, developments in Glasgow helped with what the Joint Committee on Barmaids (1905, p. 57) termed the ‘ripening’ of public opinion towards ‘the fate’ of the nation’s ‘brightest and healthiest women’. Using the 1901 census it estimated that there were 27,707 barmaids, 26,235 of whom were unmarried and 26,072 were 25 years of age or younger (Joint Committee on the Employment of Barmaids, 1905, p. 3 and p. 8). Agitation, directly linked by the Committee to efforts in Glasgow, would lead to calls for a registration scheme in the Employment of Barmaids Bill in 1906 and a clause in the 1908 Licensing Bill to outlaw them altogether (Malone, 2003, p. 124). Similar anxieties about barmaid work had been building in places like New Zealand (Upton, 2013, p. 111) and Australia where, according to Diane Kirkby (1997, p. 124 and p. 128), the extension of women’s political citizenship proceeded alongside a closing down of occupations deemed to be ‘the antithesis of the desirable woman citizen subject’. Interestingly, in the face of such calls, pragmatic campaigns emerged to promote the validity of barmaid work (Mullin, 2004, p. 491). Meeting in Edinburgh in October 1902, for example, the executive of the National Union of Women Workers rejected a proposal that licensing renewal be made conditional on the ‘gradual discontinuance’ of barmaids. Aware of the symbolism of banning women’s work, the meeting supported an alternative motion in favour of an inquiry into the problem (*The Scotsman*, 1902, October 31). Similarly, when parliament was asked to consider prohibiting barmaids in 1908, Eva Gore-Booth and Esther Roper of the Barmaids’ Political Defence League called for the right for women to work and vote; they claimed a national Glasgow-style prohibition might impinge on the livelihoods of 100,000 women, pushing them into worse areas of employment (*Manchester Guardian*, 1908, June 15).⁴ The *practical*

prohibition on women working in Glasgow's pubs did not go away, however, being confirmed through the war despite complaints from the trade that it was hard to find suitable male employees (GCA, B8/1/2, p. 220, 1915, November 23; B8/14/1, p. 96a, correspondence). Indeed, in their account of Scotland's pubs Rudolph Kenna and Anthony Mooney argue that the policies of this period reinforced a gendering of Glasgow's licensed premises that could still be found in the 1960s (Kenna & Mooney 1983, p. 41). Glasgow's ban would be the high water mark of British anti-barmaid action.

Conclusions

The familiar cry of 'last orders' is a regularised reminder of the role of time in alcohol regulation (Howell & Beckingham, 2015). Use the case of one particularly distinctive licensing innovation, I have sought to argue for greater scrutiny of the more subtle ways in which time codes the experience and regulation of different types of licensed premises and problem behaviours (Valverde, 2015). The barmaid stood out because she seemed to be connected to premises where men might linger. And so it was time as well as the materiality of the different premises in question that helped define the problem *barmaid* as distinct from simply a woman who worked on premises that happened to serve alcohol (Beckingham 2015). In this regard, there was another temporality at work, namely that it was harmful to women's futures to spend too much time working in pubs, that their womanhood would be corrupted by practical concerns about long working hours as well as the more diffuse anxieties about language and 'jests'. Here, bar work was seen as a damaging interlude in, or maybe more specifically prelude to, women's labour careers, however much credit they were to be given for negotiating the parasexuality of premises in which they were employed. Of course this was as much connected to what I would playfully

term the 'chronotopia' of the home, with its particularly distinctive ideal of women's work, as it was the time-space patterning of the problem public house. Opponents saw the ban as behind the times, rejecting the view that women workers were out of place in those environments. But even if we might join contemporary papers in criticising the inconsistency of the policy, we can conclude that by calling time on the barmaid the magistrates were attempting to differentiate the city's licensed leisure venues.

The implications of this study are three-fold. Firstly, while geographers of drink have clearly not been ignorant of time, I have sought to argue for a closer examination of the *entanglement* of space and time in licensing, of the spatial effects of temporal logics, and vice versa. It is important to question who had the authority to shape these logics. In Glasgow, they had very clear effects on definitions of women's work, reflecting and reinforcing gendered conventions in the city's pubs. And it is vital to question how they were calibrated. Glasgow's magistrates did this work by seeking reassurances from the trade about the dress and decorum of staff and enforcing rules about the place of bar furniture and the materiality of serving arrangements. Managing the experience of different premises was, to be clear, always as much a challenge of temporality as some singularly spatial struggle to regulate pub *space*. Secondly, these should not simply be seen as attempts simply to regulate single pubs; they were doubly significant as attempts to differentiate a perhaps rather more amorphous 'publand'. More work remains to be done in this regard, to track the ways in which landscapes of drink were conceived in the regulatory imagination. Finally, there is an important challenge to consider the ways in which those landscapes, with their conventions, were experienced as part of everyday urban life, to consider the

relationship between people's drinking and the various attempts to calibrate and control the venues in which they drank.

Notes

¹ MacDonald's wife was a prominent opponent of barmaid work, through her connection with the National Union of Women Workers (Beckingham, 2015).

² For more on Scottish temperance see King (1979), Smitley (2009) and Smout (1986). On the relationship between temperance action and Scottish legislation see Nicholls (2012, p. 1399).

³ When put to the relevant committee, the amendment was defeated by 19 votes to 14.

⁴ The pair had campaigned against William Churchill when he was defeated in the April 1908 Manchester North-West by-election. See Tiernan (2012, p. 125).

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