

When should bars close?

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Abstract

Comments on an article by Ingeborg Rossow & Thor Norstrom. The paper by Rossow and Norstrom adds to the accumulating, although not always consistent, evidence that closing time changes affect levels of violence in bar districts. If drinking tends to start at a regular start time, but drinking continues as long as bars remain open, late closing times will have a significant impact on overall consumption and related problems. On the other hand, closing too early can also have risks associated with displacement of drinking to other private and public locations after the bars close. Despite this risk, few studies have examined possible displacement of drinking and drinking problems with earlier closing of licensed premises. In fact, Rossow and Norstrom used assaults outside the city center as the comparison for their evaluation. Thus, the risk of backloading as post-bar drinking has been called also needs to be considered in the overall context of alcohol availability, especially when off-premise establishments stop selling alcohol, that is, backloading would be less likely if alcohol is not for sale elsewhere after bars close.

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