

**Objects Campaign To Close Strip
Clubs in Hackney**

**Possible Evidence of Wilful Misrepresentation To
Hackney Councils SEV Consultation by Object**

Throughout 2010, Object campaigned with a view to ensuring that every strip club in Hackney had its licence revoked. Publicly, they tried to achieve this by announcements on their website with template letters for members of the public to use. We now have evidence that privately, via their Yahoo Object Activist Group (a private internet group where Object members plan campaigns and receive messages from the organisations management group), Object were actively encouraging their activists to write letters to Hackney Council of a very different nature.

Below is an excerpt from the posting on the Yahoo Message Board. The full version is included later in this section.

TEMPLATE LETTER, please amend as you wish:

To whom it may concern,

I would like to register my objection to the renewal of the sex encounter establishment licence at XXX.

I live and work in the borough of Hackney and as a woman I feel particularly concerned about my personal safety when passing this club on foot and push bike. I am worried about rape, sexual violence and harassment from male customers entering and leaving this club. When passing this club I have been verbally abused and harassed on several occasions by men outside this club.

I am not a lawyer, but it seems clear that Object were encouraging their activists to write letters and/or emails that contained false allegations about the venues. That Object knew this was wrong is clear, because the publicly available template letter to councillors that is available as download from their website (also enclosed) does not contain any of the above comments.

I also understand that club owners were shown letters received by Hackney Council that contained comments that closely resemble the ones that Object were urging their activists to make. The critical issue here is that I am unsure how many Object activists actually live in Hackney, implying that false names and addresses MAY have been used.

Our concern is the possibility that many of the consultation responses are from people that are not resident in Portsmouth, but furthermore are already vehemently opposed to the existence of clubs on a moral basis.

Please note that some of the documents are so large that they are spread over a number of pages, in order to ensure they are easily readable.

This is a frame grab from Objects website. It was published on Sunday 23rd May 2010 at 18:29. It is viewable by members of the public and encourages them to support the 'Nil Policy'. Please note 'Appendix I: Template Letter to Councillors'

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL object.org.uk/resources/archive/100-persuade-your-council-to-adopt-new-lap-dancing-licensing-regime. The page features a navigation bar with links: Home, About Us, The Facts, Campaigns, Resources, and Contact Us. The main header includes the 'OBJECT' logo and the tagline 'Women Not Sex Objects'. On the left, there are buttons for 'Get Involved' and 'Support Us'. The central content area is titled 'Lap Dancing - Get your council to adopt new licensing' and is categorized as 'News' from 'Sunday, 23 May 2010 18:29'. The text discusses the new licensing regime for lap dancing clubs under the Policing and Crime Act 2009, highlighting that councils now have the power to refuse licenses. It encourages councils to adopt this regime and provides a link to a toolkit for persuasion. On the right, there is a 'Join Today!' button and an 'Archive by Month' section listing months from May 2011 down to April 2010. At the bottom, there are links to 'Stage 1 Toolkit to persuade your council to adopt new licensing regime for lap dancing clubs (overview)' and 'Appendix 1: Template letter for councillors'.

object.org.uk/resources/archive/100-persuade-your-council-to-adopt-new-lap-dancing-licensing-regime

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Women Not
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Lap Dancing - Get your council to adopt new licensing
News
Sunday, 23 May 2010 18:29

Lap Dancing - get your council to adopt new licensing

Thanks to your efforts, the Policing and Crime Act came into force on April 6th 2010 making it possible for councils to stop licensing lap dancing clubs like cafes, but instead to be able to regulate them as part of the sex industry. This new licensing regime gives local authorities greater powers to regulate lap dancing clubs and it gives communities more of a say in whether or not lap dancing clubs open, and whether or not councils renew the licenses of existing clubs.

However, these licensing powers are optional for councils to adopt. It is crucial that your local authority adopts this legislation to give you a greater say over the licensing of lap dancing clubs in your area.

We have put together a toolkit to help you persuade your council to take on these powers.
You can download the whole toolkit here.

Or you can download the documents separately below:

Stage 1 Toolkit to persuade your council to adopt new licensing regime for lap dancing clubs (overview)

Appendix 1: Template letter for councillors

Join Today!

Archive by Month
May, 2011
April, 2011
March, 2011
February, 2011
December, 2010
November, 2010
October, 2010
August, 2010
May, 2010
April, 2010

Appendix I: Template letter for councillors is reproduced on the next two pages. As stated, this document is available for download from Objects public facing website.

Appendix 1: OBJECT template letter to councillors

Ask your councillors to adopt the new regulations governing lap dancing clubs

Instructions for use:

- Amend the text marked in <red bold>
- Send the letter and OBJECT briefing (in appendix 2) to the councillors in your ward. To find out who your local councillors are visit <http://www.writetothem.com> or check on your local council's website.
- If you receive a reply please forward a copy to OBJECT: anna@object.org.uk or OBJECT, PO Box 50373, London, W4 3ZP

<Your address>

<Insert name and address of the councillor>

<Date>

Dear <name of councillor>

RE: Please propose and support a resolution to adopt the new licensing regulations pertaining to lap dancing clubs

I am writing to you as a resident of <your ward> and a supporter of OBJECT to urge you to propose a council resolution to adopt Schedule 3 to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (LGMPA) 1982, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009. This resolution would grant <your local authority> greater powers to regulate lap dancing clubs, and would give local people, like myself, a greater say in the licensing process.

As I'm sure you are aware, since the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003 local authorities have been compelled to license lap dancing clubs in the same way as cafes and karaoke nights - with a Premises Licence. Yet lap dancing clubs are part of the sex industry, not the ordinary leisure industry. They fuel a sexist culture in which it is increasingly acceptable to treat women as sex objects, not people. This has been recognised by the UN Convention on Eliminating All Forms of Discrimination Against Women since 1979 as having clear links to discrimination and violence against women. Areas surrounding lap dancing clubs can become 'no-go' areas for women, with many women and girls reporting that they feel unsafe in the vicinity of such venues, and research reveals that individuals performing in the clubs face exploitative working conditions.

Yet local authorities have been prevented from considering these issues when deliberating licence applications from lap dancing clubs, and have been unable to stipulate conditions and controls - such as the maximum number of lap dancing clubs permitted in our community or whether private booths are permitted in the clubs. This is in contradiction to authority council's legal obligation to

to consider the impact of their decisions on women and men and to promote gender equality in all they do. Furthermore, under the current licensing regime I have no right to object to a lap dancing club opening unless I live within 100-200m of the proposed club and, because Premises Licenses are granted in perpetuity, I am unable to lodge objections once a license has been granted unless they relate to one of the four licensing objectives contained in the 2003 Licensing Act.

<If there are lap dancing clubs in your district, or you have any personal experience with this issue, mention that here.>

However, <your local authority> now has an opportunity to redress this problem. Following a national campaign led by OBJECT and the Fawcett Society, and supported by a broad coalition of local authorities, parliamentarians, women's organisations, and residents groups, the Government has changed the law to give local authorities greater powers to control and regulate lap dancing clubs and give local people a greater say in the licensing process. As of 6th April 2010, local authorities can licence lap dancing clubs as 'Sexual Entertainment Venues' under Schedule 3 to the LGMPA 1982, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009. This allows local authorities to license lap dancing clubs in the same way as sex shops and sex cinemas - i.e. to apply relevant and necessary controls.

However, in order to licence lap dancing clubs in this way a local authority must first pass a resolution adopting Schedule 3 to the LGMPA (1982). A resolution is required even if the local authority has previously adopted Schedule 3 - due to the amendments made to it by the Policing and Crime Act 2009.

Therefore, I urge you to propose and support a resolution to adopt Schedule 3 at the earliest possible opportunity. Our community deserves a greater say in the licensing of lap dancing clubs in our area.

I look forward to hearing from you on this important matter.

Many Thanks,

<YOUR NAME>

What follows is a very long frame grab of a posting made by [REDACTED] of Object. The posting was also made on the 23rd May 2010, but this time on the 'Object Activist Yahoo Message Board'.

As stated earlier, this is a private message board and is not viewable by members of the public. The boxes highlighting specific passages of text were placed by me.

URGENT ACTION: Hackney strip clubs TEMPLATE LETTER

Message List

Reply

Message #3949 of 5082 < Prev | Next >

Sun May 23, 2010 12:37 am

Just to repost what Anna already sent round.

Show Message Options

Please, please get as many Hackney residents/workers as you can to email TODAY:
SUNDAY 23RD MAY.

Hello everyone,

This is very short notice, but if you live in Hackney and care about equality and women's safety, please act today!

Offline

Send Email

Four lap dancing/strip clubs in Hackney have applied to have their licenses renewed:

BROWNS - 1 Hackney Road, E2 7NX
YE OLDE AXE - 69 Hackney Road, E2
RAINBOW SPORTS BAR - 72 Shoreditch High Street, E1
THE WHITE HORSE, 64 Shoreditch High Street, E1

If you live or work in Hackney you can register an objection, but the deadline is:

TODAY - SUNDAY 23RD MAY!

Two years ago Hackney residents came together to stop a strip club opening in Stoke Newington, and we won!

We can do it again if enough of us object!

Please email Licensing at hackney dot gov dot uk (see my template email below).

YOU NEED TO SEND A SEPARATE EMAIL FOR EACH CLUB, AND DELETE THE INFO ON SCHOOLS/PLACES OF WORSHIP AS APPROPRIATE.

You should make your objection as premises specific as possible. So, talk about any harassment you have received outside these clubs or just how they make you feel when walking past them, any noise/disturbance that occurs near the clubs, etc. Also mention proximity of schools and places of worship. These are all things the council considers when looking at objections. You could also mention that, with the Olympics coming to Hackney in 2012, the council should be concerned to improve the image of the area.

Please just do as much or as little as you have time for. Even a very short email about just one club would be a massive contribution.

Please forward this email to any friends, partners, relatives, flatmates etc who live or work in Hackney and make sure they send in an email TODAY!

Thank you so much!



TEMPLATE LETTER, please amend as you wish:

To whom it may concern,

I would like to register my objection to the renewal of the sex encounter establishment licence at XXX.

I live and work in the borough of Hackney and as a woman I feel particularly concerned about my personal safety when passing this club on foot and push bike. I am worried about rape, sexual violence and harassment from male customers entering and leaving this club. When passing this club I have been verbally abused and harassed on several occasions by men outside this club.

I believe that if a license is granted to this club, Hackney Council will be breaching its obligations under the Gender Equality Duty (2006).

Gender Equality Duty

Hackney Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2006 to proactively promote gender equality.

The Equality Act 2006 places a requirement on public authorities like Hackney council to have due regard to the need to:

'Promote equality of opportunity between women and men.'

'Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment on the grounds of gender.'

This is known as the 'general duty' and came into effect on 6 April 2007. It applies to all the council's functions – policymaking, service delivery, public functions, employment, and to services and functions that are contracted out." (page 6)

Hackney Council's own Gender Equality Scheme (23 April 2007) outlined the organisation's commitment to:

'meet its gender equality duties to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, and to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.'

A key objective of Hackney Council's own Gender Equality Scheme is to:

'Improve the safety of women in the Borough'.

A key outcome of Hackney Council's own Gender Equality Scheme is to ensure that:

'Women feel safer living in the Borough.'

Violence against women

Hackney Council's own Equality and Diversity Policy (May 2006) states that:

'The Council will support and promote the rights of women in the borough and will work in partnership with other agencies to eliminate sexism, sexual discrimination, harassment and all forms of violence or abuse of women and girls.' (Point 8.3).

This application runs counter to the GED and Hackney Council's own Equality and Diversity Policy by further increasing the likelihood of crime and sexual violence against women and maintaining no-go areas for women in the Borough.

Lap dancing clubs have been linked to an increase in sexual violence against women. See:

Profitable Exploits: Lap Dancing in the UK by Julie Bindel (2004),
<http://tinyurl.com/dfr5xc>

The Eden Report on Inappropriate Behaviour: Adult venues and licensing in London (2007)
<http://tinyurl.com/d9ol7y>

I would argue that renewing this license in the face of the evidence quoted in the reports above runs counter to Hackney Council's own commitment to tackle violence against women stated on page 8 of the Council's Community Safety Plan (2008-2011.)

Further, I would like to draw your attention to the proximity of schools and places of worship to this premises:

DELETE AS APPROPRIATE:

Browns:

There is at least one nursery in very close proximity (Noahs Ark Nursery, Pelter Street), there are eight primary schools less than half a mile away (Virginia Primary School, St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary School, Columbia Primary School, St Matthias Church of England Primary School, Randal Cremer Primary School, St John The Baptist Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School, Mustard School, The Lyceum), five secondary schools less than half a mile away (Bethnal Green Technology College, Haggerston School, Mustard School, Central Foundation Boys' School, The Bridge Academy, Hackney), and a sixth form college 0.2 miles away (Hackney Community College). The club is very close to Shoreditch Tabernacle Baptist Church at 18-20 Hackney Road, and Grace Church Hackney on Shoreditch High St, and close to St Monica's R C Church at 19 Hoxton Square, and St Leonard C Of E Church on Shoreditch High St.

Rainbow Sports Bar: There is at least one nursery in very close proximity (Broadgate Nursery, Curtain Road), there are eight primary schools less than half a mile away (Virginia Primary School, St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary School, Columbia Primary School, William Davis Primary School, St Anne Roman Catholic Primary School, St Matthias Church of England Primary School, The Lyceum, Christchurch C of E School), three secondary schools less than half a mile away (Bethnal Green Technology College, Haggerston School, Central Foundation Boys' School), and a sixth form college less than half a mile away (Hackney Community College). The club is extremely close to St Leonard C of E Church on Shoreditch High St, and close to Shoreditch Tabernacle Baptist Church at 18-20 Hackney Road, and Grace Church Hackney on Shoreditch High St.

The White Horse: Same as for Rainbow Sports Bar, as they are only a few doors from each other.

Ye Olde Axe: There is at least one nursery in very close proximity (Noahs Ark Nursery, Pelter Street), there are eight primary schools less than half a mile away (Virginia Primary School, St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary School, Columbia Primary School, St Matthias Church of England Primary School, Randal Cremer Primary School, St John The Baptist Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School, Mustard School, Burbage School), four secondary schools less than half a mile away (Bethnal Green Technology College, Haggerston School, Mustard School, Central Foundation Boys' School), and a sixth form college less than half a mile away (Hackney Community College). The club is very close to St Chads Church on Dunloe Street and Shoreditch Tabernacle Baptist Church at 18-20 Hackney Road, and close to Grace Church Hackney on Shoreditch High St, St Monica's R C Church at 19 Hoxton Square, and St Leonard C Of E Church on Shoreditch High St.

I look forward to your response.

Many thanks

XXX

This is a frame grab from Object website. This appears to have been published in December 2010. It contains a raft of unproven allegations, together with comments from 'members of the public' that Object claim were both sent to Hackney Council and seen by themselves as well. Some of the comments seem to be inspired by the standard letter they privately urged their activists to send. I have annotated areas of particular interest.

www.object.org.uk/index.php/component/content/article/3-news/110-lap-dancing-press-release-on-hackney-proposal-to-set-nil-limits

OBJECT

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Women Not
Sex Objects

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Ex-lap dancers, Hackney residents and leading women's rights and equality organisations urge Hackney to set a nil-limit for Sexual Entertainment Venues in the borough.

Hackney council is currently consulting (1) on whether to set a nil-limit on Sexual Entertainment Venues (2) under new licensing laws introduced in April this year (3). This would mean revoking the licenses of the four currently operating strip clubs in the borough. The deadline for the consultation is Monday December 13th and local residents, women's groups, and councils across the country are awaiting the decision in anticipation as a nil-policy in a central London borough like Hackney would set a precedent for other councils to follow.

Human rights group OBJECT (4) is leading a coalition of support for the nil-policy and hundreds of Hackney residents and visitors of the borough have been emailing Hackney Council this week providing personal testimony of their negative experiences both inside and outside of Hackney strip clubs. Stories of sexual assault, harassment, discrimination, 'no-go' zones for women and children, and links with prostitution and trafficking have dominated responses to the Hackney council consultation which closes on Monday.

"Lap dancing clubs are not harmless fun. They are often sites of sexual exploitation, they make sexual harassment seem normal, and they create no-go areas for women and children who feel unsafe walking past them at night. Setting a nil-limit on seedy and exploitative strip clubs is an issue of equality, it is taking a stand against the negative messages that lap dancing clubs promote about women and putting a stop to the sexual abuse which takes place inside and outside of clubs."

OBJECT, along with all of the other leading women's rights and equality groups who have signed the joint statement of support, urge Hackney council not to cave in to pressures from the sex industry and to stand firm in its commitment to stop commercial sexual exploitation in the borough by setting the limit at zero for lap dancing clubs"

Anna van Heeswijk, Campaigns Manager OBJECT

Examples of consultation responses from Hackney residents include:

"I worked in strip clubs for over four years... East London is particularly renowned for its 'seedier' venues ... Many of my colleagues felt that the Hackney clubs were where you ended up if you got a drug addiction or were in real trouble... that these Hackney venues were the worst for trafficked young women... and easily the most prolific venues offering intercourse and oral sex acts."

"I work in the evenings and often have to walk home late past these places which are intimidating even in the day time. I've been harassed repeatedly and one time a man blocked my path and attempted to physically pick me up."

(More examples below)

In less than two hours, OBJECT had an overwhelmingly positive response as members stood outside Hackney Town Hall and collected a further two hundred responses to the consultation urging Hackney Council to impose a nil-limit on lap dancing clubs.

"The strength of feeling on this issue was clear. Hackney residents don't want sexist and exploitative lap dancing clubs on their high streets"

Alison Dear, Board of Directors OBJECT.

In another move to support Hackney to take a stand against lap dancing clubs, in one day alone dozens of leading women's organisations and equality groups have already signed up to a joint statement of support calling on Hackney to set a nil-limit for strip clubs, to take a stand against the spread of commercial sexual exploitation (5).

For more details or to arrange an interview contact Anna van Heeswijk, Campaigns Manager at anna@object.org.uk

ENDS

(1) <http://www.hackney.gov.uk/3450.htm>

(2) Sexual Entertainment Venues are defined by the Home Office Guidance as "any live performance or live display of nudity which is of such a nature that, ignoring financial gain, it must reasonably be assumed to be provided solely or principally for the purpose of sexually stimulating any member of an audience (whether by verbal or other means)." An audience can consist of just one person (e.g. where the entertainment takes place in private booths). It is stated in the Home Office guidance that while local authorities should judge each case on its merits, SEVs would apply to the following forms of entertainment as they are commonly understood: **Lap dancing; Pole dancing; Table dancing; Strip shows; Peep shows; Live sex shows.** The Home Office Guidance can be found here: <http://www.object.org.uk/files/SEV%20HO%20Guidance.pdf>

(3) These extra licensing powers for Sexual Entertainment Venues are granted by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act (2009) which came into force April 2010.

(4) OBJECT is a human rights organisation which campaigns against the sexual objectification of women through the mainstreaming of the sex and porn industries. OBJECT spearheaded the Stripping the Illusion Campaign, and in partnership with the Fawcett Society, successfully lobbied for lap dancing clubs to stop being licensed like cafes and to be regulated as part of the sex industry. It is this legislation which allows councils like Hackney to set a limit to the number of lap dancing clubs that it wants in the borough.

(5) A copy of the **Joint Statement of Support** which includes further information, references and sources can be found [here](#).

More examples of testimony responses:



"Earlier this year whilst waiting for the bus on Shoreditch high street at about midnight, a group of men who were leaving one of the lap dancing bars (The Rainbow Sports bar) verbally **harassed me using language of a highly sexualised and offensive nature**. Why should I have to put up with that? What is more, how did this group of men then later act towards other women they happened to pass by or meet, especially after a couple more drinks?"



"I and many other women in the borough have effectively **lost out on career progress** because we are unwilling to socialise and network in places like these"



"**I run and perform in cabaret nights** and no aspect of my work will be compromised by this nil policy - however as a women living in Hackney I will be safer and freer to walk the streets with the nil policy in place."



"**I am a mother of young children.** We pass advertising hoardings for lap dancing clubs when we are going about our daily business. My 3 year old notices everything around him. What sense is he meant to make of the explicit posters which are designed to be sexually provocative and which so comprehensively degrade and dehumanise women? Does he begin to see women differently? What happens to the slightly older children who can read the degrading messages? And the teenagers who are beginning to explore their own sexuality? And what should I do as a mother? I want my boys to grow up respecting women and girls. These establishments and their advertising undermine this."



"**I would be so proud** to live and work in a borough with an overt "nil" policy and believe it would pave the way for boroughs around the country to follow suit, saving thousands of women from daily sexual abuse."

This is another frame grab, again from Objects website. Once again it seems to date back to December 2010 and once again contains allegations that are untrue. It also encourages contributions from people that live outside the borough of Hackney

www.object.org.uk/resources/archive/109-lap-dancing-take-action-to-urge-hackney-council-to-set-nil-limit

OBJECT

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Lap Dancing Clubs: Urge Hackney council to set a nil-limit

News

Wednesday, 08 December 2010 14:01

Lobby Hackney Council to set a nil-limit on lap dancing clubs

Hackney Council have proposed a **nil-limit for lap dancing clubs** (sexual entertainment venues) due to popular support and because of the numerous problems associated with them (1).

This would mean **closing down all lap dancing clubs in the borough**, which includes Shoreditch.

This is a bold move and would set a precedent for other councils.

However, the lap dancing industry and its supporters are placing enormous pressure on Hackney Councillors not to go through with this proposal.

Please take these simple actions to show Hackney councillors the widespread support for a nil-limit. Don't let your voices be drowned by the power and influence of the sex industry!

You do not have to be a resident for your voice to count.

Deadline Mon Dec 13th

Take Action

- Take 5 Mins

Respond to Hackney Council's **online consultation** outlining your reasons for wanting a nil-limit. You don't need to be a resident of Hackney to do this (BEFORE MONDAY 13th)

- Note** to send a more detailed response use our template response and send it to licensing@hackney.gov.uk. Please blind copy (bcc) OBJECT into the email

- Take 10 Mins

Send a **personal testimony** of how you have been affected by lap dancing clubs to licensing@hackney.gov.uk. Please blind copy (bcc) OBJECT into the email (BEFORE MONDAY 13th)

- Organisations

Read the **Joint Statement of support** and email OBJECT to add your organisation as a signatory

- Spread the word today!

Pass this on to everyone you know and encourage them to take action.

Archive by Month

May, 2011

April, 2011

March, 2011

February, 2011

December, 2010

November, 2010

October, 2010

August, 2010

May, 2010

April, 2010

1. Comprehensive information on the harm associated with clubs can be found on our lap dancing campaign pages. Responses to a prior consultation by Hackney Council further illustrates this:



'I've been harassed repeatedly [when walking past clubs].'
Hackney resident

'Hackney venues were the worst for trafficked young women... and easily the most prolific venues offering intercourse and oral sex acts.'
Respondent who had worked in strip clubs for over 4 years

We are now aware that Object have been encouraging radical feminist activists from all over the United Kingdom to participate in the Portsmouth Council SEV Consultation. Please see the frame grab below taken from Object website...

STRIPPING THE ILLUSION

Lap Dancing Campaign

**LAP DANCING CLUBS ARE
LICENSED IN THE SAME
WAY AS COFFEE SHOPS
AND KARAOKE**

**OBJECT TO INADEQUATE LICENSING
OBJECT TO NORMALISATION OF LAP DANCING
SUPPORT CHANGE TO LICENSING LEGISLATION**

Take Action!

Campaigns

Object to a lap dancing club in Newquay!

Object to lap dancing clubs in Islington borough!

Object to lap dancing club in Hemel Hempstead!

Object to SEV application in Poole!

Respond to one-question survey about whether Norwich City Council should adopt SEV legislation!

Object to another lap dancing club in Leamington Spa!

**Respond to consultation on SEV policy by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
See here.**

Object to lap dancing club in Cheltenham! See here.

Object to lap dancing clubs in Hull! See here.

Respond to Portsmouth City Council's consultation on lap dancing clubs here before 12 April. They are proposing a nil limit!

For the sake of fairness, surely the only opinions that have an weight must be those of people that live and work in Portsmouth.

Object & The Solent Feminist Network

Their Campaign Structure

&

How It Has Been Applied to Portsmouth

STRIPPING THE ILLUSION

Lap Dancing Campaign

**LAP DANCING CLUBS ARE
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See here.**

Object to lap dancing club in Cheltenham! See here.

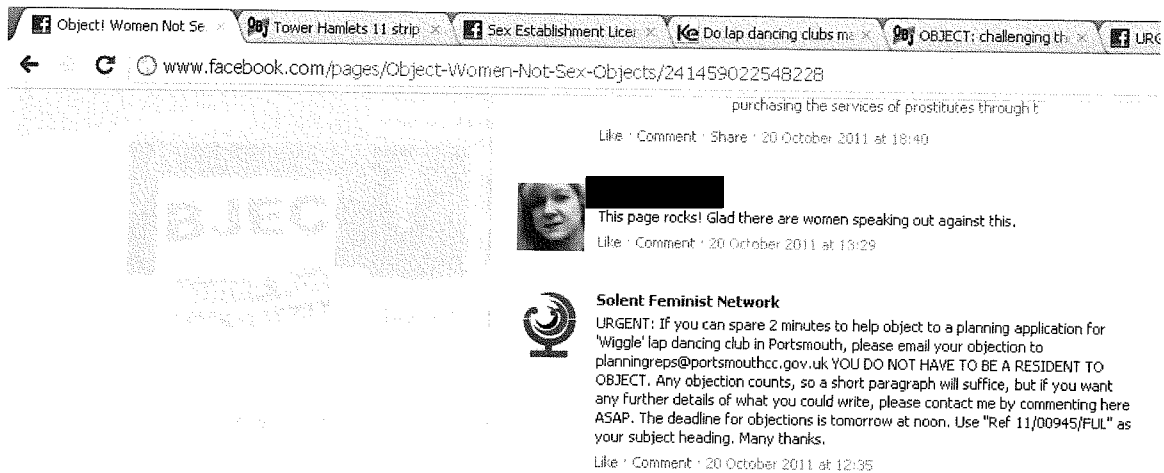
Object to lap dancing clubs in Hull! See here.

Respond to Portsmouth City Council's consultation on lap dancing clubs here before 12 April. They are proposing a nil limit!

Object are applying a standard template campaign in Portsmouth, one that relies of activists throughout the United Kingdom to support the closure of lap dancing clubs in Portsmouth.

The above frame grab is taken from Objects Lap Dancing Campaign page and as you can see, the final call to arms is about Portsmouth. This alone will have encouraged people that are not local residents to lobby the council...

We have found that the campaign does not end there....



The above frame grab is taken from Objects Facebook page and as you can see, encourages people to Object to Wiggles Planning application. You will also see that the writer clearly states that 'YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A RESIDENT TO OBJECT'. We question exactly how many objections were from people that are not Portsmouth residents.

Oct 24, 2011

Like · Comment

"URGENT: If you can spare 2 minutes to help object to a planning application for 'Wiggle' lap dancing club in Portsmouth, please email your objection to planningreps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A RESIDENT TO OBJECT. Any objection counts, so a short paragraph will suffice, but if you want any further details of what you could write, please contact me by commenting here ASAP. The deadline for objections is tomorrow at noon. Use "Ref 11/00945/FUL" as your subject heading. Many thanks." on Object! Women Not Sex Objects's timeline.

Oct 20, 2011

To the left we another Facebook entry that once again encourages planning objections and clearly states that 'any objection counts'.

This is of course untrue, a wide range of objections cannot legally count, such a those made on a moral basis. But of course the writer wanted as many objections as possible, so as to make it seem as though half of Portsmouth is protesting against the existence of Wiggle.

The reality of course is that about 300 people throughout the UK are against us and any other club that is currently trading – anywhere.

2011



Solent Feminist Network

20 October 2011

URGENT: If you can spare 2 minutes to object to a planning application for 'Wiggle' lap dancing club, please email your objection to planningreps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A RESIDENT TO OBJECT. Any objection counts, so a short paragraph will suffice, but if you want any further details of what you could write, please contact me by commenting here ASAP. The deadline for objections is tomorrow at noon. Use "Ref 11/00945/FUL" as your subject heading. Many thanks.

Like · Comment · Share



Solent Feminist Network

11 October 2011

Are you a resident of Portsmouth or Southampton? Do you want to help out with the fight against lap dancing clubs? There are a number of ways you can help with the campaign, and you don't have to do them all. Tasks include writing to Councillors, making written objections/deputations to licensing and planning, making spoken deputations at licensing/planning meetings, attending licensing/planning meetings to support the speakers, attending protests outside lap dancing clubs, writing to the local press, distributing materials to local residents. If you are able to help with any of these tasks, please get in touch. Thank you.

Like · Comment · Share

This frame grab is from the Facebook page of the Solent Feminist Network and we can see that they have essentially cut and pasted the wording from Objects Facebook page.

We believe that this demonstrates that Object are supporting SFN and as a result making a local planning issue into a national campaign.

Please note to the left that one of the campaign activities includes protesting outside clubs, something we have experienced that worries customers but worse of all, frightens our staff.

Below we see the SFN encouraging nationwide participation in the campaign.



Solent Feminist Network · 1,294 like this.

20 October 2011 at 12:35

Like

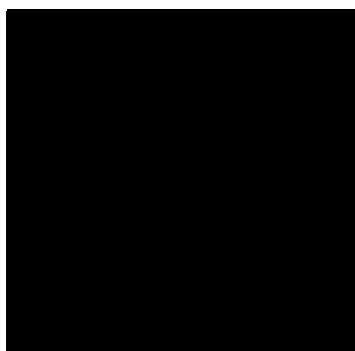
URGENT: If you can spare 2 minutes to help object to a planning application for 'Wiggle' lap dancing club in Portsmouth, please email your objection to planningreps@portsmouthcc.gov.uk YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE A RESIDENT TO OBJECT. Any objection counts, so a short paragraph will suffice, but if you want any further details of what you could write, please contact me by commenting here ASAP. The deadline for objections is tomorrow at noon. Use "Ref 11/00945/FUL" as your subject heading. Many thanks.

Like · [Comment](#)

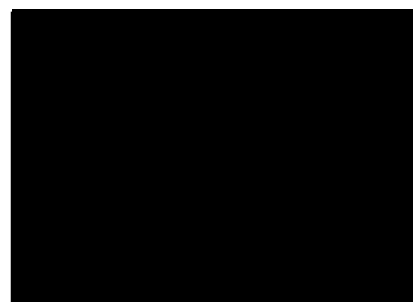
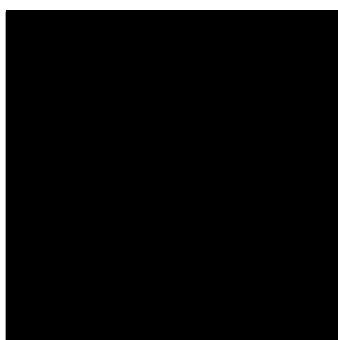
The Solent Feminist Network and its spokesperson, [REDACTED] have been involved at a local level, an intense campaign to ensure that every club in Portsmouth is closed.

[REDACTED] has even established an on line petition on the website Change.Org which calls for the strict implementation of the Nil policy throughout the City. The site features the names and home towns of recent signatories and as can be seen below, many of the signatories are not in fact residents of Portsmouth and therefore essentially unaffected by the continued presence of the boroughs clubs. In fact the petition allows any member to be a signatory, irrespective of their geographical location. At the time of writing, this petition has only managed to attract 171 signatures, on a national basis.

Recent Signatures



Recent Signatures



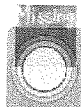
[REDACTED] has shown a close interest in council proceedings as she mentioned in a recent Facebook posting. Why she felt it necessary to make such unpleasant comments about two unnamed councillors is difficult for us to fathom. Please also note the arguably defamatory comment that [REDACTED] made about an identifiable club owner.



[REDACTED]
So, another successful day at licensing committee; draft policy with clause for 'Nil cap' passed by committee. 2 sexist, white, middle class, male able bodied Cllrs moved amendments to remove the 2 important clauses, but the amendments fell, and then the policy was passed 10-1. Great work everyone and thank you for your ongoing support.

Feb 24 at 7:37pm · 🌐

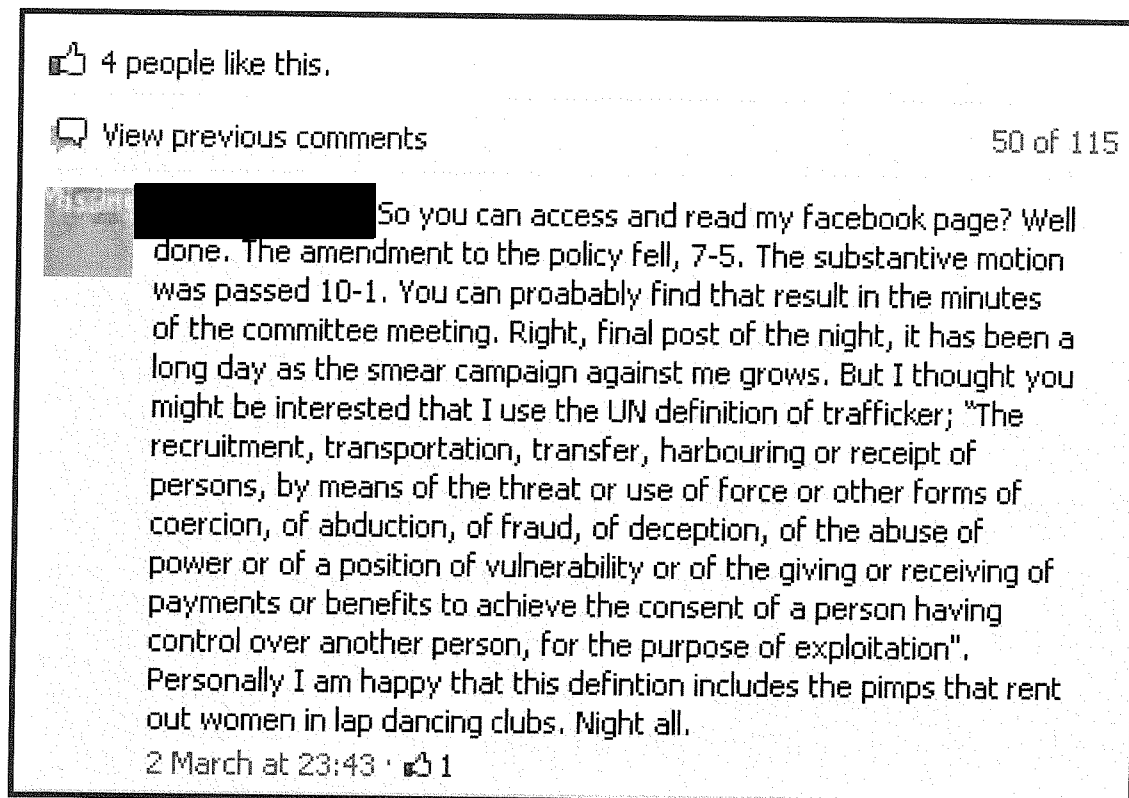
👍 25 people like this.



[REDACTED]
One of the traffickers present wheeled out 2 lap dancers to tell the committee how much they loved it and how intelligent they were. I felt sorry for the 2 women.

Feb 24 at 7:38pm

We fail to understand why someone that is so sure of the validity of their campaign, finds it acceptable to make such unfounded and insulting comments.



██████████ adds further insults when she refers to those that she recently termed as 'traffickers', as being 'pimps'.

You may unaware that ██████████ made allegations that she was harassed outside Wiggle by parties unknown. We took the allegation seriously and spent hours analysing CCTV footage in order to obtain evidence of the offence. The police were of course involved and after considerable investigation, we could find nothing that corroborated ██████████ allegation.

To be frank, we feel that we are being victimised by ██████████, the Solent Feminist Network and ultimately Object.

In the frame grab on the next page we see that the Solent Feminist Networks opposition to lap dancing also extends to local authority run Pole Dancing For Fitness lessons. Please note that ██████████ also disapproves of the dress style of the people that attend the lesson.



Solent Feminist Network · 221 like this.
31 August 2011 at 06:12 · 🌐

👍 Like

Anybody that lives in the Fareham area that would like to make a complaint about their Council-owned leisure centre running pole dancing classes?

Like · Comment



Solent Feminist Network Oh dear.
31 August 2011 at 06:20



Solent Feminist Network ^ That comment was Lexi. How do I post as myself or tag myself on this page? Can't figure it out, sorry. x
31 August 2011 at 06:21



Solent Feminist Network Thats something I'd like to know Lexi! :P Charlie you seem to have worked out how to change over if you are posting as yourself or as SFN, please help the rest of us do it! Jess
31 August 2011 at 08:05



Isn't it also a form of keep fit?
31 August 2011 at 12:42



Is that what the centre are asking people to wear to the class? Please don't be sarcastic Charlie? The class is called Pole Dancing for Fitness.
31 August 2011 at 13:06



Excuse me?
31 August 2011 at 13:08



The class is called Pole Dancing for Fitness, and is an exercise/dance class, so it's not anything to do with clubs, etc, and not spectated. The people going to these classes are doing it because they want to and could never be being forced into it to earn money, as in the sex industry. I think the actual stuff SFN are doing regarding the Lap Dancing Clubs in Portsmouth has more of an impact, and SFN would rather draw attention to that.
31 August 2011 at 13:15



I think they are both important. Pole dancing classes groom young women for the sex industry and society to accept the sex industry as normalised and mainstream. Lap dancing club owners have publicly acknowledged and applauded this fact. There is no expected dress code, but I am not far wrong, because this is what women turn up wearing, heels and hot pants. And I think my point that there are no men queuing up to take the class OR pole dance for cash is an important one. That is what makes it a feminist issue. It is sexist. I am not being in the slightest bit sarcastic. Feminism is an extremely serious subject for me.
31 August 2011 at 13:23

What kind of mindset would disapprove of someone wearing 'high heels and hot pants'? Furthermore, in the frame grabs below, we see that SFN see this as national issue when [REDACTED] urges people to contribute to a consultation being run by Tower Hamlets Council in London and SFN target Southampton.

... Vodafone UK 18:27 58%



Solent Feminist Network
So we've managed to persuade the council to limit the number of lapdancing clubs in Portsmouth. Next target Southampton. Do we have any residents who would be prepared to fight for this? Contact us, let us know.

Sep 26, 2011

Like · Comment

4

... Vodafone UK 18:26 58%



URGENT: can you find 10 minutes of your time tonight to fill in this easy online form? You DO NOT have to live in Tower Hamlets. Thank you. — via Object! Women Not Sex Objects

OBJECT Tower Hamlets 11 strip clubs :
Take Action
object.org.uk

Oct 4, 2011



i find this group incredibly insulting and also rather pathetic that you make you're arguments so personal. It's like you are celebrating the fact people like rachael and myself will no longer have a job, "the debate is redundant, just like you will be next year". i find it very difficult to comprehend how you can call yourself a member of 'portsmouth against the cuts together', when you are rejoycing the potential loss of employment. not one person is asking you to morally support strip clubs they are asking for their jobs.

5 March at 11:26 · 2

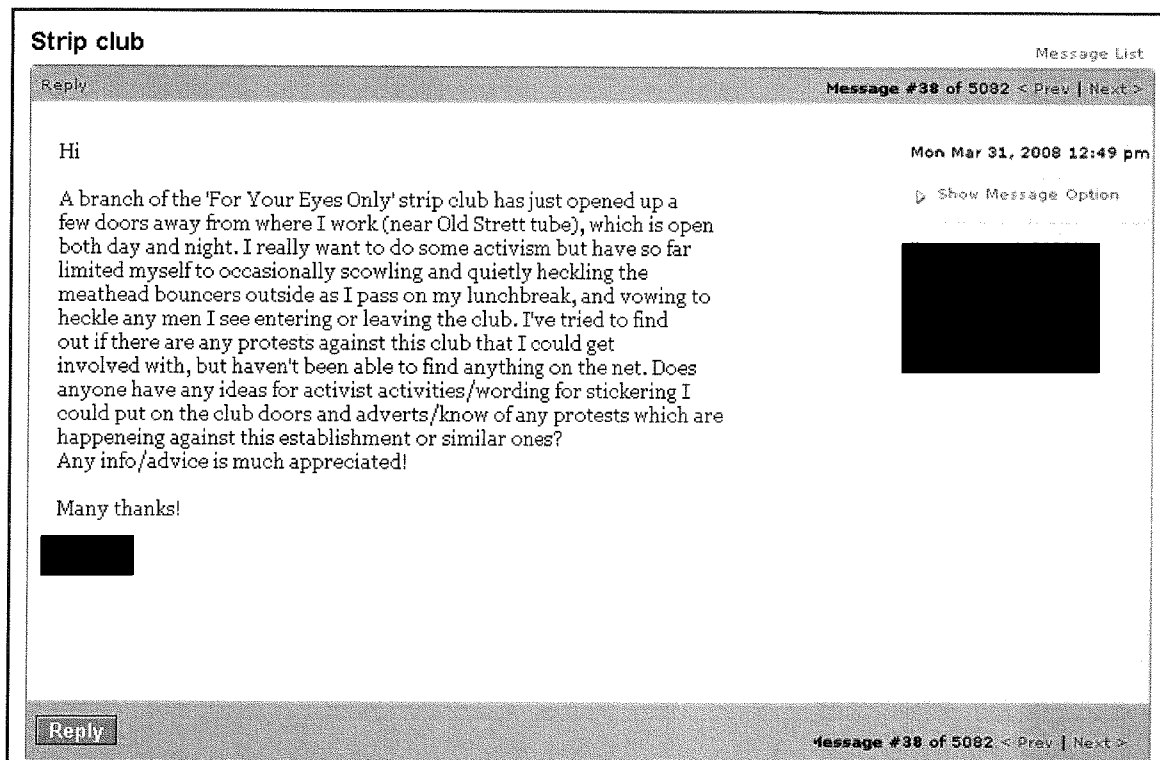


I don't support sweatshops or big corporations that dump illegal waste just because they provide employment to some. I look at the bigger picture. Social change is hoodie no doubt you all have many other skills that you could use to find work.

5 March at 11:45 via Mobile · 2

In the above frame grab, taken from a heated debate on Facebook, we see a member of Wiggle Bar Staff that understands the core issue, its about jobs versus morality. The eponymous [REDACTED] reveals her true attitude as well, that is if the dancers lose their jobs, they can just go and be employed somewhere else.

Finally, we thought it would be interesting for people to be able to understand some other Object viewpoints..



Here an Object activist has taken violent exception to a branch of For Your Eyes Only in London. As you can see her plan include covering the venue with stickers, which essentially is an act of criminal damage.

Increasingly, Object activists seem to contemplate direct action against any target that embodies what they see themselves as being against. The range of actions have included protesting outside clubs, damaging adverts and even the direct victimisation of dancers whose personal contact details they possess. This is a new development and was raised in an article published on the Moronwatch website, which is reproduced in this document.

Dancers Speak Out

Eleven of our dancers wanted to make a contribution to this document and what they have written is below. Please note that due to the perceived risk of harassment and abuse from Object and the Solent Feminist Network, the some of the dancers requested that they remain anonymous.

I urge you to read and consider the opinions of the girls that written the following testimonies. They are after all the people that will be affected the most by a 'Nil Cap'.

Testimony One

To whom it may concern.

I have been dancing at Wiggle Portsmouth since it opened and previously worked in Elegance. I am self employed and this is my sole income.

I thoroughly enjoy working at Wiggle, I earn a good income and have a very good relationship with my manager and fellow colleagues, many of which I count as my closest friends.

I feel very safe working in wiggle, we have fantastic door staff, CCTV throughout the premises and I can go to my manager if ever I have an issue. I chose to do this job and gave up my previous full time job so that I could work full time at wiggle.

I am extremely concerned about the effect the nil cap will have on my current situation. I live alone and rely on my income from wiggle to pay all my living expenses. Losing my job in the current economic climate we are facing is an extremely worrying prospect.

I am worried that if policy is passed and the clubs shut down I will struggle to find a job and have to rely on benefits, something I have never had to do before and which would result in the contract on my flat being void. I hope you will consider the massive effect this nil cap will have on the many workers in these clubs when making your decision.



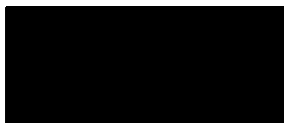
Testimony Two

I have been dancing for three years now and worked in many clubs but I can truly say that wiggle is one of the safest clubs I have worked in filled with reliable bouncers and a responsible manger.

I very much enjoy my job even more then when I was a hairdresser I can honestly say that is my choice to work within the establishment and I find it a very sensible job to get ahead In life and get a step up the ladder.

The club is filled with friendly staff and I have made many friends, my family know what I do as my career and see that I am more sensible then ever.

People can not say what they don't know before I was a dancer I had my ideas but I couldn't of been more wrong the club is filled with lovely people and I'm proud to be apart of it.



Testimony Three

Please let this be anonymous you can use my first name if necessary. I am a student at portsmouth uni and I rely heavily on my job as a dancer at wiggle. I love my job its a joy to work here. All the staff and other dancers are lovely and we all get on well. If I lost my job I would struggle to live with my uni fees and debt. If would effect me massively if you closed Wiggle and I was out of a job.



Testimony Four

I have been working as a lap dancer for 2 years, and at Wiggle Lap Dancing club in Portsmouth since the day it opened. I really enjoy what I do, I can work part-time in friendly environment and I'm happy with what I earn there, it also gives me financial freedom and I do not have to rely on anyone. If the club shuts down - that would dramatically affect my life - I would still carry on dancing but would have to drive to other towns, which means my journey would be an hour each way. I will also risk falling asleep behind the wheel which if I have an accident, I will not be able to look after my child.

Being able to work in Portsmouth Wiggle club gave me chance to spend more time with my family and daughter and not having to pay for (very expensive these days) childcare. Apart from that, I also support my parents financially, so shutting Wiggle club in Portsmouth would affect not only my family but also my parents as well.

It is really hard to get a day job these days, so to me it feels really unfair that mine and my friends jobs are about to be taken away for absolutely no reason. I hope this letter would help some people to understand how important it is to keep lap dancing clubs in Portsmouth open, by doing so you are going to make lives of many people, including me - much better

Testimony Five

I enjoy the environment I work in, and the people I work with. Its a fun friendly atmosphere and all the girls get on.

I feel it is a safe place to work, and there are several bouncers and cameras in the work place which makes it that extra bit secure.

The impact it would have on the dancers is huge, we all live close to the club and like I said before we all have fun and work together so why does anyone have the reason or right to try to shut us? If we lost our jobs we would be left with nothing, which would mean having to go on benefits.

All the girls that work at wiggle and elegance all work for a reason some of us have children, mortgages and many other thing to pay for, I've been doing it a long time and for something this big to happen would be devastating. There are many jobs people do in this world that others dont agree with, but you dont see us dancers setting up petitions and demonstrations to close them down. It is not illegal so I personally dont see what the problem is.

Testimony Six

Dancing maybe frowned upon by others, but this is only because they don't realise how little we need to do in order to earn a decent salary. There are plenty of women who walk around on a beach in next to nothing so why is it so frowned upon to dance for men who are paying a decent amount?

The clubs are safe and well monitored we are always protected by a number of bouncers and in all my time of dancing I have never felt unsafe or scared. In fact I feel safer in this job then I have in any others. Many single mums manage to earn a weeks salary in one night and therefore don't have to be on benefits and relying on the government so why are feminists who don't have a clue how we feel have the right to try and stop it?

The impact of being unable to dance in Portsmouth would mean several people in severe financial difficulty and trouble, so we really do need to be saved. We are all self employed we are not "forced to work" or asked to do anything other then dance for men who are willing to pay. There are many people who look down on it but we are all normal girls who need our jobs as much as anyone else.

Testimony Seven

I am a dancer and having been doing this job for a short while. Wiggle is one of the best clubs I've worked in as i feel very safe and secure here.

If this club was to shut down, i would have to claim job seekers, so i would be another young person claiming benefit. If not, i would have to work in another club that may not be as safe as wiggle.

Also working in wiggle i have met lovely people who i enjoy working with and make the atmosphere fun and the job is enjoyable, safe and easy.

Not every club is like this so I wouldnt like it to be shut down.



Testimony Eight

Dear Chair,

I am very disappointed with the decision of Portsmouth Council to implement new rules to clubs or even worse the closure of some clubs and threats of closure. In my time at working at the club industry, I can only say that i have always been treated with the utmost respect, I have also observed the same treatment afforded to the other young women.

There is certainly no coercing in any way, shape or form. The place is secure and at the end of the shift, all the young women are escorted to their cars by security staff and not left until they are in their car and the doors are locked.

Speaking for myself, I find the venue and atmosphere very safe and great fun. My father once told me that if the job stops being fun, stop doing the job. the closure of the club will not only stop the enjoyment of working because there will be no place to work but also be a massive cut of income not only for me but to other girls and the bouncer, bar staff and the management team.

Let me be candid; I am a young woman looking to put myself through University without being saddled with debt, scrounging off the state or my parents. My mother and my father, a Sales Director of his own Company, are fully aware of my part time occupation. Having checked the Venue for themselves, they are more than satisfied everything is above board and legal.

The attitude of the Council flies in the face of the 1968 Theatres Act and the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain as censor. Our performances are no more than titillation; no different to Benny Hill shows, Carry on films, imagine Gerald Thomas, Director of the Carry On's, asking Sid James to keep his distance from Barbara Windsor. Ridiculous.

Please reconsider and reverse your decision and allow us to legally earn some money and have a laugh at the same time.

Testimony Nine

I have now been a lap dancer for coming up four years, and I can confidently say that in that time it has changed me into a more relaxed and confident person. I have tried a variety of jobs prior to dancing, including office work, retail and sales, bar supervision, none of which I ever felt happy and suited to, hence why I was forever looking to change jobs.

When I decided to become a lap dancer it was days after I started my first shift that I began to feel more at home. Within a few weeks I'd noticed a massive change in my life, I was earning good money, my confidence had boosted, I had more self esteem, I'd made great friends and I didn't come home feeling stressed and pressurised like I did in my previous jobs, as for the first time I could finally work at my own pace.

People make a lot of bad assumptions of what lap dancing clubs are like, but as a dancer myself I can assure you that none of it is true. It is 100 per cent safe, clean, security is high and we never experience the fights, violence and drug use that happens on a daily basis in a typical night club. It's simply a place where a man or women or group of people will go to escape the stress of everyday life in a chilled out and friendly environment.

If the council decide to shut us down, it will put hundreds of girls that have worked hard to support their life out of a job, we will probably have to resort to job seekers allowance as employment will not fall at into our hands for some time, which in theory will cost our country more money.

In the time I have been a lap dancer, I have earned money which I've adapted my lifestyle to. I can finally pay for bills without a struggle, I can finally run a car that doesn't break down every week and can finally put some money into a savings account so in the future I have enough to support my children and put a deposit on a mortgage, rather than living off benefits as most 9-5 jobs only pay a basic wage.

Continued Over.....

Testimony Nine – Continued.

Since having this job I have cleared my debts, not behind on any payments and not ended up in debt. As I did with my previous jobs as it simply wasn't enough money. Us women are NOT being exploited at our work place, we do this job out of choice.

We have the option to stay or go. I am the kind of person that will just hand in my notice if I'm not happy somewhere, no questions asked. But seeing as I've now been a self employed dancer for four years that must be telling the public something. I am happy and I'd live to continue this job. Please think about how many unemployed people there will be of you choose to shut us down

Testimony Ten

To whom it may concern,

I have been a lap dancer for quite some time now. I work in Portsmouth as I live here and it would be inconvenient for me to travel to other cities on regular basis (however this would happen if you shut the strip clubs in Portsmouth). I am a student at University of Portsmouth and as most people know the tuition fees are high as well as the accommodation and the life is hard when you cannot get support from your parents or the government. Being a lap dancer made my education possible, because working as a bar staff or having any other job wouldn't provide for all the expenses I have. Also I choose how many nights and hours to work so I can still attend the lectures during daytime.

If the strip clubs in Portsmouth shut that would make everything so difficult. I will most probably have to go work in other cities doing the same job, it won't stop me. If I do not have this job this means I have to drop university wasting all that time and efforts I've put in so far. I don't even want to think about this possibility because it would be ridiculous. I think of myself as a smart and intelligent girl. I am not embarrassed from my job because I don't think it is something bad or that it harms anyone. Men come to strip clubs for fun and they know there is nothing else they can get except from a dance, which does not even include any form of physical contact. **Continued over...**

Testimony Ten - Continued

I like my job not only because of the financial part but also because I meet so many different people and enjoy some nice conversation. I've learnt so many new things, broadened my knowledge on different topics, this is something that I've never imagined or expected before I started doing this job and perhaps no one would understand that until they actually get involved in this job ... any may be this is the reason everyone judge us even though they don't know what is really going on ...

I can confirm and declare that none of the girls I've met since I've been doing this job are forced to do it. It is our own choice and we all have our reasons to do it. Even some of the girls are happily married with kids and they do this job because the hours and financial part are convenient. Girls support their families or just their children due to different circumstances, others do it to support their education or just for a bit of extra money. The important thing is that we all want to be lap dancers and this is our full or part time job. If we lose our jobs in Portsmouth won't stop us being lap dancers most of us will just move to work in other strip clubs in the country but it will just make it so inconvenient.

Please save out jobs, we like what we are doing, we are not forced to do it, strip clubs don't harm anyone and our jobs are important for us!!!

Best regards,

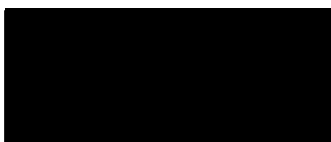
Testimony Eleven

As a dance at wiggle in Portsmouth, I feel I'm fighting against the very people that claim to be trying to protect me in order to save my job.. A job which I willing do, and enjoy doing.. I was a manger of a hair salon for 8 years and chose to leave that profession in order to become a dancer.. I was in no way forced or 'trafficked' in as implied by the woman's right group..

I use the money I earn to support myself, my 6 year old daughter and I also help care for my grandma.. If the club closed I would be forced into searching for a new career and in the current state of the country with million out of work I fear claiming benefits is a likely outcome.. Claiming benefits is not a choice I would like to make and would be considered a last resort.. But it seems like that choice is about to be taken out of my hands..

I have worked for Elegance and I have worked for Wiggle from the day it opened.. I have never once felt unsafe and I am always protected to the highest level. The club is clean, and there is never any trouble, between the girls or the customers.. There are never customers hanging about outside ready to 'pounce' as also implied by the group and doorman walk us to our car/taxi to ensure we get home safely...

I haven't Ever experienced drug use inside of the club nor excessive drinking... The girls working are not allowed to get drunk.. So to assume we're all drug users that need to drink in order to get us through a night working here is extremely small minded.



Summary

What you have read are the views that Object and the Solent Feminist Network would prefer to see suppressed. The closure of clubs in Portsmouth would lead to severe financial hardship not just for dancers and bar staff, but their families and other dependants as well.

Object
Moronwatch Article

For decades, every major battle in the area of sexuality has been won by progressives. The pill and the condom have long allowed women to enjoy their sexuality, and increasing numbers of women are unashamed of fulfilling their sexual desires. Alternative sexualities have become increasingly accepted, with gay marriage now accepted in many countries, and the Internet has allowed people to find those of similar sexual tastes and needs far more easily than ever before.

By the year 2000, it seemed that sexual conservatives were in irreversible retreat – at least on this side of the Atlantic. But society's conservative/progressive pendulum has been swinging rightward for a while now, and it's therefore not so surprising that sexual freedom is under attack, yet again. The usual suspects are there, of course: Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and other religious groups who are always keen to trumpet the evils of free sexuality, in whatever form it may rear its head. The religious believers can't be swayed by fact or logic: if their book says something is bad, then so it must be.

But attacks on sexual freedom here in the UK often come from more unexpected sources. Religious moralists are in a small minority, but secular moralists have become increasingly loud. In particular, some small, active hate groups using the Feminist label have appeared on the scene.

If you're expecting an attack on Feminism here, you'll be disappointed. In fact, the feminist movement came under heavy attack from within in the 1980s. The original feminist movement (of the 1960s and early-70s) was a libertarian one that focused on the individual rights of women: most of all, it fought for the right of women to do with their own bodies as they saw fit. In modern-day feminist parlance, the early feminists were "sex-positive". In the 1980s, an anti-sex faction appeared, led by Catharine MacKinnon, a lawyer. These new "feminists" directly opposed the sexual libertarianism of earlier feminists. They effectively became the secular wing of religious pro-morality campaigners, and the two, apparently quite different, groups have fought for the same causes ever since.

Sex-positive feminism is still going strong, as demonstrated by the Slutwalk movement of last summer, which aimed to make Slut a word of pride instead of shame. Notably, the "feminist" anti-sexuality groups failed to support Slutwalk. But the mass media, and many conservative-leaning feminists, have embraced the puritanical feminist movement and rewritten history. Rather than a conservative offshoot of sex-positive feminism, the puritans are now presented as the only valid form of feminism: an anti-sexuality coup has twisted and subverted a once libertarian movement.

Chief among these neo-puritan groups in the UK is one called Object. It paints itself as a feminist organisation, and has received plenty of mainstream media coverage, but it campaigns exclusively against sexuality and sexual imagery. Bizarrely for a group that adopts the label "feminist", much of its vitriol is used against women who dare show naked flesh in public. In Object's campaigning – against nudity in the media, strip clubs and prostitution – it supports and shares platforms with right-wing and religious fundamentalist groups. Yet newspapers like the Guardian and TV outlets like Channel 4 take Object seriously, and give them a platform that they wouldn't give to religious hate groups.

Object's propaganda is laughable – I suggest you look at their site for yourself to see that. In particular, the page entitled “[The Facts](#)” is a masterpiece in obfuscation. For sure, the page lists some facts. But it provides no information about how these facts are in any way linked to *Object's* claims that sexual freedom creates dangers for women. For example:

Over half (54%) of all women around the world say they first became aware of the need to be physically attractive between 6 and 17 years of age

Yes... and? I'd have expected the number to be higher, if anything. Given that evolution drives us to make the best possible choice of sexual partner, both women and men (not to mention many species other than humans) have a built-in need to make ourselves physically attractive. What point is being made here?

Eating disorders are as common amongst women as autism

OK... and is that a lot? And if so, what does it say about the causes of eating disorders? Or of autism, for that matter?

66% of teenage girls would consider plastic surgery and 20% would do it right now

Again, what are the causes of this? Is this proven to be a bad thing? *Object* don't say. Can it be linked to scantily clad women (and men) in lads mags and music videos, as *Object* seem to imply? Or perhaps newsreaders should wear brown paper bags over their heads as well? Maybe we should ban any video or photo featuring a potentially attractive woman, just in case? Maybe Wahhabi Muslims have the right idea. If everyone is veiled, nobody can aspire to look like anyone else.

Polls suggest that 63% of young women aspire to be glamour models or lap dancers

And plenty of young men want to be footballers. What does this mean? *Object* doesn't provide any interpretation. These “facts” alone are supposed to show that society is “too sexualised”, women are “objectified”, and somehow these meaningless words conjure up a world in which women are less safe. So let's hide naked flesh! That will solve everything! ...

And the nonsense continues. Yet some journalists and politicians take these people seriously.

As I began planning interviews for my recently launched podcast, I decided to talk to women who have come under attack, both from neo-puritanical groups like *Object* (and others, such as [UK Feminista](#)), and old-style religious puritans. I've met and interviewed strippers, prostitutes, female pornographers, female sex writers and female academics who research sexuality, and discovered some shocking things: that *Object* have never approached and talked to the women who they claim to be “saving from exploitation”; that *Object* have ignored the weight of research and evidence that exists showing that abuse is powered by secrecy and censorship, not by sexual freedom. I've even met a woman (who I can't name here) who has received threats from *Object* activists against her and her family unless she stops working in sex-related areas.

In east London, *Object* are working alongside religious fundamentalists to have strip clubs closed down. They link the existence of strip clubs with increases in rape, although evidence doesn't back that claim. They lie about links to "trafficking", ignoring that licensed venues are forced by EU regulation to check workers' passports. They picket the venues and harass the workers, and their campaign will ensure gay clubs close as well as straight ones (a fact they're remarkably quiet about).

Quite simply, *Object* is a hate group. Its methods are those of lies and intimidation. It deliberately avoids facts that may undermine its fundamentalist belief that free sexuality is bad for women. Yet it receives donations and media time from sources that other hate groups (far-right racists, for example) could not.

If *Object* and *UK Feminista* won't talk to women involved in the sex industries, I can. In my upcoming podcast episode, I interview strippers who have become political activists and trade unionists in order to defend their chosen way of making a living, and their right (once fought for and won by feminists) to do as they choose with their own bodies. *Object*, without ever meeting these women (they refuse to), or setting foot in a strip club (their minds are made up), have labelled the women simultaneously victims, and a root cause of rape and domestic violence, without a shred of evidence to back any of these claims.

Conclusion

We hope that we have provided the reader with enough information to make a balanced judgement in regard to the proposed Nil Policy. It is our view that clubs throughout the United Kingdom have been subject to an organised campaign that is being undertaken by a group of people that numbers no more than 500.

Strip and Lap dancing clubs are legal businesses that subject to rigorous licensing and management. We welcome any inspection, by any organisation as we have nothing to hide. We are not 'traffickers', we are not 'pimps', we are simply people that are deriving income in manner that a minority disapprove of. We do not believe that moral judgements can ever be the basis for closing businesses and inflicting unemployment and poverty on people that quite frankly deserve better.

Appendix

So as to demonstrate our commitment to openness, the appendix contains copies of the Lilith and Holsopple Reports. We include them because we believe that we have demonstrated that they are of no relevance to our situation.

The final inclusion in the appendix is a copy of a letter that was sent to Dr Teela Sanders by an Object activist. The writer is deeply critical of Dr Sanders findings and once again, makes some quiet insulting comments about the report and its interim conclusions.

The Lilith Report

LILITH REPORT ON LAP DANCING AND STRIPTEASE IN THE BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

“Table dancing has moved into the mainstream. The clubs, previously perceived as sleazy and hostile, are now seen as ideal venues for a corporate night out or a bit of celebrity-spotting.”

The Guardian, ‘Wage Slaves’

Taking your clothes off is big business. Lap dance arrived in Britain in 1997 with the opening of Secrets in Hammersmith, and it's not going away without a fight. Although striptease clubs have been a familiar sight in Soho for many years, it is lap dance where the money is, where ‘girls’, sometimes teenaged but almost always young, gyrate naked in front of men for £10, and perform private shows for £20. With the chain For Your Eyes Only making £1 million a year profit on its outer London Park Royal branch (the Mayfair branch refuses to disclose), there is no doubt that this is an extremely healthy market. The founder of Spearmint Rhino, an American chain which is one of the more controversial clubs, even models his business on McDonalds, giving the customer a three minute fantasy of being wanted by beautiful women, whilst pocketing a healthy fee.

This ‘fast fantasy’ approach is demeaning and insulting to women as it is, but coupled with the potential impact that such establishments can have upon a community in terms of noise, antisocial behaviour and safety, it becomes far more serious. It must be stressed that the venues discussed in this report are licensed, and therefore the Council that licenses them has some responsibility towards them. The report centres on the Borough of Camden because Lilith and Eaves believe that Camden's opinion and acts carry great weight with other London boroughs, and that if Camden were to change its policy on lap dance and striptease establishments, then this good practice could spread through London.

PROFILE BOROUGH - POPULATION AND DENSITY

For the purposes of this report we are comparing the borough of Camden to two inner London boroughs, Islington and Westminster, in terms of their relative size and distribution of striptease or lap dancing venues, as well as the interpretations that each Council uses to licence such establishments. Finally, the report looks at the impact of the striptease and lap dancing venues have had on the residential populations of the boroughs, and how the incidence of crime (particularly sexual crimes against women) has altered since the arrival of the first UK lap dancing club in Hammersmith in 1997.

Camden is an inner London borough neighbouring Westminster to the south-west and Islington to the east. Although it is smaller than Westminster, it shares some of the commercial/residential clustering that characterises that borough. However, whereas Westminster attempts to cluster most of its 20 licensed striptease and lap dancing establishments in the Soho or WC2 area away from the majority of its 181,279 residents, Camden's commercial areas are still highly residential. It has a resident population of 191,000, 1200 premises licensed to serve alcohol, 130 premises with entertainment licences and 7 striptease and lap dancing premises licensed by the Council. By contrast Islington, which shares Camden's highly residential character, has only one licensed striptease venue and one pole-dancing bar.

The premises licensed by each borough for striptease and/or lap dancing break down into the following wards;

Camden

Ward	Number of licensed premises
Bloomsbury	2
West Hampstead	1
Holborn	3
St. Pancras/Somers Town	1

Westminster

Ward	Number of licensed premises
St. James	2
Marylebone	1
West End	17

Islington

Ward	Number of licensed premises
Caledonian	1
Clerkenwell	1

INTERPRETATION OF LICENSING

Any premises in Greater London, and the United Kingdom as a whole, that offers entertainment for the public, and advertises or charges for such entertainment, is required to possess a Public Entertainment Licence, or PEL. Any premises that is subject to a PEL is exempt by law from the requirement to register as a 'Sex Encounter Establishment' in order to offer striptease or nude entertainment. As a result most London Authorities impose a standard condition on PELs that any establishment wishing to apply for a PEL or Music and Dancing licence with the intention to show striptease, lap and table dancing or sex entertainment must apply expressly for a waiver (known as 'special nudity permission') from the

Council in question. A fee is charged for this waiver and the Council is therefore free to impose conditions upon the licensee, although this does not always occur.

A distinction is often made at the licensing stage between 'striptease', 'lap dancing' and 'sex establishment', although this is at the Local Authority's discretion. The Local Authorities (Miscellaneous) Act of 1982, which was adopted by the GLC and subsequently by the borough Councils defines 'striptease' as including nudity, wearing see-through clothing, and non-participatory sexual stimulation performed in a designated area (e.g. a stage) only, and no person under 18 being admitted, with notices posted to this effect around the premises.¹

'Lap dancing' or 'table dancing' has additional conditions imposed, that the dancers may only dance at the tables of customers seated in areas approved by the Council with CCTV in operation at all times, an adequate number of Council-approved Door Supervisors, and that contact between dancer and customer is restricted to the transfer of money or tokens at the beginning or the end of the performance. By contrast, a 'sex establishment' is defined as a premises at which performances are given that comprise the sexual stimulation of customers, or performances in which the breasts, genitalia or excretory organs are exposed, or premises selling sex articles to a significant degree. Needless to say these definitions are self-contradictory enough to allow lap dancing and striptease licensees some legal leeway, not to mention the interpretation made by each individual Council. Some choose to enforce rigid interpretations upon their licensees. Camden unfortunately does not.

¹ Local Authorities (Miscellaneous) Act of 1982, Additional Conditions SX: For Particular Control Over Striptease Or Similar Entertainment Involving Nudity
(<http://www.council.blackburnworld.com/feedback/licensing/pdf/exe>)

CAMDEN AND ISLINGTON

Several borough authorities have attempted to interpret this system of conditions and rules in the strictest possible sense. Islington, a borough that is smaller than Camden but is highly residential, has ruled that any premises that wishes to show striptease confined to a stage must apply for a Music and Dancing licence only, in accordance with the GLC ruling, but that the licensee must submit to Council and Police inspection as well as imposed age restrictions and strict rules about contact and Door Supervisors. Any premises wishing to use lap or table dancing must apply for a Music and Dancing licence and also a Sex Encounter licence, costing £10,000. To date Islington has one pub licensed to show stage striptease and one recently opened pole dance club.²

Camden Council takes a different approach. The well-known 'Secrets' chain of table dancing clubs, which operates three of its five London-based premises in Camden, has been permitted under appeal to evade the 'special nudity permission' for one of its clubs by continuing to be licensed under the previous premises' name of Manatiys, and thereby being deemed suitable for a straightforward Music and Dancing PEL. The other Secrets clubs, Spearmint Rhino on Tottenham Court Road and three other lap dancing venues within the borough are licensed with Music and Dancing PELs including the special nudity permission, but Camden declines to set any form of age restriction on these venues, preferring to leave it to the club's discretion. Camden also admits that there are unlicensed premises operating within the borough.

² The Flying Scotsman, Caledonian Road and Hooters, Clerkenwell respectively.

CAMDEN AND WESTMINSTER

Camden operates a 'full nudity' stance on the lap dancing and striptease venues within the borough, which allows dancers to perform fully nude instead of in minimal clothing (usually a G-string). Camden's relaxing of its minimal clothing requirement in 2000 (incidentally the year of the arrival of Spearmint Rhino and Secrets Holborn) has prompted a tide of change among other borough authorities.

Westminster Council recently changed its own policy to fall in line with Camden's after extensive lobbying by its 20 'strip' establishments, culminating in a court case victory by Peter Stringfellow, of Stringfellow's Cabaret of Angels in February 2002.³ Mr. Stringfellow had felt that the minimal clothing rule previously imposed by Westminster was constricting him financially, and had threatened to move to Camden borough in order to keep up with his main rival, the fully-nude Spearmint Rhino. Westminster's decision to capitulate was in part financially motivated, as there were concerns about the loss of business and licensing fees to Camden if striptease and lap dancing premises decided to relocate.

IMPACT ACROSS LONDON

Camden's relaxed stance on full nudity has also made life difficult in other boroughs. Hammersmith and Fulham Council, a member of the North and West Licensing Liaison Group, (of which Camden is also a member), attempted to impose a condition requiring table dancers at their Secrets to wear a minimal amount of clothing, although stage dancers could appear nude. However, the licensee of Secrets, the longest running lap dancing club in Britain,⁴ felt aggrieved by this decision and appealed to the Magistrate. The Local Authority was overruled and the administrative and financial costs of attempting to impose conditions when Camden, Brent and Westminster all stand in favour of full nudity

³ <http://www.ananova.com/sexlife/02/2002>

⁴ Established in 1997 according to Secrets themselves, making them the first lap dancing club in Britain.

has discouraged other authorities. Hillingdon even cited the stances of other boroughs and the Secrets appeal to support its own decision to go 'fully nude'.⁵ As one of the first boroughs to relax its stance towards nudity, Camden has had a great deal of influence on other boroughs. If Camden Council can improve its policy regarding striptease and lap dancing, then this good practice could also be used to positively influence other Local Authorities.

IMPACT: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

It is clear that some concerns exist over the attitudes of the Council towards the licensing process. However, we also believe that the advent of the 'strip club' and its encouragement towards late licensing is also having a detrimental effect on the welfare of local residents, particularly female residents and visitors to Camden. Between April 2000 and March 2001 Camden recorded 2730 noise complaints within the borough. A quarter of these complaints related to commercial noise coming from pubs, clubs and bars at night.

It can be no coincidence that Bloomsbury and Holborn,⁶ the areas that had the most complaints, also have the greatest number of striptease and lap dancing clubs in the borough, all of which have late -opening licences and attract late night noise nuisances such as unlicensed minicabs, individuals soliciting and prostituted women, not to mention the departure of the legitimate customers. The noise generated by these clubs has not gone unnoticed by residents, who lodged objections against the 2002 renewal of Spearmint Rhino's licence for 161 Tottenham Court Road and the licensing of Secrets at Finchley Road for the reasons mentioned here.

⁵ N. Stanley, Environmental Committee Report 1st October 1998, available online at <http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk>

⁶ Holborn had most complaints according to Camden Environmental Health (2001), Bloomsbury had most complaints according to Camden Police's CAD records (2001).

The residents at Finchley Road were particularly concerned that the new lap dancing club would add to the already considerable night noise generated by the O2 centre to push environmental noise up to an unacceptable level. Their concern is well founded. Camden measured environmental noise at Euston and Finchley Road, and found levels had increased from 60dB in 1999 to over 70dB in 2002,⁷ past the level advertised by the Council as being unlikely to cause permanent damage during lifetime exposure. Although this level is mostly due to traffic, the problem can only be made worse by having several late-licence establishments disgorging customers (who then all have to get home) into a highly residential area in the early hours. The Council is aware of this problem and is taking steps to minimise noise to residents, including making sounding a horn between 23.00 and 07.00 an offence. However, as the Police's observations of Spearmint Rhino show, this action may not be enough.

"... 00.20am...a large group of approximately 18 males left the club and hung around outside, making lots of noise, shouting and singing..."

"Touts were overheard offering to take people who have left the club or passing by, to other strip clubs to see girls."

(from Report of Director, Environmental Health Department 28 March 2002)

⁷ Between the hours of 22.00 and 07.00.
<http://www.camden.gov.uk/green/sections/urban/publichealth5.html>

CRIME

The principal causes for concern regarding the impact of late-opening striptease and lap dancing venues for both residents and visitors can be summarised as the following;

Concerns of residents of Camden:

- **Antisocial behaviour**
- **Fear of crime**
- **Safety of female residents**

Concerns of visitors to Camden:

- **Safety at night**
- **Safety of female visitors**

The problem with antisocial behaviour is that it is difficult to measure or quantify. As Camden Council admits, 'because of the persistent level of incidents and their location and nature the impact they have upon an area and the community who live there can be profound.'⁸ Put another way, the Police cannot take any action against normally rowdy customers exiting a lap dancing club because they are behaving, but this does not mean that they behave all the time. The persistent nature of antisocial behaviour generates more misery for residents who, in the case of Bloomsbury, Euston and Finchley Road, already suffer noisy environments and broken sleep. Camden's Audit also places disturbance 'hotspots' at Kings Cross, Camden Town Underground and UCL on Tottenham Court Road.

Fear of crime is also a key concern of residents. One in five Camden residents fears assault without a motive, compared to one in six Islington residents.⁹ In Westminster 73% of female respondents fear crime, and the residents of WC2,

⁸ Camden Crime and Disorder Audit 2001, p.34

⁹ Islington Crime and Disorder Audit 1998- 2001 p.7

where a quarter of the licensed lap dancing and strip venues are based, are unique in Westminster for feeling more unsafe at night.

RAPE AND SEXUAL OFFENCES

With a number of venues in Camden that have a predominately male clientele, as well as being situated near large numbers of female residents and students in the case of Spearmint Rhino and Secrets Holborn, the safety of women in the borough, particularly at night, is a concern. Although all three boroughs have seen their overall number of crimes decrease in recent years, Camden has seen the smallest decrease. Westminster's level of recorded crime decreased by 12.6%, Islington's by 13.2%, but Camden's decreased by just 5.6%, less than half of the other boroughs.¹⁰ Islington has also seen its number of sexual offences (including indecent assault, soliciting, prostitution and unlawful intercourse with girls) decrease by 24% over 2001 (and many of these incidents centred on Holloway and Pentonville Prisons), while the rape rate dropped by 4%.

Camden's female rape rate per 1000 for 2001 was three times the national average, and 12% of these were aggressive, causing mild to moderate injury. Comparing the rape and indecent assault figures for 1999, before the establishment of Spearmint Rhino and Secrets Holborn, Finchley Road and Euston, and 2002,¹¹

Since 1999 rape of women in Camden has increased by 50%

Since 1999 indecent assault of women in Camden has increased by 57%

In addition, several of the venues are close to student accommodation, such as ULU, UCL, LSE and several TEFL schools, and in the Spearmint Rhino renewal application it was suggested that

¹⁰ Statistics from the Met Police web site <http://www.met.police.uk/statistics> for 2000.

¹¹ Financial Years, Apr 1998 to Mar 1999, Apr 2001 to Mar 2002.

'the area around the University Street and Tottenham Court has now been denigrated into a 'no go' area for female shoppers and male passers-by who are often accosted by pimps and other strip clubs offering sexual services and favours.'¹²

This would suggest that the female students, particularly those away from home, are also at risk. Over 60% of rape victims and 78% of indecent assault victims in Camden in 2001 were under 30, which is particularly concerning when the Met reports that over 230 young women were victims of minicab rape in the same year.¹³ The increase in striptease and late clubs can only attract more unlicensed mini-cab drivers to the area, putting potentially vulnerable young women in danger.

There is also some concern over the welfare of the women working in the establishments. The controversy over Spearmint Rhino's alleged 'prostitution' charges, which were reported in the national Press as

"prostitution and brothel-keeping".

From 'My Camden' News online July issue¹⁴

"Clients, it was claimed, were breaking the lap dance taboo by touching the girls and police investigated allegations of prostitution. Prudential Assurance, which owns the building, was horrified..."

From the Evening Standard

¹² Report of Director, Environmental Health Department 28 March 2002 section 3.4

¹³ Numbers taken across London as a whole. (<http://www.sapphire.met.police.uk/minicab>)

¹⁴ <http://www.mycamden.co.uk/camden/community-localnewsJuly01.htm>

“Dancers' contracts appear to be designed primarily to sign away their rights. 'informality' within the business means health and safety rules are not always enforced.”

From the Guardian story ‘Wage Slaves’¹⁵

“Police were worried conduct at the club might amount to prostitution.... Residents have also complained about the club attracting prostitutes and unlicensed minicab drivers.”

From the BBCi online newspaper¹⁶

Because Spearmint Rhino doesn't have their 'girls' dancing on an open floor, but instead uses trademark 'private' booths for a £20 dance, it is feared that coercion to break the 'no-touching' rule may be taking place, violating the worker's terms of employment and the licensing set by Camden Council, who investigated claims of dancers performing oral sex and other illegal acts upon customers in July 2001. Despite this widely-reported investigation, Spearmint Rhino won its last license appeal in March 2002. This report's ultimate intention is to highlight some of the problems that Lilith and Eaves feel are either caused or exacerbated by the lap dancing industry in London. Camden may not have the most strip tease or lap dancing venues in the capital, but we are convinced that it does have the capacity to instigate change if it so wishes. We accept that this industry is financially motivated, but we cannot accept that any public body would wish to be seen as abandoning those people to which it has a responsibility. The Local Authority of Camden states itself in its Equalities policy that

¹⁵ <http://money.guardian.co.uk/work/wageslaves/story/0,11996,714994,00.html>

¹⁶ \BBC NEWS England Indecent conduct claim at lap dance club.htm

“...the Council has an important leadership role in influencing others, promoting and encouraging fairness and equality and contributing to a more just and compassionate society.”

From the Diversity Policy Statement

It is difficult to see how allowing women to continue to walk in fear, while residents go without sleep and licensees can overturn Council decisions imposed to protect others, can be seen as a more compassionate and just society. Of course it would be wonderful if strip clubs could be eradicated tomorrow. Until that occurs it is clear that the licensing rules as they are need to change, and if the Council cannot enforce rules directly onto the venue, they can hurt the pockets of the owners instead.

The Local Authority could impose some forms of standard monitoring for the larger clubs to curb their power to influence policy, and strict procedures for violation of licence conditions , or removing the licence altogether to close down the venue. Camden could adopt a system similar to Islington's, where lap dancing clubs must pay an additional £10,000 and enforce strict age restrictions on the orders of the Council. The clubs could be made responsible for enforcing noise restrictions outside their premises, including the reputed touts, again on the understanding that they need to do this to retain their licence. This may well also discourage the bogus minicab drivers.

Perhaps in this way, Camden Council could change policy in its own borough, and then share efficient good practice with other boroughs to create a London that bears more resemblance to the description given by Camden Council.

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EAVES AND LILITH

Eaves Housing For Women was set up as a supported housing collective for women in 1977. After a period of recent growth Eaves decided to improve the services across London in response to the appalling lack of service available to women suffering violence in some London boroughs, and the limited availability of services in others.

Lilith, a second tier pan-London agency, was born to address this lack of services available to combat violence against women. In conjunction with Hackney Women's Aid and the Women's Resource Centre, Eaves intends to research the services already available in London to victims of a range of violence, including rape, sexual assault, FGM, stalking, harassment and bullying in the workplace. Where these services are working well, we will share this good practice with other London-based agencies. Where a service is inadequate, poorly funded or needs assistance, then Lilith can help.

The Holsopple Report

STRIP CLUB TESTIMONY

by Kelly Holsopple

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to investigate women's experiences in stripclubs and to describe the activities in stripclubs from the women's point of view. The format approach is collective story narrative with the author as part of the collective voice. The research was inspired by the author's experiences in stripping over the course of thirteen years. The author's intention is to examine the conditions of stripclubs by describing the fundamental way stripclubs are organized. The description features bar activities focused on stripper-customer interactions; survey data on sexual violence in stripclubs; and women's thoughts on stripping.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Stripclubs are popularly promoted as providing harmless entertainment and as places where respectful men go to watch and talk to women (Reed 1997). Stripclub customers are described as normal men who use stripclubs to avoid adultery and therefore find a safe outlet for their sexual desires in balance with their marital commitments (Reed 1997). In contrast, stripclubs are criticized for being environments where men exercise their social, sexual, and economic authority over women who are dependent on them and as places where women are treated as things to perform sex acts and take commands from men (Ciriello 1993).

Stripclubs are organized according to gender and reflect gender power dynamics in greater society. "Gendered spaces are social arenas in which a person's gender shapes the roles, statuses, and interpersonal dynamics and generates differential political and economic outcomes and interaction expectations and practices" (Ronai, Zsembik, and Feagin 1997:6). Stripclubs are more specifically organized according to gender inequality, which is perpetuated by gendered spaces and consequently sexualized (Ronai, et al 1997). The typical stripclub scenario displays young, nude or partially nude women for fully clothed male customers (Thompson and Harred 1992).

The entire analysis of stripclubs is located within the context of men's domination over women. When organizations are produced in the context of the structural relations of domination, control, and violence, they reproduce those relations (Hearn 1994). These organizations may also make explicit use of gendered forms of authority with unaccountable and unjustifiable authority belonging to men (Hearn 1994). The stripclub elicits and requires direct expressions of male domination and control over women (Prewitt 1989).

In order to dominate or control and secure men's domestic, emotional and sexual service interests, male dominated institutions and individual men utilize violence (Hanmer 1989). Violence against women is identified as physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, and representational, but all violence from men against women should be understood as sexual violence (Hearn 1994). The concept of a continuum is useful when discussing sexual violence, especially in stripclubs. Continuum is defined as a basic characteristic underlying many different events and as a series of elements or events that pass into one another (Kelly 1987). The common underlying element in stripclubs is that male customers, managers, staff, and owners use diverse methods of harassment, manipulation, exploitation, and abuse to control female strippers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite a substantial amount of research on the topic of strippers, stripping, and stripclubs, none focuses on sexual violence in stripclubs perpetrated against strippers. Instead the studies focus on sociological and psychological profiles of the women (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Peretti and O' Connor 1989; Reid, Epstein, and Benson 1994; McCaghy and Skipper 1970; Thompson and Harred 1992) and their strategies for interaction with customers (Boles and Garbin 1974; Enck and Preston 1988; Ronai 1989). Although most studies mention male sexual violence and exploitation, the research regarding stripping fails to investigate and account for the problem of sexual violence in establishments that feature female strippers. The gap is the rationale for my study.

METHOD

Data for this research was obtained through interviews, a survey, and the researcher's participant observation while involved in stripping (Hamel 1993). Women in this study stripped in the local stripclubs in the Midwest metropolitan area where the researcher lives, in local nightclubs in the same area, in metropolitan and rural stripclubs and nightclubs across the United States, at private parties, in peep shows, and in saunas. The stripclubs featured a variety of attractions including topless dancing, nude dancing, table dancing, couch dancing, lap dancing, wall dancing, shower dancing, and bed dancing. In addition, some clubs had peepshows, female boxing and wrestling with customers, offered photographs of the dancers, or hired pornography models and actresses as headliners.

The study was conducted in two phases. In 1994, I conducted free-flowing qualitative interviews for one to four hours each with forty-one women while I was still involved in stripping and compiled participant observer notes about the activities in stripclubs. The women ranged in age from nineteen to forty years old and were involved in stripping from three months to eighteen years. All of the women identified themselves as Caucasian.

In 1996, I proceeded to design a twenty-six question survey according to themes derived from the interviews to investigate sexual violence in stripclubs. My long-time involvement in the strip industry allowed an association with strippers that was invaluable for administering in-depth surveys regarding sensitive issues. The surveys were administered face-to-face to insure the information was indeed from the women in stripping. Again, the surveys and consequent discussions lasted from one to four hours. Many women explained that they had never talked about their experiences so extensively because no one had ever asked them the right questions. Participants were asked to say whether they had experienced different abusive and violent actions in the stripclub, to estimate how often each action happened, and then to identify which men associated with the stripclub perpetrated the action. The categories of men were defined as customer, owner, staff, and manager. Since I exited stripping, snowball sampling was employed to recruit the eighteen participants for the survey. Participants in the survey were asked to pass on postcards to other women. The range of ages was eighteen to thirty-five years old. The age of entry into stripping ranged from fifteen to twenty-three years old, with a mean age of eighteen years and ten months. The length of time the women in this study were involved in stripping ranged from three months to eighteen years with an average length of six years and seven months. Women predominantly identified themselves as Caucasian. Only one woman identified herself as Hispanic. Twelve of the women described their sexual orientation as heterosexual, two as lesbian, and four as bisexual. The survey data was analyzed on the Statistical Program for Social Sciences.

After the data was compiled, a focus group of 4 women currently in stripping and with no prior association with the study positively evaluated the relevancy of the study and approved the collective story.

Statements in quotations throughout this paper are derived from the 41 interviews and discussions that often followed the administration of the 18 surveys.

PART 1: TYPICAL STRIPCLUB ACTIVITIES

A. Recruitment

Women find out about stripping from a variety of sources. Upscale stripclub franchises recruit in new cities by having managers and imported dancers scout in nightclubs. Most women find out about stripping from girlfriends already in stripping, male associates, the media, and some from prior involvement in prostitution. One woman told how she loitered in and around urban stripclubs to pick up customers when she was fifteen and how her pimp eventually drove her to small town strip bars because those bars admitted her and hired her. Someone else got involved in stripping through an escort service for bachelor parties. Another young woman who went to a gentlemen's club to pick up her friend recounted her recruitment as an eighteen-year-old. She waited at the bar, was served alcohol, and the owner asked to check her I.D. Instead of censuring her for drinking, he told her she would make \$1000 per week and pressured her to enter the amateur contest that night. She won the contest, \$300, and worked there three weeks before being recruited into an escort service by a patron pimp.

In a typical hiring scenario women respond in person to a newspaper ad promising big money, flexible hours, no experience necessary. As an audition the club manager asks the applicants to perform on amateur night or bikini night, both of which are particularly popular with customers who hope to see girl-next-door types rather than seasoned strippers. The manager will make a job offer based on physical attributes and number of women already on the schedule. Clubs portray the job requirements as very flexible. Women are told that they will not be forced to do anything they do not want to do, but clubs overbook women so they are forced to compete with each other, often gradually engaging in more explicit activities in order to earn tips (Cooke 1987).

B. Working Conditions

Women in stripping are denied legal protection relating to the terms and conditions under which they earn their livings (Fischer 523). Most strippers are hired to work as independent contractors rather than employees. Most strippers are not paid a wage (Mattson 1995), therefore their income is totally dependent on their compliance with customer demands in order to earn tips. More often than not, the strippers have to pay for the privilege of working at a club (Cooke 1987; Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Prewitt 1989). The majority of clubs demand that women turn over 40 to 50 percent of their income for stage or couch rental and enforce a mandatory tip out to bouncers and disc jockeys (Enck and Preston 1988; Forsyth and Deshotels 1997). Usually a minimum shift quota is set and the women must turn over at least that quota amount. If a woman does not earn the quota and wants to continue working at the establishment, she owes the club and must pay off that shift's quota by adding it to the quota for the next shift she will work. The stripclubs may also derive income from promotional novelty items, kickbacks, door cover charges, beverage sales, prostitution, and capricious fines imposed on the women. As independent contractors, strippers are not entitled to file discrimination claims, receive workers' compensation, or unemployment benefits (Fischer 1996; Mattson 1995). Club owners are free from tax obligations and tort liability. Owners pay no Social Security, no health insurance, and no sick pay. Some club owners require strippers to sign agreements indicating that they are working as independent contractors and many clubs require women to sign a waiver of their right to sue the club for any reason.

Although strippers are classified as independent contractors, the reality of their relationship to their supervisors is an employee-employer relationship. Regardless of the agreements claiming independent contractor status, clubs maintain enormous control over the women. The club controls the schedule and hours, requires strippers to pay rental fees, tip support staff large amounts, and even sets the price of table dances and private dances. Clubs have specific rules about costuming and even dictate the sequence of stripping and nudity. For example, by the middle of the first song the woman must

remove her top, she must be entirely nude by the end of the second song, and must perform a nude floorshow. All this regardless of whether customers are tipping her or not. A club may further influence dancers' appearances by pressuring them to shave off all their pubic hair, maintain a year-long tan, or undergo surgery for breast augmentation. At nude clubs, it is common for the performers to be shaved clean, giving them an adolescent and even childlike appearance.

Clubs also exert significant control over the strippers' behavior during their shifts by regulating when women may use the bathroom and how many of them can be in the dressing room at one time. Some clubs do not provide seating in the dressing room and forbid smoking in that room, thus preventing strippers from taking a break. When a woman wants to sit down or smoke a cigarette, she must do so on the main floor with a customer. Clubs enforce these rules through fines (Cooke 1987; Enck and Preston 1988; Ronai 1992). Women are fined heavily by club management: \$1 per minute for being late, as much as \$100 for calling in sick, and other arbitrary amounts for "talking back" to customers or staff, using the telephone without permission, and touching stage mirrors. Women are fined for flashing, prostitution (Enck and Preston 1988), taking off their shoes, fighting with a customer, being late on stage, leaving the main floor before the DJ calls her off, not cashing in one dollar bills, profanity in music, being sick, not cleaning the dressing room, using baby oil on stage, dancing with her back to a customer (Enck and Preston 1988) and being touched by a customer.

Despite the stripclub's representation of a dancing job as flexible, strippers attest that their relationship with the club becomes all consuming and everything associated with being a stripper interferes with living a normal life. And despite the common perception that a woman can dance her way through school, many strippers report that their jobs take over their lives. Long and late hours, fatigue, drug and alcohol problems, and out of town bookings make it difficult to switch gears. Not only do the women spend a significant amount of their time in stripclubs, the activities and influences from the club environment permeate their personal lives and detrimentally effect their well-being. Although stripclubs are considered legal forms of entertainment, people not associated with the industry are unaware of the emotional (Peretti and O'Connor 1989; Ronai 1992), verbal (Mattson 1995; Ronai 1992), physical (Boles and Garbin 1974), and sexual abuse (Ciriello 1993; Ronai 1992) inherent in the industry. Despite claims from management that customers are prohibited from touching the women, this rule is consistently violated (Enck and Preston 1988; Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Ronai and Ellis 1989; Thompson and Harrod 1992). Furthermore, stripping usually involves prostitution (Boles and Garbin 1974; Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Prewitt 1989; Ronai and Ellis 1989; Thompson and Harrod 1992).

C. Stripper-Customer Interactions

Main Floor

Stripclub activities are offered in public spaces or private rooms or other isolated parts of clubs (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997). The typical stripclub scenario presents young, nude or partially nude women mingling with fully clothed male customers. They circulate through the crowd, encouraging men to buy liquor, drinking and talking with men, and soliciting and performing a variety of private dances (Prewitt 1989; Ronai and Ellis 1989). Women describe their role in the stripclub as hostess, object, prostitute, therapist, and temporary girlfriend and say they are there to entertain and attract men and business for the owners.

Women who work at small strip joints say they can hang out, order in food, and play pool during their shifts. On the other hand, women who work at gentlemen's clubs have to hustle photographs and drinks and are required to sell promotional T-shirts, calendars, and videos. They can be mandated to sell the items with private dances. For example, the dancers buy T-shirts from the house mom for \$8 and sell them for \$15. So for \$15, the customer receives a T-shirt and 2 \$10 table dances. Strippers at gentlemen's clubs are further informed by management that they are not allowed to buy their own

drinks, that they have to be sitting with customers, and can never turn down a drink, even when their drinks are full.

Stage

Women report dancing on stages as cheaply constructed by laying plywood on the benches of restaurant booths to stages covered with kitchen linoleum to wood parquet or marble stages in a few upscale clubs. Some stages are elevated runways so narrow that strippers say that cannot get away from customers on each side touching them, especially when they are kneeling down to accept a tip in the side of their g-strings/t-bars or when they have their backs turned. Stages can also be sunken pits with a rail around it and a bar for the customers' beverages. During a set, a stripper may do striptease, acrobatics, dance, walk, or squat to display her genitals. Generally the progression for striptease begins during the first song with the woman wearing a dress or costume covering her breasts and buttocks. Over the course of a set of 2 or 3 songs she will remove her bra and in nude clubs, her g-string/t-bar. Some clubs feature floorshows in which women crawl or move around on the floor posing in sexual positions and spread their legs at the customers' eye level. During a floorshow, a dancer changes her movements from upright to positions on her knees and squatting in a crabwalk in order to 'flash' tipping customers. "Flashing" is pulling the g-string/t-bar aside, revealing the pubic area and/or the genitals. Dancers describe this as "doing a show" for paying customers. Ordinarily, a dancer only positions herself in front of tipping patrons (Prewitt 145). Customers who fail to tip are ignored. Audience response can be expressed by clapping, hooting, barking, whistling, amount of money tipped, or complete silence depending upon time of day, state of inebriation, excitement over the musical selection, or the appearance and abilities of the stripper.

On stage, some women's thoughts wander, while others' focus on angry desperation. *"I daydream about nothing in particular to pass the time of 12 minutes."* *"I'm thinking about how good I look in the mirrors and how good I feel in dance movements."* *"I tell myself to smile."* *"I think about getting high and that I am making money to get high."* *"I am giving these guys every chance to be decent, so that I don't have to be afraid of them."* *"I am filled with disdain for the customers who do not tip, but sit and watch and direct you to do things for no money."* *"I think of how cheap these fuckers are, what bills I need to pay."*

Private Dance Activities

Private dances are usually performed in areas shielded from the larger club view (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997, Prewitt 1989). As a rule, the private dance involves one female dancer and one male customer. Private dances are situations where women are often forced into acts of prostitution in order to earn tips (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Prewitt 1989; Ronai and Ellis 1989). Men masturbate openly (Peretti and O'Connor 1989), get hand jobs (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997), and stick their fingers inside women (Ronai and Ellis 1989). Men with foot fetishes have been known to suck on dancers' toes.

A variety of private dances are promoted in strip clubs.

Table dancing is performed on a low coffee table or on a small portable platform near the customer's seat. The woman's breasts and genitals are eye level to the customer.

Couch dancing for a customer entails the dancer standing over him on the couch, dangling her breasts or bopping him in the face with her pubic area.

Lap dancing requires the woman to straddle the man's lap and grind against him until he ejaculates in his pants. A variation involves the woman dancing between his legs while he slides down in his chair so that the dancer's thighs are rubbing his crotch as she moves.

Bed dancing is offered in a private room and requires a woman to lay on top of a fully clothed man and simulate sexual intercourse until he ejaculates.

Shower dancing is offered in upscale clubs and allows a clothed patron to get into a shower stall with one or more women and massage their bodies with soap.

Wall dancing requires a stripper to carry alcohol swabs to wash the customer's fingers before he inserts them into her vagina. His back is stationary against the wall and she is pressed against him with one leg lifted.

Peep shows feature simulated or actual acts directed by openly masturbating customers. Customers sit in a private booth and view the women through a glass window.

Live sex shows involve 2 or more individuals engaging in simulated or sexual activity performed behind glass or on a stage. Customers openly masturbate while watching the show from the audience or through an opening in a private booth.

During private dances women are conscientious about their boundaries and safety. *I don't want him to touch me, but I am afraid he will say something violent if I tell him 'no'.* "I was thinking about doing prostitution because that's when customers would proposition me." "I could only think about how bad these guys smell and try to hold my breath." "I spent the dance hyper vigilant to avoiding their hands, mouths, and crotches." "We were allowed to place towels on the guys' laps, so it wasn't so bad." "I don't remember because it was so embarrassing."

D. Dressing Room

Women describe a range of types and qualities of dressing rooms. Strippers are expected to change clothing in beer coolers, broom closets, and public restrooms. Some stripclub dressing rooms are nice with lights, mirrors, vanities, and chairs, and are equipped with lockers, and tanning beds. Other clubs have make-up mirrors but no chairs or ashtrays to prevent dancers from lingering. Women complain that too many dressing rooms are down isolated halls or in the basements of establishments and that they have to scream for help when customers intrude. Some are so damp or filthy that the women cannot take their shoes off. Other dressing rooms are so frigid that dancers carry small space heaters to and from work. The dressing rooms are used to change costumes, drink, do drugs, do hair and make-up, iron costumes, do homework, bitch about customers, avoid customers, talk about problems, hang out. In strip joints and rural bars, women lay on blankets or inside sleeping bags between sets and nap and read.

The greatest response to questions regarding preparation for work was "drink". Women drink while getting ready to go to work and they drink while doing their hair and make-up once in the dressing room. Women who work at nude juice bars that do not serve alcohol or at bars that do not allow women to buy their own drinks report that they stop at another bar on their way in and "get loaded". Between stage sets and private dances, women drink some more, clean themselves with washcloths or babywipes after performing on a dirty stage or being touched by a lot of men, apply deodorant, and perfume their breasts and genitals.

PART 2: SURVEY DATA

One hundred percent of the eighteen women in the survey report being physically abused in the stripclub. The physical abuse ranged from three to fifteen times with a mean of 7.7 occurrences over the course of their involvement in stripping. One hundred percent of the eighteen women in this study report sexual abuse in the stripclub. The sexual abuse ranged from two to nine occurrences with a mean of 4.4 occurrences over the course of their involvement in stripping. One hundred percent of the women report verbal harassment in the stripclub. The verbal abuse ranged from one to seven occurrences with a mean of 4.8 occurrences over the course of their involvement in stripping. One hundred percent of the women report being propositioned for prostitution. Seventy eight percent of the women were stalked by someone associated with the stripclub with a range of one to seven incidents. Sixty one percent of the women report that someone associated with the stripclub has attempted to sexually assault her with a range of one to eleven attempts. Not only do women suffer the abuse they experience, all of women in the survey witnessed these things happen to other strippers in the clubs. The overwhelming trend for violence against women in stripclubs was committed by customers of the establishments. Stripclub owners, managers, assistant managers, and the staff of bartenders, music programmers or disc jockeys, bouncers, security guards, floorwalkers, doormen, and valet were significantly less involved in violence against the women. According to the women in this study, almost all of the perpetrators suffered no consequence whatsoever for their actions.

Physical Abuse

Customers spit on women, spray beer, and flick cigarettes at them. Strippers are pelted with ice, coins, trash, condoms, room keys, pornography, and golf balls. Men pitched a live guinea pig and a dead squirrel at two women in the survey. Some women have been hit with cans and bottles thrown from the audience. Customers pull women's hair, yank them by the arm or ankle, rip their costumes, and try to pull their costumes off. Women are commonly bitten, licked, slapped, punched, and pinched.

Table 1 - Physical Abuse

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	At Least Once Every Day (%)	At Least Once Every Week (%)	At Least Once Every Month (%)	At Least Once Every Year (%)
Grabbed by arm	78	44 C 6 M 11 S	17 C 6 O 6 M 11 S	11 C 6 O 6 M	6 M
Grabbed by ankle	56	28 C		6 C 6 M	11 C
Grabbed by waist	94	50 C 6 M 11 S	33 C 11 M 11 S	6 M	11 C
Bitten	56	6 C	11 C		11 C
Licked	78	28 C	17 C	11 C 6 O 6 M 11 S	22 C
Slapped	39	6 C	11 C		17 C
Hair pulled	39	6 C	6 C	11 C	
Punched	72	6 C			
Pinched	72	17 C	17 C	6 C 6 M 6 S	22 C 6 S
Kicked	11	6 C			
Spit on	61	6 C			28 C
Pulled costume off	83	22 C		6 C 6 O 6 M 6 C	22 C 6 S
Ripped costume	44	6 C			17 C
Flicked cigarette	33	6 C	6 C		11 C
Sprayed beer	39	6 C	6 C	6 C	6 C
Threw ice	61	6 C	11 C	6 C	6 C
Threw coins	83	17 C	11 C	11 C 6 S	28 C
Threw cans/glasses	22	6 C			
Threw garbage	39	17 C	11 C		
Threw other	28	11 C			

N = 18 Key: C = customers, O = owners, M = managers, S = staff

Sexual Abuse

Stripclub customers frequently grab women's breasts, buttocks, and genitals. Customers often attempt and succeed at penetrating strippers vaginally and anally with their fingers, dollar bills, and bottles. Customers expose their penises, rub their penises on women, and masturbate in front of the women. Women in this study consistently connected lap dances to the sexual abuse they suffered in the club. *"That's the first thing men try to do when they get close to you and always in a lap dance."* Stripclub owners, managers, and staff also expect women to masturbate them and some have forced intercourse on strippers.

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	<u>Table 2 - Sexual Abuse</u>			
		At Least Once Every Day (%)	At Least Once Every Week (%)	At Least Once Every Month (%)	At Least Once Every Year (%)
Grabbed breasts	94	28 C 6 M	17 C	17 C 6 M	17 C 6 O
Grabbed buttocks	89	39 C	11 C	39 C 6 M 6 S	6 O 6 S
Grabbed genitals	67	17 C		11 C 6 M	17 C
Exposed penis to her	67	11 C	6 C	6 C 6 O 6 M	33 C
Rubbed penis on her	78	39 C 6 M	22 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	6 C	22 C 6 O
Masturbated in front of her	78	33 C 6 M	11 C	28 C	6 C

N = 18 Key: C = customers, O = owners, M = managers, S = staff

Abusive Action	Experienced Attempted Abuse (%)	<u>Table 3 - Sexual Abuse</u>	
		Experienced Successfully Completed Abuse (%)	
Penetrate her vaginally with fingers	61 C 6 M	39	
Penetrate her anally with fingers	33 C	17	
Penetrate her with object	33 C 6 O	11	
Force her to masturbate him	28 C 6 O 6 M	17	
Force intercourse on her	17 C 6 O 6 M	11	

N = 18 Key: C = customers, O = owners, M = managers, S = staff

Verbal Abuse

Customers, owners, managers, and staff alike engage in harassing name-calling. Women are continually called "cunt", "whore", "pussy", "slut", and "bitch". Women in this study charge that men in the stripclub called them other demeaning or degrading names like ugly, loser, fat, pregnant, boy, stupid, crack, slash, snatch, beaver, dog, dyke, lezzie, brown eye, hooters, junkie, crackhead, and shit.

Forty four percent of the women report that men associated with the stripclub have threatened to hurt them physically. These women report from three to 150 threats during their involvement in stripping. Threats range from verbal threats of slaps, ass whippings, and rapes to physical postures of punching and back hand slapping. *"When I wouldn't let a customer grab on me, he would call me a bitch and threaten to kick my ass or rape me."* *"When a customer grabs and the woman and the girl takes action, they threaten"*.

Table 4 Verbal Abuse – Name-calling

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	At Least Once Every Day (%)	At Least Once Every Week (%)	At Least Once Every Month (%)	At Least Once Every Year (%)
Called "cunt"	61	28 C 6 M	6 C	17 C	11 C 6 M
Called "slut"	61	28 C 6 S	6 C	17 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	11 C
Called "whore"	78	28 C 6 S	6 C	17 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	22 C
Called "pussy"	72	39 C 6 S	11 C	11 C	11 C
Called "bitch"	89	39 C 6 S	11 C 6 O 6 M 6 S	6 C	22 C 6 M
Called other	56	17 C	6 C	17 C 6 M	6 C

N = 18 Key: C = customers, O = owners, M = managers, S = staff

Stalking

Men associated with stripclubs repeatedly attempt to contact the women against their wishes. Strippers are followed home and stalked by stripclub customers. Customers telephone, write letters, send gifts, and follow the women around against their wishes. Women recount stories of catching customers following them to fitness clubs, parks and lakes, day care centers, and even lesbian bars. They describe times when customers have broken into their homes and taken underwear, hairbrushes, and family photographs. Women say that other customers have used their jobs at the telephone company or within the criminal justice system to target the women. The women complain that customers also have followed them home masturbating while driving in the next lane. Women who travel the strip circuit to rural areas report that customers and stripclub owners, managers, and staff alike follow women from city to city and state to state. Furthermore, local men in small towns harass the visiting women by calling and knocking on the doors of the motel rooms and have been caught peeping in the windows of strippers' motel rooms.

Twelve percent of the women who reported being followed to their cars further reported that they were robbed (5.6 %), beaten (11.1%), threatened with a weapon (5.6%), verbally sexually harassed (66.7%), and sexually assaulted (16.7%) by customers. A customer who claimed he was in love with the woman followed her to her car, called her a "fucking cunt" and strangled her hard enough to cause blood to squirt from her neck.

Table 5 - Stalking

Abusive Action	Ever (by men in stripclub) (%)	Range of occurrences
Sent her letters against her wishes	28	3-100 times
Sent her gifts against her wishes	22	2-100 times
Called her home against her wishes	39	2-360 times
Followed her home against her wishes	56	2-500 times
Followed her to her car against her wishes	67	12-500 times
Followed her around on her private time	28	1-150 times
Followed her from club to club, city, and state	28	6-360 times
Other	28	1-360 times

N = 18

Sexual Exploitation

Only a minority of women report that they were asked to perform sexual acts on men associated with the stripclub in order to return to work (11% by owners); as a condition of being hired (11% by managers, 11% by owners); in order to continue working there (17% by owners); in order to get a better schedule (6% by owners); or for drugs (17% by customers, 11% by managers, 22% by owners, 11% by staff).

A majority of the women, however, report they were asked to perform sexual acts on men associated with the stripclub for money (100% by customers, 6% by managers, 17% by owners, 11% by staff). Customers and pimps constantly proposition women (Boles and Garbin 1974; Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; Ronai 1992; Ronai and Ellis 1989). Fourteen (78%) women from the survey report they are propositioned for prostitution every day by customers, three (17%) every week, one (6 %) every year. Women comment that customers ask them "Do you date?" all night long. *"Infinite...too many too count."* Women say that prostitution is influenced and suggested by management. One woman new to stripping was dumbfounded at how little money she was making taking her clothes off, so she asked the manager for his advice on increasing tips. He suggested turning tricks and said he could help her set up dates. Management sets up tricks, says it is good for business, and obligates women to turn over money from prostitution to the club. Women say prostitution is promoted even though owners tell women they would be punished if they turn tricks. Some stripclubs are notorious for promoting prostitution. *"You have to be a 'ho to work there'".*

Women disclosed that they were recruited into prostitution through stripping. Although the strip industry markets stripping as something other than prostitution, some women consider prostitution an extension of stripping and stripping a form of prostitution. Pimps season women first with stripping and then turn them out into brothels or escort services for more money. Tricks, sugar daddies, pimps, and drug dealers in the stripclub seek to engage women in prostitution. Another young woman said that soon after she became involved in stripping, a pimp who posed as a customer in the stripclub manipulated her into an escort service by promising that she could make more money in less time simply by accompanying businessmen to dinner. She agreed in order to feed her crack addiction and as her addiction increased she slid down from gentlemen's clubs to escort service to brothel to street and crack house prostitution.

Not only are women in stripping pressured by customers to perform sexual acts on them, owners, managers, and staff pressure the women to perform sexual acts on them, their relatives and associates, on vice officers and police officers. Women explain the pressure could range from being coerced into dancing for the intended with an expectation to put on a real good show with special treatment, extra time, and sexual contact, to engaging in prostitution. Strippers, like other subordinates in worker-management relationships, respond with obedience to directives from management and others with authority (McMahon 1989).

Table 6 - Sexual Exploitation

Recipient	Pressure d by customer (%)	Pressure d by owner (%)	Pressure d by manager (%)	Pressure d by staff (%)	Pressure d by vice officer (%)	Pressure d by police officer (%)
Owner's friend		39				
Owner's relative		11				
Owner's business associate		33				
Manager's friend			17			
Manager's relative			6			
Manager's business associate			11			
Customer	72	22	17	6		
Vice officer		17	11	6	11	
Police officer		17	11	6		22

N = 18

PART 3: WOMEN'S THOUGHTS ON STRIPPING

Women in stripping are overwhelmingly motivated by the promise of wealth or a will to survive (McCaghy and Skipper 1970; Ronai 1992; Thompson and Harred 1992). Stripclub owners, managers, pimps and the media portray stripping as a glamorous way to earn big money fast and use this strategy to lure young women into stripping. Women in this study report the best part of stripping to be the money. *"The only part that keeps me there is the money"*. At the same time, women are trapped and disappointed by the money. *"I hated it...but glad I had it at the time for the income."* *"Women are reduced to exposing genitals for \$1 bills."* *"It pays the bills... if we could pay bills another way we would."* *"The bar owners and management are exploitative, they steal money."* *"It's hard to get out because of the money."* With respect to the money strippers seek to earn, they in turn must pay out fines, kickbacks, 100% of their social security insurance and taxes, travel and hotel expenses, and the costs for costumes, tanning, and plastic surgery. Women report that they have to have the right attitude to make money (Ronai 1992). This ordinarily was described as being drunk, high or numb (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997). Others feel it required tolerance. *"The ability to ignore customers for just being there."* Most women say it is easier when the men are tipping regularly and when they do not have to interact with men intimately. Women acknowledge that strippers measure their worth according to the amount of tips they earn and that they want attention, acceptance, and approval from the customers because it brings money (Futtermann 1992).

Women in stripping feel it doesn't take much skill to be a stripper (Forsyth and Deshotels 1997; McCaghy and Skipper 1970). *"It would be nice to say women need dance talent but it's not true."* *"Tits, pussy, and blonde hair is all it takes."* Instead they referred to dissociation to abuse. *"It takes a willingness to do it...anybody can do it."* *"It takes somebody who can shut themselves off and be really fake."* *"...the ability to take a lot of abuse."* They state a stripper needs a good head on her shoulders, an open mind, guts, strength, and survival skills. They believe they need abuse counseling, a lifeline from the "outside world", and education about what's really going on. *"Need to know they have options, that they aren't always going to be a 'ho'."* Women in stripping want a union to protect strippers, decent working conditions, fair treatment, and an end to cruelty by management. Lastly, strippers think that women and girls don't know what they are getting into when they first start dancing. *"It's really harmful because it is so benign, so accepted."* *"Girls think they will have fun dancing and get paid, they have no idea they have to fight men's hands, and dicks, and tongues, and then fight for every fucking dollar bill you earn."* *"It was a lot different than I originally thought."*

The women in this study condemn the men associated with stripping and the impact stripping has on them as the worst parts of stripping. Women do not like the way customers treat them (Thompson and Harred 1992). Furthermore they say they do not like talking to customers, asking men for money, and resent having to have to deal with them at all. They find customers irritating because they are drunk and have negative attitudes towards women. Women characterize customers as scum, psycho mama's boys, rapists and child molesters, old perverted men, idiots, ass-holes, and pigs. Strippers are largely disgusted by customers and describe them as pitiful and pathetic, stupid and ignorant, sick, controlling and abusive. *"They smell so sour, they breathe very heavy and kind of wheeze when women are near."* *"They are weak abusers who have to subordinate women and girls to feel like a man."* *"I see my dad. They're old enough to be my father."* *"Yuck. I am repulsed by the sight, sound, smell, and touch of them."* *"I'm embarrassed for them."* The women offer insightful evaluations of stripclub customers. They say that these men do not know how to communicate. Moreover, they perceive that customers are out of control, have power and abuse problems, and will do anything to degrade women because they hate women. Strippers also state that customers want a free show and think women are cheap. In contrast, a few women positively perceived some customers as nice and added they are thankful to those who tip well.

Women in this study undoubtedly denounce stripclub owners as pimps and "glorified pimps" and maintain that owners misuse power and are sick. The women also label managers as pimps citing that they mistreat women, that they make every attempt to take money from the women, and that they are sick because they are affiliated with the industry and know the harm they do. Strippers accuse managers of being threatened and jealous of the money women make and that women are just a dollar to management. Finally, women refer to staff music programmers, doormen, bartenders, bouncers, floorwalkers, and valet as wanna-be pimps because they always want to be tipped. The women see staff as derelicts who can't get a job anywhere else and who think they are cool for working in a stripclub. Strippers perceive staff as creepy and disrespectful and as "looky-lous" who just want to look at naked women for free. Women criticize staff by pointing out that at least owners are making big money. Few women had positive responses, but those that did felt they got along well with staff and had no real hard feelings.

Clearly strippers' attitudes about men are impacted by the activities in stripclubs. Women say they don't like men and men are worthless. Likewise women believe stripping inhibits their ability to be involved in a normal relationship. *"It affects your love-life and feelings about men."* *"Nice boyfriends can't handle it."* *"Too large a percentage of men fit into category of customer and I do not want to hate men."*

Women in this study expressed mostly negativism regarding their experiences in stripping with themes of abuse, deception, drugs, and low self-esteem. *"I would never do it again. It was degrading."* *"No doubt that it led me to prostitution and my pimp."* *"Taught me how to control men and gave me a false illusion of control. Takes a long time to regain self-control."* *"Don't do it. Once you do it, it is hard to get out."* *"If there is any way you can avoid it...it is hard to get out once you start."* *"I wouldn't recommend it. It is too stressful and I am always comparing myself to other women on the outside."* *"I wish I had put more money away and had more education by the time I quit. I just didn't know it wasn't about success for us, it was about using us."* *"I spent my entire young adulthood being abused. It is hard to undo all this."* *"Drugs destroyed beautiful, healthy women."* *"I blame the men...it is all bad. I didn't think highly of myself while I was in stripping, but I am glad I got out of it by standing up for myself."* *"It is hard to view myself for who I am and my accomplishments rather than how I look and attention from men. I got this from stripping."*

Some women expressed fascination with stripping. *"It has been an experience of a lifetime. I've seen everything...some crazy shit."* *"I have never seen things like I have seen in stripping. It is weird."* Still others felt positively about their experience. *"If it wasn't for the money I made at it, I would have nothing right now."* *"It has its ups and downs, but I always enjoy the music and dancing and the attention."* *"I have been extremely fortunate as far as what happened in stripping. It provides a good life, but I look at it as a job, work day shifts and work a straight job at the same time."* A few women also determined positive outcomes for themselves from their involvement in stripping. *"It served its purpose as a group for a sense of belonging."* *"Helped me recognize what is right and wrong, and what is right and wrong for me."* *"After surviving it I felt strong."* *"Stripping distracted me from my personal problems that led me into stripping...no way could I have held normal job with the problems I had."*

Above all, women in stripping reject the popular image of stripping and clarify the common misperceptions about stripclubs. *"That no one touches you, women enjoy it, and it's okay for men to go there."* *"That women actually get to wear a costume and actually get to dance."* *"That we get sexually aroused doing this."* *"That men are there to have harmless fun, when they are really there to abuse women."* *"That it is a big party and that the women want to be there for some reason other than money, like sex or to meet men or because they are nudists or exhibitionists."* *"That you are doing things you want to be doing."* *"That they are not degrading us because girls always are justifying it with college."* *"That it is not prostitution."* *"That it is glamorous, fast money, easy work, way to get ahead."*

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Men associated with stripclubs use force and coercion to establish sexual contact with women in stripping, proposition women for prostitution, intentionally inflict bodily harm upon the women, and expose themselves to the women. These actions are prohibited by law, yet when these crimes are committed against women in stripclubs, the general attitude that strippers deserve what they get prevails. Women's complaints of abuse are met with contempt and are dismissed by owners, managers, and staff. Women are customarily told to ignore abuse and have been rebuffed with "Go bend over and do your job" and "You have to expect a certain amount of that." In the case of women in stripping, enduring sexual violence is part of her job description. Women in stripping are expected to endure these abuses, degradations, and humiliations with a smile and a "Thank You".

The degree of sexual violence perpetrated against strippers explodes the myths about stripping as harmless entertainment. The verbal harassment, physical and sexual abuse, and financial exploitation women suffer in stripclubs is unparalleled in any other legitimate workplace. Women in stripping are subject to actions that would be perceived as assaultive or a least unwanted in any other context or were directed against other women. Stripclubs allow men to use and abuse women in a manner that is not tolerated in any other business.

The organization and conditions of stripclubs not only produce and reproduce gender inequality, but facilitate and normalize men's violence against women. Sexual violence has been normalized, institutionalized, and legalized in the stripclub industry as socially sanctioned male behavior. Stripclubs and the men associated with stripclubs have turned acts of violence into entertainment and tied male sexual pleasure to victimizing and exploiting. Stripclubs are structured according to male domination and control, and are inherently violent. It is impossible to set up stripclubs without sexual violence and that is reason to challenge the legitimacy of stripclubs.

Future research should address men associated with stripclubs and their views on women in stripping and stripclub activities. An exploration of why stripclubs exist, an explanation of why men go to stripclubs, and a description of how stripclub owners and government policy establish the tone and culture of stripclubs are also in order. Future research should explore gender role socialization and female strippers' perceptions of sexual harassment and violence. The definition of sexual harassment should be tested with strippers to learn if they perceive actions differently than women in other workplaces. In turn, strippers' rights in the workplace must be considered. Studies focused on women's emotional and psychological response, including drug and alcohol abuse, to violence in stripclubs should be conducted.

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**Object Reaction to Dr Teela Sanders
Research into Lap Dancing Clubs**

The research undertaken by Dr Teela Sanders attracted the attention of Object. The following frame grabs are taken from their Yahoo Message Board.

Reply

Message #4283 of 5082 < Prev | Next >

RE: [ObjectActivist] Lap dancing is seedy but its hard to say why-article in The Independent

Fri Sep 10, 2010 9:16 am

Argh! This must be the one citing Teela Sanders - every misogynist's favourite rent a quote... I'll look for it

Show Message Option

To: ObjectActivist@...
From: rosiemick@...
Date: Thu, 9 Sep 2010 19:06:45 +0000
Subject: [ObjectActivist] Lap dancing is seedy but its hard to say why-article in The Independent

Silvia Murray
Wakefield
<dottysilv@...>
dottysilv
Offline
Send Email

Did anyone read this article by Katy Guest in The Independent (Sunday 29 August). I don't know how to post it on here so perhaps someone else could. It mentioned some research done by 2 academics into lap dancing at Leeds University who claim lap dancers are 'smart, happy and earning lots of money' and that 1 in 4 had degrees! I find that hard to believe.
Rosemary

Reply

Message #4283 of 5082 < Prev | Next >

There are two notable comments in the about frame grab. The first is where the contributor dismisses Dr Sanders as 'every misogynists rent a quote' and the second where someone else questions the academic ability of dancers. We have seen that anyone that dares to venture an opinion that contradicts Object, runs the risk of abuse...

RE: [ObjectActivist] Lap dancing is seedy but its hard to say why-article in The Independent

Fri Sep 10, 2010 9:16 am

Here is one of our supporters' letter to Teela Sanders: It might be worth a punt -

Show Message Option

Dear Object,

Silvia Murray
Wakefield
<dottysilv@...>
dottysilv
Offline
Send Email

I also wanted to let you know that I've e-mailed Dr Teela Sanders at Leeds University whose recent 'research' on lapdancing hit the tabloids (and Yahoo mail) yesterday. I attach the letter I sent.

Dear Dr Sanders,

I was really saddened and angry to read the newspaper articles which had picked up on your 'research' into lapdancing and, to some extent, manipulated it to suit their own purposes. I do feel that it is irresponsible of you to allow your research to be presented in this misleading way - I note that you only interviewed 300 women in two cities in Britain - hardly a conclusive piece of research in terms of numbers or location. I would also argue that what appears to be qualitative research can hardly be applied on a national, (let alone global) scale and that your statistical findings mean the articles fail to explore any causal relationship between women with degrees becoming lapdancers and society at large or indeed, the assertion that, 'the majority of lapdancers' (which should read 'the majority of the 300 lapdancers interviewed in two British cities') saying they 'enjoy' their work. WHY these women now SAY they enjoy a job which effectively reduces them to a sexual object, is far more important than a set of statistics. In any case, tabloid newspaper articles imply that a quarter of all lapdancers worldwide have degrees (the relevance of 'degrees' sort of escapes me anyway - is there a belief that lapdancers are uneducated and doing the job due to lack of alternatives? And is there a belief that everyone with a degree is intelligent and has alternative job opportunities? Neither are accurate.) A very simplified version of the situation seems to have been presented in the tabloid media as a result of your 'research'.

Throughout the world, women's sexuality is harnessed and controlled in some form or another, from the 'voluntary' wearing of burkas to sex trafficking. Women continue to be viewed as inferior to men on a global scale and suffer financially and physically as a result. The fact is, we in the West live in a consumer, capitalist society and those in powerful business and media roles (let's face it, mainly men) have done an admirable job of making lapdancing (and so called 'glamour modelling') seem like a credible 'profession' for women - the venues themselves hold the misnomer 'gentleman's clubs.' Opposition to what has become a cultural 'norm' is often undermined with a form of 'silencing' using insults such as 'prude', 'killjoy' and, god forbid 'feminist'; remember Claire Short's attempts to get rid of P3 in the 1980's? Lapdancing clubs are a power trip for many men and as long as the media and 'research' continues to lend them an air of credibility, women and girls will continue to be valued, and value themselves, for the way they look and their sexuality - I believe Britain and the rest of the world, would be a better place with less women in lapdancing clubs and more in politics and as company CEO's.

I believe that Teela Sanders hasn't been manipulated or misquoted here - I believe that TS either has a vested interest in the sex industry, or at the very least is one of these 'ignorant privileged' who thinks vast gulfs of status and power between two groups can be resolved by a bit of roleplay.

An Object activist sent a letter to Dr Sanders that was highly critical of the findings. Perhaps most amusing was the writer's view that 300 dancers do not constitute a representative sample. It should be remembered that Object's campaign was based upon the testimonies of only 7 people.

The letter is reproduced on the next page.

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Continued Over

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