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‘Yeah, they’ve started to get a bit fucking cocky ...’

## Culture, Economic Change and Shifting Power Relations within the Scottish Lap-Dancing Industry

Billie Lister

**ABSTRACT:** This article is informed by data taken from wider findings from a Ph.D study in which the author worked as a stripper in a lap-dancing venue in Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland and, at the time of writing, is home to five venues. The data was collected over a ten month period in 2011. The findings are generated through in-depth interviews with a number of women who worked in lap-dancing venues across Scotland, and the findings reflect their experiences of their involvement in this changing industry. By using dancers’ voices, this work contributes to the growing body of literature which supports the complex and contradictory nature of involvement in the sex industry (Bradley-Engen and Ulmer, 2009; Sanders et al, 2009). In doing so, I reveal how dancers’ working experiences are fluid, and subject to change in accordance with economic and cultural shifts outside the venue. These elements, I argue, directly impact not only upon the generation of income, but also on the power relations within clubs, resulting in a far more precarious form of labour than previously. It is suggested that dancing as a strategy for sustaining a viable income as a stand-alone form of work ended in 2008 in response to the economic crisis (Sanders and Hardy, 2015). Until then, although always precarious, dancers reported that their work provided them with an acceptable standard of living (Sanders and Hardy, 2015). The findings of this Scottish study support Sanders and Hardy’s research, which took place in England. The definition of economy used here differs from that used by Brents and Sanders (2010, 43), who refer to it in combination with mainstreaming and involves ‘processes that push businesses towards smoother



integration with mainstream economic institutions'. Within this article I refer to economic impact as a wide spread reduction in disposable income amongst average workers (Sanders and Hardy, 2014) that has contributed to the declining earning possibilities within the lap-dancing industry as the result of the economic recession.

**KEYWORDS:** Sex work; Gender; Power; Labour; Mainstreaming

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This article contributes to the growing body of literature which supports the complex and contradictory nature of involvement in the sex industry (Bradley-Engen and Ulmer, 2009; Sanders et al, 2009). Using participants' voices, I reveal how dancers' working experiences are fluid, subject to change in accordance with economic and cultural shifts outside the club. These elements, I argue, directly impact not only upon the generation of income, but also power relations within clubs. Brents and Sanders (2010, 43) refer to the economy as working in combination with mainstreaming, involving 'processes that push businesses towards smoother integration with mainstream economic institutions'. Here, I refer to economic impact as a widespread reduction in disposable income amongst average workers (Sanders and Hardy, 2014) that has contributed to the declining earning possibilities within the lap-dancing industry as a result of the economic recession.

The study revealed that not only was there less opportunity to make the same amount of money as in previous years, but also that this, combined with other economic shifts and cultural changes, had served to alter the dynamics of power inside lap-dancing clubs. For example, women felt that during the 'glory days' of lap-dancing, they were empowered and had better relationships with each other, club owners, managers and customers. Currently, dancers feel significantly disempowered, not only due to a reduced income, but also as a result of changing customer behaviour, soured dancer relationships and declining working conditions as a result of club owner's attitudes. A marked reduction in customer willingness to spend, in combination with increasing numbers of dancers, has resulted in a highly precarious working environment.

Finally, lap-dancing working environments are not static and are subject to change in accordance with club rules, customer demand, and cultural taboos. I have utilised a typology of strip clubs used by Bradley-Engen and Ulmer (2009) in order to show how the atmosphere in one of the clubs which featured in the research, Supernova<sup>1</sup>, had shifted from that of a 'Social' club to that of a 'Hustle' club.

## Declining income potential

Other UK studies investigating the lap-dancing industry have suggested that dancers were particularly financially empowered pre-recession as a result of the income that could be generated via the lap-dancing industry (Colosi, 2010a). Many women were able to accumulate property and live comfortably from the proceeds of this, which was only made possible due to their involvement in dancing (Sanders and Hardy, 2014). Dancers noted that the financial rewards that could once be reaped from the industry were high. One of the main changes which has impacted on dancers is the drop in income that can be made via dancing. Those dancers who had spent a number of years in the industry reveal the dramatic decrease in their money making potential;

'Back then when I started there was so much money in the club. Day shifts, you couldn't move, night shifts, during the week, packed. On a Wednesday night you could make three hundred pounds just by fannyng<sup>2</sup> about. You didn't even have to try ... it was totally different to the way it is now. Even if you didn't actively work you would still come out with a big wad of money' – Lisa

'When I started (2000) yes, there was less dancers, more money floating about from customers ... you could quite easily pull in a grand a week' – Rebekka

'On average I was making £1100 a week for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and Saturday night. I used to make on average £200 each day shift. £500 on a Saturday night. I don't make anywhere near that now' – Athena

In addition, the actual nature of the work had changed, with dancers now having

to approach customers – rather than the other way around;

'You won't make anything if you sit on your arse all night ... it just doesn't work.  
Generally, you have to get out there, you have to speak to people, keep going'  
– Chloe

'If I don't approach customers, I don't make any money. That said, a lot of men  
get off on turning you down and insulting you. You receive no financial return for  
this and it is the most gruelling part of the job' – Tania

The growing supply of workers into the sex industry can be attributed in part to the increased competition for employment within the formalized labour market. There is pressure upon individuals to obtain qualifications with which they can compete for careers that can offer long-term security. Standing (2011) has noted that citizens are increasingly 'sold' further opportunities to study and add to their CVs, simply, a First Degree may no longer be 'enough' to obtain a professional career. The increasing costs relating to fees for tuition does not apply to students in Scotland, as course fees for a First Degree are currently paid for by the State. Postgraduate fees, however, are not, and neither are the accompanying costs of living. As such, perceived pressure to continue education by enrolling on costly Postgraduate courses may contribute to the growing supply of individuals willing to enter the industry.

As the formal sector becomes increasingly competitive, lowering disposable incomes, something which is outside the control of dancers, impacts upon demand for lap-dances as individuals have less to spend on non-essential purchases such as entertainment. This is shown within this research and also that of others (Sanders and Hardy, 2014). Furthermore, it is perhaps unsurprising that due to a lack of work options, and a decline in real wages, the cash-in-hand element that characterises the informal economy has drawn increasing numbers of women to various elements of the sex industry, including stripping. This means there is more competition for fewer paying customers. Dancers also felt, to some extent, that customers were more empowered due to shifting supply and demand dynamics. Indeed, the very fact dancers must now approach customers as opposed to waiting for them to make the 'first move' in the transaction, undoubtedly alters the

power dynamics. Dancers felt strongly that customers were quite aware that they 'held the purse strings'. As a result of increased supply and reduced demand, dancers were more reliant on customers choosing to spend their money on a dance with them as opposed to other dancers.

'It's quite hard sometimes – see if you're having a bad day and you're not making any money and everyone else is, and you speak to a guy, and he doesn't want you, and you walk away, and then someone else goes for a dance with him ... And I think the guys can sense your anxiety when you are not doing well and you just feel like shit don't you? ... they can sense you are stressed out. It is exploitation when that happens' – Donna

'Now, very rarely do I get asked if I want to dance. When I first started it was mainly 'are you free for a dance, are you free for a dance, are you free for a dance' – Sammy

Billie – Has it affected the way customers behave?

'Yeah, they've started to get a bit fucking cocky. They can say things like 'why would I want to dance with you?' – Sammy

Here, Jamie directly connects the numbers of paying customers in comparison to dancers to the degree of power held by dancers;

'And you know, lots of girls will do it now, there's a lot of competition, I hate to say it but guys have more choice. And they know that. They'll drag their feet buying dances. I think the more girls that are on in a way, the less power we have' – Jamie

Clearly, further work needs to be done with customers of lap-dancing clubs in order to decipher their feelings with regards to how much power, if any, they feel they have as customers or potential customers. Such investigation was outside the remit of this study, however women's experiences strongly indicate not only a shift in economic power, but also an *awareness* of this, both from the perspective of dancers and customers. Others have noted the problems inherent in gain-

ing access to study the sex industry (Sanders, 2006; Crofts, 2014). This access is particularly difficult when customers are involved (Sanders, 2008; McKeganey and Barnard, 1996), with comparatively less research done with customers of sex workers than sex workers themselves (Earle and Sharp, 2008). Earle and Sharp (2008) suggest that the stigma associated with those who buy sexual services deters clients from getting involved in social research.

The 'deskilling' of the industry has meant that it is far 'easier' to obtain work as a dancer at Supernova, which has also led to more women being able to present themselves for work. Although women are expected to maintain stereotypical, Westernised styles of beauty, the requirement to be able to perform pole tricks appears to have declined. The 'deskilling' of the industry has been highlighted by others (Sanders and Hardy, 2012), however dancers at Supernova noted that there had been a move from there being a requirement for being a skilled dancer to a situation whereby the owner would let 'anyone' work, even if they were not skilled on the pole.

'In the past it was hard to get a lap-dancing job. But now they are taking anyone. Supernova and Galaxy were a lot more selective ... it was quite hard to get a job there. Most people who auditioned didn't get the job, and places like Supernova were doing really well' – MM

'It used to have quite a high standard in that it was notoriously hard to get a job, so it was regarded as a compliment ... you had to be a good dancer, have stage presence. He (club owner) lowered that standard for whatever reason' – Morag

The deskilling of the industry then, coupled with a rise in the numbers of women who are willing to try this form of labour, has also contributed to a growth in supply.

## Culture

It has been suggested that cultural norms have shifted, with activities such as visiting a lap-dance club now being considered to be 'less taboo' (Attwood et al, 2009). The terms 'sexualisation' and 'mainstreaming' are used to describe the ways that sex and sexualized themes are becoming more visible in Western popular culture (Attwood, 2009, xiii). Commonly cited examples are the visibility of stores selling

obviously 'sexy' lingerie and sex toys such as Ann Summers on the High Street, and the availability of pole dancing classes (Holland and Attwood, 2009). Interestingly, from the dancers perspective, this heightened visibility has had a negative impact on the demand for lap-dancing since it has removed much of the allure and deviancy of visiting clubs, which, the dancers argued, was one of the main reasons why customers wanted to buy dances.

'... lapdancing's way more popular now than it was eight years ago, way more popular. It's less taboo to do it, more girls are doing it now, it's just more acceptable' – Sammy

'I don't think the industry is going to collapse in total. But the fact it is less taboo now, takes the edge off it. But people used to make huge amounts of money, and that doesn't happen anymore' – Chloe

This idea of dancing being less deviant also contributes to the increasing supply of dancers. This, in combination with a fall in customer numbers, results in a workplace which is less financially lucrative than it was previously;

'There's a lot more girls who are willing to get into it now too. There are always girls asking to audition. We are very expendable' – Felicity

Despite these changing attitudes, a paradox remains. Lap-dancing work continues to be unrecognised as a legitimate source of labour which goes in some part to explain why there continues to be an element of stigmatisation surrounding this occupation (Sanders and Hardy, 2014). The issue of mainstreaming and the idea of lap-dancing as an occupation being 'more acceptable' is, however, complex and contradictory. Although women suggested the work was indeed culturally less taboo, Scottish society was not quite ready to acknowledge it as a legitimate, 'decent' form of work. This became apparent during interviews. Although women felt lap-dancing was more socially acceptable, the majority of respondents in this study had reservations regarding outsiders discovering their occupation;

'I wouldn't want people to have that kind of knowledge that they could use against me. I don't think there's anything wrong with lap-dancing. It's just ...



I mean, sex is everywhere, and it can make okay money, but at the end of the day you do still get judged' – Jamie

'I did a college course, and I told people what I did, as I thought it was art. And I thought they would be open minded. And there were girls in that group who were really bitchy about it. And nasty. They made me feel really bad' – Donna

Those who are opposed to the existence of a lap-dance industry argue that it is demand from men which provides the climate in which the industry can exist (OBJECT, 2008). Sanders and Hardy (2014) have recently suggested that the industry has remained buoyant despite the recession not due to an increase in customer demand, but because of a continuing, regular stream of women who are prepared to pay to work as dancers. The findings of this study appear to confirm this; a reduced number of men were paying for dances, however this was not matched by a decline in women making themselves available for work. In the venues that featured in this study, owners generated income from the payment of either house fees, which dancers were required to pay in advance of the commencement of their shift, or commission, where owners retained a percentage of the value of each dance sold. This means that owners at least are guaranteed of generating income through dancers and also from the customers that visit the venue. Customers are generally expected to pay a door fee in order to gain entry to a lap-dancing club, however two of the clubs discussed in the study, which informs this article, operated during the day, something which is not common in Scottish strip clubs. Customers were able to purchase a dance for five pounds instead of the usual ten pounds which was charged in the evening. Although customers were not expected to pay to gain entry, they were obliged to buy at least one drink. Interestingly, after fieldwork was completed, one of the two clubs decided to cease operating during the day, so minimal was the demand, thus reinforcing the lack of demand for lap-dances.

Here, a dancer notes that a drop in demand meant that the owner lost the money he normally made via the provision of evening entry fees, which led to him recouping this loss via dancers' fees;

'I think he just started getting greedy. With recession and stuff he was losing money – he used to make all of his money at the door. That place used to be jam

packed, there was constant stream of customers. I think he is wanting to make his money back through commission' – Lisa

To do this, the owner allowed far more women to work on any shift than required; simply, demand did not match supply. Despite this, women were still required to pay their house fee. This placed women in a precarious position, as they were competing with more dancers for less customers, putting them at risk of losing money rather than making it. Here Jamie expressed her anxiety that she might not recoup the thirty pounds she was required to pay to work in an Edinburgh based club on a Saturday afternoon;

'He lets far too many girls work and there is hardly any punters. I suppose he has to charge something, but it's so unpredictable at the moment, I've done Saturday day shifts and I'm competing with twelve odd other lassies and sometimes I am shitting myself because I might not make my thirty quid back' – Jamie

## Disposable Bodies

A constant supply of women who were willing to dance also meant that owners had no motivation to improve working conditions. Bradley-Engen and Ulmer (2009, 43) succinctly describe the new found situation dancers face, arguing 'When there is an ever-ready supply of dancers, they become nameless and faceless'. In Scottish clubs, women were very much considered to be 'expendable'. This was the result of a constant flow of dancers without the demand required to sustain these dancers. The dancers felt that the behaviour of the owner of Supernova suggested that he was all too aware of his position of power;

'I used to have the philosophy where it was like, you couldn't complain about anything because it was a case of, well if you are not happy, go somewhere else'  
– Lisa

## Decline in working conditions / Health and Safety

Despite the fact women pay to work at clubs, owners commonly failed to maintain the upkeep of their venues. The following quotes refer to Supernova, a club situ-

ated in Edinburgh;

Well, at Supernova, they should have lockers. The stage is a death trap ... the stool you use to go onto the stage, well that was rocking back and forward, it wasn't sturdy and it was a total death trap. You know it's hard enough to get up on that stage without a fucked stool and you know one day Morag was getting up on stage and she cut her foot, fell down, bruised herself and nothing was done about it. So there was no stool for ages, then he took a chair from downstairs and started having us use that – he's so cheap it's unbelievable. I don't think he gives a shit about the dancers – Felicity

My main problem is with the air conditioning. And he has had the same air conditioning system in there since I started eight years ago and there were problems with it then ... he will not spend money on it. And that kinda bothers me. That lap-dancers needs are kinda secondary because you're disposable. Like, there is ten other girls just fucking itching to take your place – and he knows that. You're totally disposable to him – Sammy

'I think they need better air conditioning. There always needs to be a candle so we don't slip on stage. The bars in the booths needed to be cleaned every day ... the curtains we used to have were disgusting. It was gross. He doesn't seem to like spending any money on the place unless he really has to' – Donna

Despite the lack of will from owners to improve the workplace for dancers, they were well aware of their disempowered position – particularly in comparison with how their working life in the venue was before;

'You just kinda go along with the good and the bad, you know. At the end of the day the management have most of the power, and it's not like we can go on some sort of protest about it' – Felicity

'It used to be pretty lax, not as in uncaring, but it was liberal, it wasn't us against them, it was more the managers and the dancers against the public. Now it's like the management against the dancers. Things got a lot less, erm, appear to be, a lot less friendly' – Rebecca

## Changing work dynamics at Supernova – from a ‘Social’ club to a ‘Hustle’ club

Bradley-Engen and Ulmer (2009), in their research on US strip clubs, propose a typology of venues, in which they are categorised into three ideal types; Hustle, Social or Show clubs. The working environment of Supernova as it was during fieldwork shared some similarities with their definition of a ‘Hustle’ club – that is, venues in which dancers’ efforts centre around the manipulation of customers in the hope that they will spend more money than they actually intended to (Bradley-Engen and Ulmer, 2009). In the past, when there were a higher number of customers willing to spend and fewer dancers, Supernova appeared to share more characteristics with a ‘Social’ club, a lap-dancing club where having a ‘good time’ is considered crucial by owners and dancers alike. The key difference between Supernova and the ‘typical’ Hustle club set by Bradley-Engen and Ulmer (2009) is that Supernova now tends to attract a smaller number of clients (although this, as I have demonstrated using dancers’ words, is a result of economic and cultural factors). Before the economic crash of 2008 (Sanders and Hardy, 2014), Supernova catered for a large customer base which has since dramatically dwindled. The typical Hustle club is characterised by a high turnover rate and few ‘regular’ customers (Bradley-Engen and Ulmer, 2009). Supernova, in comparison, had its fair share of regulars, who tended to frequent the venue during the day. Such customers were considered as the providers of ‘guaranteed’ income by dancers, since they generally bought one or more dances per visit. Regulars would often stay in the venue for the entire afternoon, not only buying dances, but also engaging in chat with dancers. The fact the venue had become very quiet during the day was beneficial for these regulars, as they essentially had long periods of time to chat with dancers. Such chat, unless facilitated as part of a private dance, was free of charge. In some respects these regulars had a degree of power over dancers. Previously, when demand for dances was higher, customers would often be expected to pay to spend time with a dancer, with the rationale being that her time could alternatively be spent more profitably with a paying customer of which there were many to choose from. At the time of fieldwork, dancers often invested much time in a regular visit to Supernova. Generally these men would buy a dance, however some also expected the women to engage in unpaid, emotional ‘talking’ labour before electing to buy a dance. Some regulars came specifically only for unpaid conversa-

tion. Thus, the changes to supply and demand in the venue resulted in men being in the position to spend long afternoons chatting to women without paying them for their time. It should be borne in mind that while regulars usually bought dances, they did not always buy them, leading women to compete to be the regular's 'choice' on that particular visit. This often leads to strained relationships between dancers as Jamie notes;

We were having a bad day one day and one girl went totally mental at me for approaching a customer too soon. Even though he is a long time regular and everyone knows he buys a dance off most of us when he comes in. Anyway, she was being out of order as he had bought a drink. But I think she was just getting stressed out because there were no customers – Jamie

Dancers noted that the 'fun' had been taken away from the work, due to increased pressure to make money. This had served to sour relationships between dancers as Jamie indicates. Sanders and Hardy (2014) found that dancers in their study of dancer experiences in Leeds found their work to be far more enjoyable than other legitimated forms of employment such as administration or sales work. Colosi (2010b), in her research of UK strip clubs, also refers to lap-dancing as 'anti-work', that is, work which is viewed not so much as 'work', but as something which is an enjoyable pastime. At Supernova, dancers felt strongly that any fun had been removed from their occupation, as competition increased for a smaller number of paying customers;

'I used to love Supernova because it used to have a really good atmosphere and everyone would be having a laugh and it was just a really good atmosphere in the club, like you'd come in and it was like some school disco you had come into because everyone was just so much about having a good giggle ... I think girls are a lot less likely to have a laugh now. Because there is more pressure to make money. In the past it wouldn't even pop into your head that you might have a bad night – you would come in, have a laugh, and you would make your money, without having to think about it too much' – Lisa

'I've never really had any problems at all and I've always gotten on with everyone. But recently I've noticed, especially since I got back from maternity, the

atmosphere has really gone down, it's changed an awful lot. I don't know why it is, if it's the lack of money going about' – Belinda

It is the 'fun' element of the work that characterised Supernova with the definition of a Social club. Bradley-Engen and Ulmer (2009) note that in Social clubs having an enjoyable time is more important than making money. Although money was always cited as one of the main reasons for dancing at Supernova, dancers argued that previously, making money went side by side with fun and a 'party atmosphere', which is the principal characteristic of the Social club. Social clubs are typically small, with the main stage featuring only one or two dancers at a time. This reflects the set-up of Supernova, which was a small lap-dancing club with only one stage, with private dance booths situated atop a staircase, out of view of the main customer area. In the Social club, dancers are incorporated as part of the club's overall 'good time' atmosphere (Bradley-Ulmer and Engen, 2009, 45), with the club making most of its money not through dancer fees, but through the sale of alcohol. Social clubs in the US tend to be situated in areas with smaller, more stable populations, which means dancers are more valuable to club owners. This is because, unlike the current situation at Supernova, there is a far smaller pool of women who are willing and able to work as dancers. This contributes towards a more balanced relationship between club owners and dancers (Bradley-Engen and Ulmer, 2009, 46). In previous years, when less women were approaching lap-dancing clubs for work, more positive working relationships with club owners, dancers and customers were reported in Supernova. However, as supply has grown, dancers have become less valuable and this has contributed to Supernova's shifts towards the working environment typical within a Hustle club. Social club dancers in Bradley-Engen and Ulmer's study were quite aware that, because they were less expendable, they had more 'bargaining power' with club owners. For example, club owners were happy to negotiate with dancers with regards to working times and picking shifts (Bradley-Engen and Ulmer, 2009).

### Conclusion: What does the future hold for the lap-dancing industry in Scotland – and why do women keep returning?

Despite the increasingly precarious nature of the lap-dancing industry in Scotland,

women continued to turn up for shifts. This was despite the very 'hit or miss' nature of the work; the odds were generally not in women's favour that they would leave a shift with the same amount of money they had become used to in previous times. However, it is the very 'Russian Roulette' nature of the industry which encourages women to return again and again. It would appear that, as long as the *possibility* to walk away with large sums of money remains, women will continue to turn up for work.

'I enjoy the good potential for making money, the laughs you have when the atmosphere when it's good' – Morag

'Last Monday night there were only three girls and I made £190, which is really good for a Monday night, because there were only three girls on' – Sammy

In addition, the instant nature of the payments are enticing, even if these are not particularly high. This is something which legitimated forms of labour are unable to compete with;

'As long as I've got enough to get my shopping and that. Cos you know there have been times where I've had nothing at all till seven, then I've come out and went straight to Tesco to buy food. With a normal job I'd have to wait for pay day' – Jamie

'I think if you are in a tight spot financially, it's obviously easier to make some quick money in this job, rather than another job. Where you have to wait a month or three weeks to get paid' – Chloe

This article has suggested that shifts in supply and demand into the lap-dancing industry have served to create a more exploitative form of work for women, and has used Supernova as an example of how the atmosphere has been shifted from that of a 'social' to a 'hustle' atmosphere, as typified by Bradley-Engen and Ulmer's (2009) research on US strip clubs. Scottish lap-dancing clubs are currently unregulated from the point of view of dancer working conditions and the ways in which they operate as a business. Because of this, it is difficult to generalise across clubs, indeed it would probably be more accurate to consider the changing nature of the

industry on a club by club basis, with Supernova being used as one example here. That said, it is clear that there is a need to also consider macro factors such as economic and cultural change outside clubs, as these impact on supply and demand, which in turn affects relations inside clubs.

In their recent research into lap-dancing venues in England, Sanders and Hardy (2014) noted similar problems which may affect the longevity of this industry, with a decline in custom and revenue, reported not only by dancers, but also venue owners and managers. However, venue owners remain the principal benefactors in this industry, if women continue to pay to work in their venues. One of the factors affecting dancers in this research was a lack of motivation on the owner's part to keep the working environment clean and safe; despite dancers paying to work in them. Sanders and Hardy (2014,153), in conjunction with dancers, have published policy recommendations for Local Authorities who license Sexual Entertainment Venues in England and Wales in the hope that the well-being of dancers can be taken into account by owners. However, these recommendations, which include the banning of fining and an obligation to provide adequate changing and kitchen facilities, are not mandatory and are not currently provided to club owners in Scotland. Furthermore, Sanders and Hardy (2014) noted that the health and safety officers who were involved in their study were far more concerned with how safe buildings were for public and employee use than they were for dancers themselves, thus directing attention to an issue which is likely to present itself so long as performing in lap-dancing clubs is not considered a legitimate form of work by the State. Simply, Local Authorities are legally obliged to ensure premises are safe for the use of public and employees; the rights of the self-employed are thus of less importance.

Understandably, dancers' primary aims are now based around making money in a competitive climate, rather than enjoying their work to any extent. Although they were well aware of the changes in power relations within their workplaces, they were resigned to their situation. Although not mentioned by dancers, one reason for this may be that, in Scotland, they are only a small number of venues in which women can work. Thus, the choice to move elsewhere does not exist to the same degree as in large cities such as London, where there are far greater number of venues. If money cannot be made in one venue, dancers can migrate to another. In Supernova at least, fun no longer forms part of the process of making money



due to a reduction in custom and an increase for the custom that still exists. In such a climate it is even more crucial that Local Authorities act in order to ensure that this industry is better regulated, so that venue owners are obliged to maintain workplaces and practices such as fining are removed from the workplace.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Supernova is a lap-dancing club located in Edinburgh, Scotland. At the time of the research, the club offered fully nude, clothed contact dances in private booths and opened daily from 12pm until 1am daily. Due to a reduction in demand for dances, the club now operates from 7pm-1am daily.
- <sup>2</sup> Scottish slang, literally meaning vagina. In this context, it means "Wasting time or messing about". Lisa refers to simply having fun in the workplace through conversation and drinking.

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