‘HOW DO YOU DO IT?’: How Exotic Dancers in Australia Manage Stigma to Maintain Positive External Identities

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ABSTRACT

The exotic dance industry is highly stigmatised. Several studies have examined the stigma management techniques which exotic dancers use to maintain positive self-identities, but none have examined the techniques used to maintain positive external identities. This thesis argues exotic dancers use stigma management techniques for externally-applied stigma, in order to maintain a positive external identity and positive social interactions. Though stigma management techniques may also be used for internalised stigma, they are nevertheless required to manage external stigma due to its potential effects on stigmatised individuals' personal lives. The research questions 'How exotic dancers manage the stigma which manifests in their personal life in order to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interactions?' To address this question, fifteen current and former exotic dancers in Australia were individually interviewed using a feminist method; additionally, an autoethnographic element was utilised. Ultimately, it was found externalised stigma was managed by the interviewees primarily through 'separation of social/personal world'. The interviewees demonstrated they chose who to share their stigmatised identity with based on external pragmatic and practical factors rather than internalised shame. This finding furthers our understanding of the subculture/beliefs of exotic dancers (and other stigmatised workers) and their mental considerations when choosing to manage stigma.

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CHAPTER 1 PERCEPTIONS OF EXOTIC DANCERS

SECTION 1.1 PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS DISPLAYED IN POPULAR MEDIA

The man leaned back in his pleather armchair, taking a moment to relax. His weary eyes closed, the dark light of the small room nearly eclipsing him. A neon haze filtered over his pale skin tone. Music began. He opened his eyes as the plexiglass booth in front of him brightened garishly. A female – young, hot, scantily clad – began moving inside the booth. Legs spread, hair whipped, torso twisted. The man leaned forward, engaged. He earned this. He deserved this.

Was that a nipple? No, not yet.

He leaned back again, allowing the languish of the moment to wash over him.

This, this he deserved. A pause. A break in real life. A loss of self in pure visual pleasure.

But…

Leaning forward again, he looked more closely at the form in front of him. More intently. Examining it. Something seemed familiar. Something…

'Diana?' he asked, questioning. Surely Diana wouldn't be here. Not in this kind of place - a place for relaxing men and naked women.

Abruptly, the lights flipped off. The music ceased. The body gasped. The single sound appeared wounded. Quickly gathering her clothes, the body folded inward, entering further into a fetal position with each movement.

The next day, she – Diana – appears to the man in his house. Dressed modestly, absent of make-up, she confides in him. She says times were tough. The town had changed since the man was gone. She had tried 'that work' to help her child, but seeing him reminded her that she did not need to do that. She would find another way.

For many, this scene from ‘A Man Apart’ reflects their notion of stripping. For them, stripping is work performed by an outsider – an ‘other’. A stripper – or, at least, one kind of stripper – is a young, attractive female facing an insurmountable problem who happens to have taken a wrong pathway to attempt to correct the problem. She risks remaining on the wrong pathway if a voice from her conscience does not remind her of who she is and that she is above such work.

For others, the concept of a stripper might be reflected better in the occupation’s representations in series like ‘How I Met Your Mother’ (HIMYM) or ‘Six Feet Under’. In HIMYM, a character referred to as ‘Stripper Lily’ is introduced. Physically identical to one of the main characters, Lily, she has the opposite personality traits. Whereas Lily appears sweet and innocent, Stripper Lily is hardened and manipulative. Similar traits are displayed by a stripper-character in the first season of ‘Six Feet Under’ when one of the main characters enters a strip club in a momentary spurt of loneliness. One of the dancers spotted him from across the club and managed to plot and enact a complex scheme in the seconds it took her to walk over to him – a scheme which eventually led to him being manipulated out of a significant portion of his life savings. These shows reflect how some imagine the personality of a woman who has long-performed the career of stripping. She has changed. No longer retaining innocence, she contains guile. She is manipulative, hardened, and wickedly clever – capable and desirous of conning ordinary men out of hard-earned money through highly dishonest tactics.

The more long-term characters of Samantha and Catherine Willows (present in ‘That 70s Show’ and ‘CSI’, respectively) can also display how some view long-term strippers and the reasons they expect would prompt individuals to become career strippers. In ‘That 70s Show’, the character Samantha is displayed as a career stripper. She is either unintelligent or lacks confidence in her intelligence. She does not appear to have other skills nor to have contemplated other career paths. Catherine (of CSI) is slightly different. She is a former stripper who has changed her ways to earn the ‘medium-sized bucks’, as she once playfully quipped. Forgetting Catherine’s former occupation, Catherine’s co-worker once made a case-related comment that she did not understand why women would choose an occupation that focuses on their physical appearance.

'Your father ever tell you you were pretty?' Catherine asked in response.

'I guess,' Sara (the colleague) answered, uncertain as to the purpose of the question.

'Did he ever tell you you were smart?'

'Yeah.'

'So it probably never occurred to you that you wouldn't be successful. If all you ever hear is that you're gorgeous, you can let everything fall away and leave you in a very dangerous place' she answered sagely.

The implication was the same as the one presented in 'That 70s Show' – long-term strippers lacked intelligence or confidence in their intelligence. The only confidence they contained was in their appearance. As a result, stripping was the only occupation they viewed as viable to them.

Combined, these examples demonstrate how many outside the exotic dance industry view the occupation and its workers. Some might only hold one view, but many hold multiple, sometimes conflicting, views. They might believe a 'stripper' (or exotic dancer) to initially be someone who is young, attractive, unaware of possessing any skills outside of her beauty, and facing a problematic situation. Not able to distinguish a good pathway for herself, she enters into the exotic dance industry with the intention of it being a short-term endeavour. If not 'saved' from herself, she might turn into a hardened, manipulative, and conniving individual.

Most members of mainstream society have rarely encountered exotic dance clubs or exotic dancers on a non-superficial level. They have not had to examine their presuppositions about the types of individuals who become exotic dancers. To them, an exotic dancer is someone who was 'forced' into her current occupation by circumstances, contains poor planning skills, has yet to face her secret shame at her occupational role, is naïve and unintelligent, lacks confidence in her abilities, and has the cleverness and sociopathic tendencies to manipulate large sums of money from deceived victims. She might also be a drug user, in an abusive relationship, and come from a broken home, as other popular images suggest; likewise, she might be using her dancing career as a 'front' for

establishing a more lucrative career as a prostitute or as a trophy wife to an elderly, rich, easily deceived male, as further popular images would suggest.

These preconceived ideas, informed by popular media and cultural stereotypes, make it difficult for dancers to reveal their occupation to people outside of their workplace. A dancer is likely to be aware of how her occupation is perceived outside of the industry. As such, when deciding if she wishes to reveal her occupational identity, she has a range of factors to consider, including who she wishes to reveal her occupational identity to, what that person's reaction is likely to be, and how she can reduce the negative stigma and stereotypes which are likely to appear in the reaction. This research examines the strategies exotic dancers use to manage the effects of stigma and stereotypes in their personal lives in order to maintain positive social interactions and external identities.

SECTION 1.2 PERCEPTIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Throughout history, dance has been associated with both sexualisation and stigmatisation. Each generation has criticised the successive generation's form of dance as inappropriate and immoral. When ballet was developed in the late seventeenth century, it was perceived as a cheap art form of the lower classes and stigmatised (Hanna 2005). Other forms of dance have had similar receptions. For example, the cancan was criticised for having gestures which 'undermined Victorian values' (Hanna 2010, p 221), while the waltz, foxtrot, swing dance, Elvis-styled pelvic thrusts, disco dance, and 'booty dancing' have all been critiqued as overtly sexualised and resulted in stigmatisation (Hanna 2010).

As a commercial sexualised performance, exotic dance has fared similarly. The most direct precursor to modern forms of the exotic stage dance is Burlesque and the most direct precursor to modern forms of the exotic lap dance is taxi-dancing. Burlesque, initiated in the 1920s, offered patrons a choreographed nude performance focused on sexual tantalisation and pantomime (Hanna 2010). Taxi-dancing, also initiated in the 1920s, instituted the notion of a purchasable interactive dance,

which was known to transgress boundaries of propriety for its time period (Hong & Duff 1977). Both industries rose upon their inception, then declined in the 1950s with the onset of television. However, aspects of what would later merge to become the modern exotic dance industry survived in the form of 'carnival stripping', go-go dancing, and topless dancing. Performers in those industries were subjected to contemptuous conditions and high stigmatisation (Gonos 1976; Hanna 2010). Little changed until the 1980s, when the exotic dance industry was reformed with the emergence of 'gentlemen's clubs'. These catered to middle and upper class clientele (Hanna 2005, Hanna 2010), promoting higher-class working conditions and higher-class dances/dancers. Two additional changes to the exotic dance industry emerged in the 1990s and 2000s due to legal battles. The first change was the legal decree that if exotic dance clubs classified their dancers as employees, then the dancers were eligible for medical leave; this prompted exotic dance clubs to reclassify their dancers as independent contractors, resulting in exotic dancers being denied a wage, medical leave, pension, and job security (Hanna 2005, Hardy & Sanders 2015). The second legal battle classified exotic dancing as a form of art, enabling the legal acceptability of lap dancing (Bouclin 2006, Hanna 2005). These two changes have resulted in the present-day definition of a female exotic dancer, in which a modern female exotic dancer (or 'stripper') is one who removes all of her clothing in an erotic dance performance, both on a stage for a general audience and in private (or 'lap') dances for the purpose of income generation (Hanna 1998, Hanna 2005).

Though these changes have been the primary changes to the modern exotic dance industry, one other change has occurred – the industry has become more mainstream in the past few decades (Bowen & Daniel 2006). Many television series contain scenes in exotic dance clubs (Bowen & Daniel 2006), aspects of exotic dance are commonly marketed as exercise (Hanna 2005), and exotic dance venues are increasingly granted licenses in residential and business areas, instead of being regulated exclusively to industrial areas (Hanna 2005). However, despite the prevalent images of exotic dance in mainstream society, studies have demonstrated the stigma associated with it has remained (Barton

2000; Bowen & Daniel 2006; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003) and is quite high (Perrucci 1999; Schweitzer 2000; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003).

The study of how exotic dancers handle stigma or 'deviance' is not new to sociology. In fact, both the exotic dance industry and sex industries have been well-investigated in the field of sociology as 'deviant occupations' or 'dirty work' – that is, occupations to which society ascribes a stigma or taint to both the work and those who perform the work (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Kreiner, Ashforth, and Sluss 2006). The focus of this thesis is how dancers handle the stigma applied to their occupation in order to maintain a positive external identity [that which is applied to them by others (Jenkins 2016)] and positive social interactions. It draws on Goffman's (1968, 1971) theories of stigma, identity management, and separation of social world, and Jenkins's (2016) theory of identity/identification. This thesis addresses the question of 'how exotic dancers manage the stigma which manifests in their personal life in order to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interactions?', ultimately arguing that exotic dancers utilise stigma management techniques for externally-applied stigma, in order to maintain a positive external identity and positive social interactions. In these circumstances, the decision of who to share their stigmatised identity with is based partially on practical and pragmatic considerations relevant to external stigma.

This chapter has introduced the ideas which will be explored in more detail throughout this thesis. Chapter 2 critically reviews relevant theories of stigma and how the sociological literature has depicted stigma within the exotic dance industry. Chapter 3 describes my approach to feminist interviewing and autoethnography. The fourth chapter presents the information uncovered in this study and shows that exotic dancers utilise strategies that manage externalised (rather than internalised) stigma when bringing people into the side stage. The final chapter summarises the study, offers suggestions for further exploration and discusses the implications of the research to academia.

CHAPTER 2 MANAGING STIGMA

This chapter critically reviews relevant theories of stigma and how the sociological literature has depicted stigma within the exotic dance industry. It also presents the theoretical framework which the thesis uses to establish its argument that exotic dancers use stigma management techniques to manage external stigma in order to maintain positive external identities and social interactions. It further examines the literature for insights into a potential stigma management technique, 'separation of social world'. It explores nuances within that technique, explaining which information has previously uncovered in previous studies and which information has only been implied or entirely overlooked. It further explains that the thesis will address the gaps in information in order to ultimately demonstrate that the stigma management technique mentioned (separation of social world) is one which is used by exotic dancers to manage external stigma, thus supporting this thesis's argument.

SECTION 2.1 STIGMA

Subsection 2.1.1 Stigma Manifesting in the Exotic Dance Industry

Several researchers have suggested reasons for the stigma and have implied ways in which it manifests. Most of the suggested reasons for the stigma centre around the disregard of traditional/patriarchal norms of societally-sanctioned acceptable sexual behaviour for females (re: private, partner-exclusive) and the condemnation of sexual behaviour for financial gain (Hubbard & Colosi 2015; Peretti & O'Connor 1989). As to ways in which the stigma might manifest, theories on stigma suggests it manifests along a continuum from overt to subtle means, in both macro and micro dimensions (Hannem & Bruckert 2012). The most obvious manifestation of stigma is structural stigma,

in which stigma manifests in rules and regulations which are meant to control the risk posed by the stigmatised population, including the ethical contamination they are perceived to pose (Hannem & Bruckert 2012). The most direct form of structural stigma is through laws (Hannem & Bruckert 2012), including laws which make performing the stigmatised act illegal or hinder its function or profitability. Other manifestations can be more subtle, such as symbolic or interaction stigma (Goffman 1968; Hannem & Bruckert 2012), which includes the verbal, physical, or sexual mistreatment of the stigmatised individual. Another manifestation can be social ostracism(Goffman 1968; Hannem & Bruckert 2012), and, more subtly, the application of negative stereotypes to the stigmatised group or person, which can result in disgust or concern for an individual who wishes to join a stigmatised group (Biernat & Dovidio 2000; Goffman 1968; Mikolon, Kreiner, & Wieseke 2016; Mikulak 2013) or doubt regarding his/her character (Ahmed 2004; Ashforth & Kreiner 1999; Hannem & Bruckert 2012). A final aspect of stigma is an overarching societal acceptance towards the poor treatment of a stigmatised group (Ahmed 2004; Biernat & Dovidio 2000, Goffman 1968, Hannem & Brickert 2012).

It has been well-documented that the exotic dance industry and those within it are highly stigmatised (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999; Thompson, Harred, & Burks 2003) - and it has also been noted that both the industry and its workers have faced difficulties which correspond to the list above. Direct forms of sex work, such as prostitution, have been and remain illegal in certain locations (Jenness 1990, Jolin1957, Weitzer 2009). Though the exotic dance industry has been legal in Western society for several decades, regulations have significantly impaired its location and function, dictating where exotic dance clubs can and cannot be located and what exotic dancers can and cannot do in their work performances (Hanna 2005; Hardy & Sanders 2015; Hubbard & Colossi 2013; Hubbard & Colossi 2015; Sanders, Hardy & Campbell 2014). Laws and industrial-wide practices have also inhibited the extent of the income exotic dancers can earn (Hanna 2005; Hardy & Sanders 2015; Hubbard & Colossi 2013; Hubbard & Colossi 2015; Sanders, Hardy & Campbell 2014). Additionally, exotic dancers are more prone than other working members of a club to being treated in a demeaning or belittling manner by management, staff, and customers (DeMichele & Tewksbury 2004; Price 2008; Rambo Ronai & Cross

1998). Exotic dancers also risk encountering sexual harassment and assault by customers (Barton 2000; Dressel & Petersen 1982; Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Scull 2013).

In their personal lives, exotic dancers can face discrimination in terms of medical care, housing, and police protection (Barton 2002; Maticka-Tyndale et al 2008). Additionally, they are likely to face difficulties in obtaining or maintaining a separate occupation if it is known they have previously participated or currently participate in a sex industry (Paulson 2008). They are also likely to be primarily identified by their occupation – current or former - as a dancer, as if the occupation is their primary identifying trait (Adler & Adler 2006, Hanna 2005). If a newspaper is reporting on an event that happened to a current or former exotic dancer, she will likely be referred to in the headline by her occupation, regardless of the amount of years which might have passed since she left the industry (Hanna 2005). Even when her primary identifying characteristic is not referenced as her occupation, she is likely to have negative characteristics (stereotypes) attributed to her due to that occupation. (Pescosolido et. al. 2008; Spencer, Logel & Davies 2016). The stereotypes associated with exotic dancing include low intelligence (Grandy 2008; Price 2008), low education (Barton 2000; Hubbard & Colossi 2015; Morrow 2012), low sense of self-worth (Pedersen et al 2015), poor planning (Hardy & Sanders 2015; Sweet & Tewskbury 2000a), drug and alcohol abuse (Price 2008; Sweet & Tewskbury 2000b), sexual abuse (Barton 2000; Pedersen et al 2015), an emotionally unhealthy childhood (Barton 2000; Pedersen et al 2015), heightened sexuality/promiscuity (Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003), and prostitution (Barton 2000; Maticka-Tyndale et al 2008). The stereotypes and stigma might be applied overtly, through ostricisation (Sweet & Tewskbury 2000b), negative comments and undesired behaviours, or covertly, through displays of concern, disgust, and even emotional distance (Hubbard & Colossi 2013, Hubbard & Colossi 2015). These and other manifestations of stigma can cause dancers to have difficulties obtaining romantic partners and difficulties obtaining familial acceptance of the occupation (Bradley 2017; Grandy 2008).

Subsection 2.1.2 Stigma in Sociological Studies on the Exotic Dance Industry

The stigma associated with the exotic dance industry has also influenced sociological studies. This is easily visible in initial sociological studies of the industry (Holland Fortner 2010, Morrow 2012, and Paulson 2008), in which occupations related to exotic dancing, such as taxi-dancing (Hong & Duff 1977), go-go dancing (Gonos 1976), and striptease/Burlesque (McCaghy & Skipper 1969; Skipper & McCaghy 1970; Salutin 1971), were studied as deviant occupations - with 'deviant' being defined as an abnormality or form of pathology inherent to the occupations (Egan 2003, Hardy & Sanders 2015, Paulson 2008, Pedersen et al 2015). The sociological focus on sex industries shifted in the 1970s and 1980s away from the deviance 'inherent' in the occupations to their placement in the sex wars (Frank 2007). During this era, sex feminists demeaned sex industries as degrading/disempowering and radical sex feminists deemed sex industries as empowering (Barton 2002; Barton 2007; Egan 2003; Frank 2007, Wahab 2011). Sociological studies during this timeframe were primarily political, focusing on supporting one stance or the other (Frank 2007).

Since then, a more nuanced view of the sex industries has been attempted (Frank 2007), primarily through what I identify as three loose clusters of research. The first cluster contains studies on power-interactions, which typically examine the two (power and interactions) as one combined notion – power which is displayed through interactions. Some have examined dancer-patron and dancer-management interactions in order to determine how power is negotiated (Aalbers 2005; Barton 2000; Barton 2002; Dressel & Peterson 1982; Holland Fortner 2010; Murphy 2003; Pinney 2005; Wood 2008). Others have examined exotic dance clubs' organisation and interactions to demonstrate how gender norms are upheld and enhanced in the environment (DeMichele & Tewksbury 2004; Price 2008; Scull 2013; Wood 2008), typically asserting the gender norms are disempowering. Additional studies have directly focused on the question of empowerment and disempowerment (Bell, Sloan & Strickling 1998; Deshotels & Forsynth 2005; Jeffreys 2008). Additionally, power and interaction studies

have identified typologies of dancers (Barton 2002, Hardy & Sanders 2015, Lewis 1998) and customers (Erickson & Tewksbury 2000) and how each typology negotiates power.

The second cluster of research focuses on deviance and stigma. Studies in this cluster typically use the terms 'deviance' and 'stigma' interchangeably. In these studies, deviance is not defined as a pathology or abnormality, but as a stigma which is created and applied in interactions. Studies on deviance/stigma have examined if stigma still exists (Bowen & Daniel 2006), proffered potential reasons for the stigma (Hubbard & Colosi 2015; Jolin 1957; Peretti & O'Connor 1989; Rambo Ronai & Ellis 1989), and proposed stigma-negotiation tactics for positive self-identity maintenance (Grandy 2008; Lewis 1998; Perrucci 1999; Philaretou 2006; Rambo Ronai 1993; Rambo Ronai 1999; Rambo Ronai & Cross 1998; Thompson & Harred 1992; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003). One study also argued stigma and stereotypes are enhanced by exotic dancers' actions (Morrow 2012); another study countered stereotypes associated with sex work (Weitzer 2009). Studies in this cluster have also examined the negative effects of sex work's stigma on performers' personal lives (Deshotels & Forsynth 2005; Downs, James & Cowan 2006; Lavin 2014; Lennon, Liampttong & Hoban 2014; Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Paulson 2008; Peretti & O'Connor 1989; Perrucci 1999).

The final cluster of research has focused on sex work as a form of labour. These studies have examined dancers' reasons for entry (Fogel & Quinlan 2011; Mestemacher & Roberti 2004; Sweet & Tewksbury 2000a), managerial tactics to entice new exotic dancers (McCandless Stone 2014), the various dance performance offered (Liepe-Levinson 1998), the training of workers (Heyl 1979; Lewis 1998), exotic dancers' sales tactics (Rambo Ronai & Ellis 1989), sex workers' sales interactions (Aalbers 2005), the transgression of club and legal regulations in order to generate income (Deshotels & Forsynth 2008), the reciprocal nature of sales techniques for the purpose of income generation (Lewis 2006), the emotional labour undertaken by dancers in obtaining regular customers (Egan 2005), the alteration of sales techniques among ageing dancers (Rambo Ronai 1992), and the use of 'side staging' by dancers to negotiate undesirable management decisions (Murphy 2003). The organisational structure of dance clubs (DeMichele & Tewksbury 2004; Price 2008; Trautner 2005) and workers'

responses to industry-relevant legal policies (Bouclin 2006; Jenness 1990; Jolin 1957; Sanders, Hardy & Campbell 2014) have also been examined as a way to focus on sex work as a form of labour.

In each of the three clusters of current research on the exotic dance industry, stigma is an underlying concept. Studies on sex work as a form of labour display the regular emergence of stigma in sales interactions and managerial/legal policies. Studies on how power is negotiated in interactions display the underlying stigma and argue its relationship to power. Studies directly focused on deviance and stigma inarguably include stigma.

As stigma is evident in each cluster of research, I argue it is the most influential framing in sociological studies on the exotic dance industry. The stigma associated with the exotic dance industry has also strongly influenced sociological experts on deviant occupations and dirty workers, such as Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark and Fugate (2007), Pescosolido et al. (2008), and Riley (2010). Yet, despite the amount of attention which has been placed on exploring occupationally-related stigma and its effects on performers' health, self-identity, social relationships, and alternative career possibilities, little focus has been placed on how performers negotiate the stigma to maintain positive relationships in their personal lives. Several studies have been performed on how exotic dancers manage the stigma to maintain a positive self-identity and how stigmatised workers (in general) manage the stigma to maintain positive relationships. However, few (if any) have examined how dancers (in specific) manage the stigma in their personal lives to maintain positive external identities and positive relationships. This thesis aims to address that gap by examining those who have performed within the exotic dance industry negotiate the stigma in their personal interactions. It asks the research question 'How do exotic dancers manage the stigma which manifests in their personal life in order to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interactions?'. This thesis examines exotic dancers' use of stigma management techniques for externally-applied stigma. Though stigma management techniques may also be used for internalised stigma, they are nevertheless required to manage external stigma due to its potential effects on their personal lives.

SECTION 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Goffman's theories on stigma, social identity, impression management, and staging are central to addressing the research question. Goffman (1968) conceived of stigma as a deeply discrediting attribute (as perceived by others) and suggested the stigmatised can be separated into two groups – the 'discreditable' and the 'discredited'. He theorised the discreditable (those whose stigma is not known) would primarily manage social *information*; alternatively, the discredited (those whose stigma is known) would primarily manage social *tension* (p 102)**.** He further theorised that both the discreditable and the discredited would utilise 'separation of social world' as a strategy for handling the stigma (Goffman 1968). The discreditable would separate their social world such that the stigmatising information was unlikely to spread; the discredited would separate their social world such that they primarily interacted with those whose reactions they could manage.

Goffman's (1971) theories on staging and impression management also offer insights into how the discreditable would manage the stigmatising information. He suggested one's social world is separated in a method analogous to two stages – a front stage (in which a performance is upheld for the audience) and a back stage (in which no performance is necessary). Audience members of a front stage are treated to props and behaviour in order to maintain an intended impression, such as the impression that one does not have a stigma. There is no 'audience' of a back stage; rather, all members on a backstage have knowledge of the performance and the impressions intended to be conveyed to the front stage. Murphy (2003) and Wosick-Correa and Joseph (2008) expanded on Goffman's (1971) theory of staging by identifying a third stage – a side stage. The side stage is the arena where audience members from the front stage can gain glimpses of the back stage. I suggest this is also the arena in which those from the front stage are provided with an opportunity to eventually traverse to the backstage, if their relationship with the stigmatised person develops strongly enough. Goffman's (1968) notation on the eventual disclosure of stigmatising information to one's developing personal relationships would support my proposal.

Goffman's theories on stigma, staging, and impression management (extended by Murphy 2003 and Wosick-Correa and Joseph 2008) imply a means through which exotic dancers may negotiate stigma – by separating their social world into three metaphorical stages: a front stage, a side stage, and a back stage. Those on the front stage have not received stigmatising information about the individual, those on the side stage have received some stigmatising information, and those on the back stage have full access to the stigmatising information. The 'stigmatising information' of exotic dancers is their stigmatised occupational identities – i.e., that they participate (or have participated) in a stigmatised occupation.

Though it is theorised that exotic dancers might negotiate stigma by placing their contacts onto various stages, it should be clarified that the term 'stage' – whether front, back, or side – is not referring to the physical stage present in an exotic dance club. Rather, it is a metaphor, relating to organisational strategies in one's personal life. Those on the front stage of an exotic dancer's personal life are those people who she has not shared her occupation with; those who are on the side stage are those with whom she has shared part or all of her occupational identity, and those on the backstage are those with whom she has shared the entirety of information related to her occupational identity. Given the stigma of the exotic dance industry pervades multiple aspects of the workers' lives (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, and Fugate 2007; Ashforth and Sluss 2006) and causes them to be associated with negative attributes (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Biernat and Dovidio 2000), exotic dancers are likely to have a significant need to reduce its application to their personal lives. This may be done by separating their social world into three stages, with some people not permitted knowledge of the workers' stigmatised occupational identities, others permitted access to some knowledge, and others permitted access to all knowledge. This may assist the workers in maintaining a positive *external* identity in order to maintain pleasant interactions and relationships.

The notion of an externally-defined identity is based on Jenkin's (2016) theory of identity/identification, which draws on Goffman's notion of a social identity (Goffman 1968). Goffman presented 'social identity' (1968, p. 12) as how one is viewed by others – specifically, how one's

characteristics and traits are or would be viewed by others. Jenkins (2016) extended this notion by suggesting 'social identity' is one aspect of an externally-defined identity – i.e., how others define an individual. According to Jenkins (2016), there are two ways to define one's identity – externally and internally. An externally-defined identity (or 'external identity'), which Goffman referred to as a social identity, is how others define a person. An internally-defined identity (or 'internal identity'), which sociologists often refer to as a 'self-identity' or sometimes simply an 'identity', is how an individual defines him/herself. Jenkins (2016) also suggested that the two types of identities – external and internal – are not unrelated, but, rather, exist on a continuum, with external identities (how others define one) influencing how one defines oneself (i.e., his/her internal identity) and internal identities influencing how others define one. Negotiating the stigma to maintain a positive internal identity (or self-identity) is not the focus of my research, as several previous studies have explored this concept (Grandy 2008; Holland Fortner 2010; Hong & Duff 1977; Rambo Ronai 1998; Rambo Ronai & Cross 1998; Thompson & Harred 1992; Thompson & Harred 2003; Trautner & Collett 2010). Instead, I focus on external identities and how exotic dancers manage the stigma in their personal lives to maintain a positive external identity in order to maintain positive interactions and relationships.

This study starts from the premise that in order to maintain positive interactions with others, one must maintain a positive external identity. It suggests one method of maintaining a positive external identity is through 'separation of social world' and 'staging' – i.e. choosing who to reveal one's stigmatised identity to. This strategy, however, is not well-explored.

SECTION 2.3 MANAGING ACCESS TO THE SIDE STAGE

In managing the side stage, the literature suggests dancers make active choices regarding who they wish to disclose or obscure their stigmatised identities to. Previous studies imply some categories of people who a dancers discloses (or, alternatively, obscures) her stigmatised identity to; however, these categories have not been directly examined. Likewise, though previous studies imply reasons as

to why individuals are allowed (or prevented) from entering the side stage, this has also not been directly examined. In a similar fashion, some studies have implied ways in which undesirables may be prevented from entering the side stage; however, this, too, has never been directly examined. The implied information is presented below.

In regard to who an exotic dancer tends to reveal her stigmatised identity to, previous studies imply there are several potential categories of people with whom a dancer can consider revealing her occupation. Based on the literature, I have identified a variety of categories, including practical/professional contacts, acquaintances, friends, romantic/sexual partners, and family. Studies have implied dancers rarely tell practical contacts such as landlords, medical personal, and children's caretakers. (Barton 2000; Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Morrow 2012). Reasons for this include a lack of relevancy, a concern the stigma and associated stereotypes might affect the quality of service, and a concern the stigma might affect a loved one's interactions with the person (Barton 2000, Maticka-Tyndale et al 2008; Morrow 2012). One study indicated a dancer had to contend with a landlord expecting sexual services once he learnt of his tenant's occupation (Maticka-Tyndale et al 2008). Another study noted a dancer withheld her occupational identity from medical attendants in case it affected the compassion and service provided. The same study interviewed a dancer who was concerned her son's teacher might share her occupation with others in the school system, potentially affecting her son's educational treatment or socialisation (Barton 2000). As exotic dancers face discrimination in accommodation, medical assistance and police protection (Barton 2002; Maticka-Tyndale et al 2008), the probability dancers would share their occupational identity with those from whom they receive professional services is further decreased. These and further examples suggest it is unlikely those who have performed in the exotic dance industry would share the information with practical contacts.

Individuals who dancers interact with when in other occupational roles are also unlikely to know the dancer's stigmatised identity. Studies suggest exotic dancers (and other sex workers) receive discrimination when transitioning to or enacting other occupations (Barton 2000; Barton 2002;

Maticka-Tyndale et al 2008; Paulson 2008). Additionally, the stereotypes associated with dancing may leave performers vulnerable to misinterpretations of their behaviour when in other occupations (Barton 2000).

As to social contacts, studies imply acquaintances are rarely told, with dancers indicating discomforting reactions when acquaintances unintentionally stumble upon their occupational identity (Barton 2000; Morrow 2012; Perrucci 1999; Sweet & Tewksbury 2000b) – reactions which can include social ostracisation and verbal harassment (Barton 2000; Lewis 1998; Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Morrow 2012; Sweet & Tewksbury 2000b). Friends may be provided with stigmatising information (Lewis 1998), depending on the closeness of the relationship (Bradley 2007; Thompson and Harred 1992; Thompson et al 2003) and the dancers' self-identification with the occupation (Lewis 1998). Studies also indicate romantic partners are likely to receive the stigmatising information (Bowen & Daniels 2006; Bradley 2007; Forsyth and Deshotels 1998; Lewis 1998; Philaretou 2006). In regard to family members, research suggests they might not be provided access to the stigmatising information (Barton 20002; Bowen & Daniels 2006; Forsyth and Deshotels 1998; Lewis 1998; Murphy 2003; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003); however, one study suggested mothers are more likely to be confided in than fathers (Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003); while children are rarely informed (Barton 2000; Bowen & Daniels 2006; Morrow 2012; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003). The latter has been interpreted as indicating dancers internalise the stigma applied to them (Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003).

While the research indicates *who* can gain access to the side stage, there is little information about *why* dancers disclose (or obscure) their occupational identity to others at a particular point in the relationship. Factors vaguely implied by the previous studies mentioned above include relevancy, (emotional) closeness and concerns of potential harm/discomfort. However, these factors have not been explored or even directly stated but, rather, implied in these studies. Additionally, there is little information in regard to *when* dancers disclose their occupational identity.

Another question which remains unanswered in previous studies is *how* undesirables are prevented from learning a dancer's stigmatised identity. 'Undesirables' is a term I use to refer to those who a dancer explicitly does not wish to know her stigmatised identity. Goffman's (1968) theory on stigma offers some insights into how such people are prevented access to a dancer's stigmatised identity and, as such, the side stage. Goffman's theory suggests that as discreditable persons, individuals who have performed in the exotic dance industry are likely to manage information to keep undesirables on the 'front stage' – at least, until the relationship with the undesirable develops enough for the dancer to desire they traverse to the side stage. Some studies have offered insights into how information might be managed to maintain an individual's presence on the front stage. Theories on stigmatised identities (Goffman 1968) and dirty work (Kreiner, Ashforth & Sluss 2006) suggest stigmatised workers prevent individuals from entering the side stage by separating from their stigmatised identity. This can involve not associating with those who know of the stigmatised identity (Goffman 1968; Kreiner, Ashforth & Sluss 2006) – i.e., not associating with colleagues or customers in one's personal life. Separation from one's stigmatising identity can also involve describing one's occupational role with a stigma-obscuring title or one's occupational duties in a similar manner (Ashforth, Kreiner, Clark, and Fugate 2007).

Exotic dancers' separation from their stigmatised identity has been identified in a range of studies. Bowen and Daniels (2006), Morrow (2012), and Perrucci (1999) noted incidences in which exotic dancers avoided locations where customers might be present. Some dancers have also indicated they choose not to associate with colleagues outside of work (Grandy 2008; Lewis 1998; Maticka-Tyndale 2008; Rambo Ronai & Cross 1998; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003; Trautner & Collett 2010), thus suggesting 'avoidance' (or socially avoiding/separating from those who have knowledge of one's stigmatised identity) is a potential tactic utilised by exotic dancers in order to separate their social world. Other studies have noted some exotic dancers refer to themselves as 'entertainers', 'working in hospitality', or with other occupational-obscuring titles (Barton 2000; Barton 2002; Lewis 1998; Rambo Ronai 1993), which could be perceived as offering support for the

notion that exotic dancers might use 'obscuring' (obscuring one's stigmatised occupational role through misleading or unclear titles) to separate their social world and prevent undesirables from learning their stigmatised identity. A few studies have even indicated some dancers might directly use false titles (Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003) or avoid the topic (Forsyth and Deshotels 1998)**.** In sum, it is evident that some exotic dancers separate themselves from their stigmatised role both socially and verbally; however, it has not been examined if their purpose for doing so is to maintain a positive externally-defined identity.

An alternative strategy to 'separating from stigmatised identity' is the reverse - adhering to the stigmatised identity by primarily interacting with customers and co-workers, thus decreasing the amount of 'undesirable's' a stigmatised individual can encounter (Riley 2010).

Overall, the literature can be interpreted as suggesting exotic dancers manage external stigma through 'separation of social world' or 'side staging'. It has been implied that dancers make conscious decisions on who to disclose or obscure their stigmatised identity to. However, this has never been directly examined – a gap my research addresses. Additionally, though some of the reasons why individuals are invited onto (or prevented from accessing) the side stage have been implied by previous studies, this has also never been systematically examined, as they are in this study. Likewise, little has previously been suggested as to when individuals are allowed onto the side stage, which is a gap this research addresses. As to ways in which stigmatised individuals might prevent undesirables from encountering one's stigmatised identity, two methods (separation from stigmatised identity and embracing stigmatised identity) have previously been suggested; I will examine if either of these methods are used by the interviewees. By addressing these gaps, I will be exploring the nuances of one stigma management technique, separation of social world. By exploring these nuances, I will be presenting insights into one stigma management technique which is used by exotic dancers to manage external stigma, thereby maintaining a positive external identity and positive social interactions.

SECTION 2.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter explored the literature on exotic dancing and stigma, demonstrating the centrality of stigma to sociological studies on the exotic dance industry. Overall, this chapter has demonstrated the exotic dance industry is a highly stigmatised occupation, with the stigma being applied to the industry and those who perform within it. It has shown the stigma is likely to affect dancers in their professional and personal lives. The stigma affects their personal lives partially by influencing how others define them (their external identity) and their relationships. This study examines how exotic dancers manage the stigma in their personal lives to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interactions. It draws on Goffman's (1968, 1971) theories of stigma, identity, staging, impression management and separation of social world, as well as Jenkins (2016) theory of identification involving internally and externally-applied definitions of identity. It is anticipated that dancers will utilise 'separation of social world' as a stigma management technique to maintain positive social interactions and externally-defined identities. Through the research, information will be gained about who dancers are likely to reveal their stigmatised identity to, what factors contribute to their decision to disclose their stigmatised identities, and how they avoid disclosing their stigmatised identity if they do not wish for an individual to have access to it. The next chapter, 'Data Methods', explores the methods this study used.

CHAPTER 3 DATA METHODS

This chapter, 'Data Methods', explains the methodology and methods which were used in the study (Section 3.1), details the process which was undertaken (Section 3.2), and provides background information about the participants (Section 3.3). It demonstrates how the research question, 'How do exotic dancers manage the stigma which manifests in their personal life in order to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interactions?' was addressed. It also highlights (in Section 3.2) an additional contribution this research presents to sociological studies on the exotic dance industry, which is describing the industry/subculture through the voices of those studied. This helps to reduce misconceptions of the culture by enabling it to be presented through the eyes and voices of those who are socially marginalised instead of that of mainstream society.

SECTION 3.1 METHODS & METHODOLOGY

Both stigmatised workers in general and sex workers in particular have been noted as being concerned their occupation is misunderstood or misrepresented by the dominant population (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999; Ashforth, Kreiner, Clarke & Fugate 2007; Kreiner, Ashforth & Sluss 2006; Thompson, Harred, and Burks 2003). I personally encountered this concern when an experienced exotic dancer (with 20+ years of experience in the industry) informally mentioned to me that though she was interested in the study, she had chosen not participate in it as she felt all studies had the same aim – to prove dancers come from broken homes, are prostitutes, and so on. Potential participants in studies on sex workers and stigmatised workers appear to face similar reluctance, ultimately resulting in small sample groups of participants. Small sample groups are common in these kinds of studies - for example, Perucci's (1999) PhD dissertation on dancers' feelings of privacy, contained only five interview participants; Barton's (2002) dissertation involved only three participants. Studies which are less time-intensive than dissertations/theses also regularly display limited numbers. Bowen and

Daniels (2006) had two dancer interview participants, Philaretou (2006) had five, Murphy (2003) had ten, Wood (2000) had twelve, etc. The majority of articles reviewed for this study had less than thirty dancers, including a few famous ones (such as Thompson, Harred, & Burks 2003). Due to this reluctance to participate, studies on stigmatised workers (including sex workers) have often utilised a qualitative approach, as a qualitative approach maximises the information provided by a small sample, as well as providing the kind of detailed information required to address the research question.

This study applied the qualitative approach by utilising a combined autoethnographic and ethnographic method; this combination has been utilised previously by researchers with a background in the exotic dance industry (Egan 2003; Rambo Ronai & Ellis 1989). The autoethnography involved a self-interview, whose method is explained in 'Section 3.2'. The ethnography involved one-on-one semi-structured interviews with eligible participants.

Ethnography aims to learn about peoples' lives through being immersed in their culture (Minichiello, Sullivan, Greenwod, & Axford 2004) and presenting their lived experiences. As one who has previously participated in the exotic dance industry in Australia and, moreover, continues to have ties and contacts with clubs and contractors (strippers) in the country, I have already been immersed in and observed the culture, thus enabling me to contain some insider knowledge of the industry and to be perceived by those currently in the industry as a partial insider. Previous studies (Blix 2015; Court & Abbas 2013) have indicated that in ethnic communities, one is either an 'insider' or not. This cannot be said for the exotic dance industry. Whether one is an insider or outsider to the industry is a question of degree. A person could be an 'insider' due to regular visits to a club (such as a regular customer), strong quality and quantity of relationships with those contracting in clubs, working in a club as a staff member, or dancing in a club (Grandy 2008). The closer one is to dancing in a club, the more one is perceived as an insider. However, even among dancers, insider status is awarded in degrees, with those who are new to the industry being viewed as having less of an insider status than those who have been heavily active in the career. Many of the interviewees in this study acknowledged that separation, referring to the newer dancers as 'baby strippers' and the more experienced dancers as

simply ‘strippers’. As one whose career in the industry spanned approximately five years (with breaks), I was viewed as having a strong ‘insider’ status. This ‘insider’ status assisted me in gaining a footing into a closed occupational subculture and enabled me to be a respected part of the subculture community among those whom I interviewed, in the same manner that researchers before me had noted their insider status assisted them (Egan 2003; Finch 1983; Rambo Ronai 1999; Wesely 2016).

Interviews were the chosen qualitative method, as they could provide the desired depth of insight into dancers’ mental considerations. Alternatives such as surveys would be impractical given the reluctance of the sample group to participate and would not provide the flexibility necessary to follow up on the nuances in the information presented. Interviews also have the benefit of providing participants with more agency, as the nature of an interview allows for adjustments to be made in order to follow topic-related ideas, thoughts, and experiences to which the research subjects ascribe importance. The value of interviews in obtaining more depth of detail than other qualitative methods has long been acknowledged in sociology (Burgess 1984; Reinharz 1992), with the less structured interview approach being recommended for obtaining greater depth.

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews have been of great value to feminist researchers. Oakley (1981) and Finch (1983) argued that ‘feminist interviewers who wish to validate women’s subjective experiences as women and as people’ should not follow ‘textbook recipes for interviewing’ (Burgess 1984, p. 103-104), but, rather, should utilise semi-structured and informal interviews. This study therefore used semi-structured, informal interviews which followed a feminist approach.

A feminist approach was chosen as it offers benefits to studies on marginalised members of a society and adds alternative perspectives to the mainstream (‘malestream’) narrative of a patriarchal society (Beasley 1999; DeVault 1990; Ramazanglu & Holland 2002). As female workers of sex industries are often subjected to the mainstream/malestream narrative, studying these workers through a feminist approach limits the influence of the dominant narrative and provides new insights into the research question and argument. Liamputton (2007; cited in Lennon, Liampttong & Hoban 2014), in particular, recommends a feminist approach when considering a marginalised or stigmatised

population group, as both a feminist and qualitative approach "'allows' the researchers to hear the voices of vulnerable populations and 'enables' them to express feelings and experiences in their own words." It has additionally been theorised that any approach which provides a voice to stigmatised and marginalised populations has the sociological benefit of 'challenging and breaking down stereotypes and power/knowledge that create inequalities and discrimination' (Hannem & Bruckett 2012), thus empowering a stigmatised group whose lived experiences are often overlooked or 'talked over' by figures of power, such as academics and policy makers. In an attempt to address this oversight and add the voices of the marginalised into academic narrative, it is common for studies on female sex workers to utilise a feminist approach, including Barton (2000); Egan (2003); Egan (2005); Lennon, Liampttong and Hoban (2014); Liepe-Levinson (1998); and Rambo Ronai (1993).

A feminist approach to interviewing recommends the researcher be conscious of his/her position of power in both the overall study and the interview (McDowell 1997; Reinharz 1992; Rose 1997). My position contains power, which includes being from the dominant sexuality (heterosexual) and race (Caucasian) in Western culture, being educated, and being of a semi-comfortable economic background. Additionally, I may be positively biased regarding the exotic dance industry, as I possess a sex radical feminist stance and have experienced the industry as someone exposed to it by choice. Furthermore, I possess power through my dual roles of researcher and interviewer. As the conductor of the interviews, I have the ability to focus attention on or away from pathways in the conversation and, as a result, influence the type of information presented to me. As the researcher, I have the power to ultimately determine the relevancy of the information towards the study and, on the most basic level, the power to determine what the study is on. Having a stance on the matter studied is not disapproved of in either feminism or sociology, as it is suggested that subjectivity can be utilised in the pathway to 'truth' (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002) and that a researcher will always influence his/her surroundings in a study (Barton 2002; Egan 2005; Rambo Ronai 1992).

A feminist approach recommends studying a culture from the point of view of the culture and presenting it from that point of view. When studying a smaller culture from the perspective of a

dominant culture, it is simple to display the smaller culture through the dominant culture's viewpoints by word choice and general assumptions, implicitly suggesting the non-dominant culture is 'other', 'different', and potentially 'lesser' or subordinate (Ramazanglu and Holland 2002). It is the intention of this study to refer to the culture of exotic dancing through the perspective of those within the culture. Additionally, any potentially pejorative or misleading terminology is replaced by more neutral and accurate phrases to avoid subtle implications of a subordinate position (Liazos 1972).

SECTION 3.2 PROCESS

Once the methods were chosen, ethical clearance was applied for and obtained. The Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (SBREC) granted it on 24 August 2018 as research project number 8088 (see Appendix 1). Interview participants were then sought. Eligible participants were identified as females eighteen years or older who were current or former exotic dancers and located within Australia. These participants were sought through two methods – online advertisements and in-venue advertisements. Online advertisements occurred through the establishment of a social media ('Facebook') profile for research purposes. The social media profile advertised for research participants by using the study's flyer as the cover photo. Additionally, profiles with self-proclaimed dancers were 'friend-requested'. Each account which I 'friend-requested' through the research profile was of an exotic dancer with whom I had not had previous contact. Former exotic dance acquaintances did not receive friend-requests from the research profile so as to ensure they did not feel imposed upon; however, if a former acquaintance initiated contact by friend-requesting the research profile, the request was accepted. In sum, the research profile was used to initiate contact with people I did not know; any contact from former associates was initiated solely by the former associates.

In addition to advertising through the profile by using the flyer as a cover photo, I also sought participants by regularly re-posting the flyer onto the profile's newsfeed and posting that any

contacts/social media 'friends' who wished to share the flyer were welcome to do so. I also made a request to post the flyer onto two closed Facebook groups whose audience members contained Australian exotic dancers. Neither group's administrators responded with permission to post; however, I cannot discard the possibility that it was posted without a response.

The second method through which research participants were sought was through advertisements in exotic dance venues. Managers of Australian exotic dance venues were contacted with a request to place the study's flyer in their venue's dressing room and/or private online forum. Twenty-four exotic dance venues were contacted. Two responded with an acknowledgement that they would share the request with the relevant management parties; one responded with contact information for bookings and employment applications. No manager responded with an acknowledgement that the information was shared, though this does not preclude the possibility that the information was shared without an acknowledgement.

Nineteen individuals who met the research criteria expressed interest in participating, fifteen of whom were later interviewed. Most had former or current knowledge of me outside of the study. Some former dancers with whom I had previously worked approached me when they learnt of the study, identifying me from the profile picture and name. Similarly, some current dancers (including former contacts and their current colleagues) had gained knowledge of the study and approached me. It is uncertain which participants gained knowledge of the study through the social media profile and which had gained it through discussions with other dancers. Regardless, once interest was expressed, potential participants received an information sheet and consent form. If their interest remained, an interview meeting was established at a time and location of their choice.

Before the first ethnographic interview occurred, the autoethnographic interview was performed. The approach to this was I interviewed myself as a former dancer, using the 'systematic sociological introspection' method. This method was used by Rambo Ronai and Ellis (1998) in their study on exotic dancers' sales techniques and was further utilised by Lavin (2014). It involves reflecting on one's own mental considerations and emotional responses during one's immersive experience in order to

respond to an interview which can be partially or fully self-administered. I used this method while following the same procedure planned for the ethnographic interviews – I verbally interviewing myself with an audio recorder in a public/semi-private setting, using the semi-structured questions. Interviewing myself before other participants ensured my answers were not influenced by the answers I later obtained in other interviews; interviewing myself in the same manner reduced the possibility that any differences between the information I produced and the information others produced was due to the interview manner.

The ethnographic interviews occurred in a public location or on the phone. In each interview, the consent form and information sheet were reviewed, the consent form was signed, and consent was reaffirmed verbally at the start of the audio recording of the interview. An exception to this practice occurred in the phone interviews; in these, the consent form and information sheet were reviewed at the start of the interview and consent for the interview and audio recording was verbally provided without the inclusion of a written consent form, in accordance with SBREC's clearance requirement for phone interviews.

The interviews utilised the feminist reflexive method. This method focuses on openness and a willingness to share information in both directions (Lennon, Liampttong & Hoban 2014). To adhere to this method, all interviewees were clearly informed of the research purpose and the general focuses of the questions prior to the interview. Additionally, it was a regular occurrence in each interview for the participant and myself to share thoughts, perspectives, and memories related to their experiences. Reasons for specific questions and personal opinions were also proffered in accordance with the method; these were often proffered after the relevant question (or overall interview) to limit influencing the interviewee's answers.

A further concession was made in order to apply the feminist ideal of being aware of power in an attempt to distribute it more equally. Effort was undertaken throughout the interview to allow the conversation to flow similar to a social conversation in order to reduce the researcher's appearance

and application of power; this also encouraged disclosure of information through increased comfort and social pleasure (Burgess 1984, Reinharz 1992, Webb & Webb 1932).

The semi-structured interviews had planned questions (see Appendix 2) which were focused on different aspects of the research question. The planned questions provided a basic framework through which information could be gained. If the relevant information was gained without the introduction of a particular question, the question was skipped. Questions were also skipped when time considerations were relevant. The list of questions was regularly updated throughout the interview process, with questions being altered, removed, or added due to the insights gained in the interviews. After each interview was completed, it was transcribed in full.

The information in each interview was then coded. The information was first organised into categories and then coded for themes/patterns, following the methods of thematic coding described by Maguire and Delahunt (2017) and by Saldana (2016). The categories included 'background' information, 'professional' information (insights of their views on the professional aspects of the occupation), 'stigma' (information on how the stigma manifested and/or participants' views on why the occupational stigma exists), 'who' (information on who they chose to share their stigmatised identity with), 'when' (information on when they typically choose to share their stigmatised identity), 'why' (information on why dancers chose to reveal their stigmatised identity), 'how' (information on how dancers reduced the strength of the stigma when they shared their stigmatising identity), 'avoidance techniques' (information of how they avoided sharing their stigmatised identity with undesirables, if relevant), and 'other'. Information within each category was then separated into themes according to their underlying patterns. This information is presented in the following chapter and is often expressed or supported through quotes from the participants, using their words to describe their experiences and insights. Due to the size constraints of this thesis, most of the coded information was not explored in this study; instead, the focus of the study was narrowed to 'separation of social world'. To accommodate the narrowed focus, 'professional information', 'stigma', 'how', and 'other' were categories which were barely utilised.

I present my own experiences at the end of each stated finding. I primarily present them using quotes from my self-interview; however, there were certain situations in which my self-interview was not sufficient. To distinguish the self-quotes from these circumstances, the self-quotes are inserted in the same format as other interview quotes, whereas summaries and afterthoughts are directly stated to be such.

SECTION 3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The participants included one autoethnographic and fifteen ethnographic interviewees. Chart 3.1 indicates background information for each participant.

Each name in the left-hand column is a pseudonym. The first letter of the name indicates the order in which the individual was interviewed, with the first ethnographic interviewee assigned a name beginning with 'A' and the final interviewee assigned a name beginning with the fifteenth letter of the alphabet 'O'. I distinguish myself from the other interviewees by referring to myself as 'Me'. I reduced the provided information to fit into a chart format while attempting to retain as much of the original phrasing as possible. I also directly used the interviewees' own descriptions and phrases to describe their sexuality and relationship status in order to avoid misrepresentation.

As can be seen in the chart, the majority of the interviewed dancers were between 19-34 years, with most ranging in age between 22-30 years. Seven identified as heterosexual/straight, with an additional two identifying as primarily heterosexual or, in their words, 'straight-ish'. Two identified as bisexual, two as primarily homosexual (or, in their words, 'mostly gay'), one as homosexual, and one as pansexual. Eight were single at the time of the interview; the remaining seven's relationship status ranged from 'in a casual relationship' to 'in a committed polygamous/monogamous relationship'. Eleven had no children and four had child-rearing duties, including natural, adopted, and step-children. All had completed at least year 11, with six having a university-level education. This

Chart 3.1: Participant Background Information

Name (Psuedonym)	Current Age	Age of Onset of Dancing	Sexuality	Relationship Status	Number of Children	Highest Level of Education	Current or Former Dancer	Length of Time in the Industry	Number of Clubs Worked at	What Prompted the Career Move
Aleena	20	20	Straight-ish	Casual relationship	0	Studying a BA	Current	3-4 months	1	Curiosity/adventure
Brianna	27	18	Straight	Single	0	Year 12, some TAFE	Current	10 years, sporadic	6	Financial trouble
Cheryl	22	22	Bisexual	Committed, non-monogamous	0	Studying a BA	Current	7 months	1	Curiosity/Adventure, performance
Daisy	34	24	Straight	Single when dancing	0	Year 12, some TAFE	Former	4-4.5 years	6	Traumatic experience
Elisa	19	19	Straight	Single	0	Some Year 12, Cert II	Current	3 months	1	Curiosity/adventure
Franki	28	17	Straight	Married	0	B. Ed, currently studying law	Former	11 years, continuous	4-5	Financial trouble, performance
Gabrielle	22	21	Straight-ish	single	0	Some university, TAFE	Current	1 year as dancer 1.5 in industry	4	Curiosity/adventure
Hazel	28	18	Lesbian	Committed relationship	0	Year 11 & TAFE	Current	10 years, sporadic	2	Financial trouble
Ivy	22	20	Straight	Single	0	Studying a BA	Current	1-2 years	2	Curiosity, love of performance
Jessica	26	25	Pansexual	It' s complicated	2 (twins)	Year 12 & Cert IV	Current	1 year	1	Exhibitionism
Kelly	32	32	Bisexual	Engaged	1 (stepchild)	Double degree	Current	6 weeks as dancer, 6 years in industry	1 as dancer, 1 as waitress	Desire for independence
Lyssa	20	19	Straight	Single	0	(not discussed)	Current	2 years	6	Financial trouble
Mia	30	30	Mostly gay	In a relationship	1 (adopted)	Year 12, some university	Current	6 months as dancer, 11 yrs in industry	1 as dancer, 2 as manager	Needed a job
Natalie	32	18	Mostly gay	Single	0	Re-doing Year 12	Current	13 years	2-5	Party and money appealed to her
Olivia	29	19	Straight	Single	4	Year 12, some university	Current	10 years	3	Love of performance
Me	36	27	Straight	In a relationship when dancing	0	BA & MA	Former	5-6 years, sporadic	8-10	Curiosity/adventure, love of performance

includes two who obtained a Bachelor's degree. Additionally, six are earning or have earnt a TAFE certification. Their ultimate career goals ranged from 'uncertain' and 'career dancer' to 'detective', 'nurse', 'lawyer', 'strip club owner', and 'auctioneer'. Each individual who stated a career goal also stated a plan she was enacting to achieve the goal.

The age at onset of career ranged from 17 to 32. The shortest length someone had been dancing at the time of the interview was 6 weeks; the longest was 13 years. Six had danced for under a year, three had danced for 1-3 years, and six had danced for more than three years. Most had worked in one or two clubs, though some had worked in as many as six. Reasons for entering into the industry included curiosity, a significant need for money, a desire for the independence allowed through contract work, and an enjoyment of performing. Precursors included first-hand knowledge of the industry or people in the industry and the end of a romantic relationship.

As for myself, I was 36 at the time of my interview, single, and heterosexual. I have no children, a Bachelor's in psychology, and a Master's in Applied Linguistics. At the age of onset of dancing, I was approximately 27. I performed for 2-3 years, mostly continuously, and had occasional re-entrances in the occupation which totalled a career span of approximately 5-6 years. I already had my Bachelor's at the time I began performing in the industry and had achieved my Masters prior to my departure. I had considered cultivating exotic dancing as a long-term career option. I entered into it due to curiosity and remained due to an enjoyment of performing. I had no ties to the industry prior to my entrance nor was I experiencing financial hardship. Similar to other research participants, I experienced stigma both during my tenure in the industry and afterwards, which I handled through stigma management techniques. One particular technique which I and others commonly utilised, 'separation of social/personal world', is explored in depth in the next chapter. It was found in the interviews that even those who were content or proud of their involvement in the industry used this technique. Though stigma management techniques may also be used for internalised stigma, they are nevertheless required to manage external stigma due to its potential effects on their personal lives.

CHAPTER 4 MANAGING STIGMA ON THE SIDE STAGE

Participants indicated they had experienced occupationally-related stigma in at least one way, though several experienced it in a variety of ways. The most common ways included undesirable treatment by customers and management in their professional lives, the reactions of others to their occupational choice in their personal lives, and their personal concerns. Some interviewees also indicated they noticed the stigma in the legal and managerial practices towards the industry and the widespread acceptability of violence, abuse or charity. This chapter explores one strategy that interviewees used to manage the stigma in order to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interpersonal relationships. This strategy is 'separation of social/personal world'. Though the strategy is typically referred to as 'separation of social world', I view it as being more realistically described as 'separation of personal world' as an individual's personal world involves more than simply social contacts. As discussed in the second chapter, 'separation of social/personal world' is a stigma management strategy in which the stigmatised individual chooses with whom to share their stigmatised identity with. It has previously been supported that exotic dancers use this strategy, though it was suggested the strategy was used for managing internalised stigma. Previous studies did not directly examine the nuances of this strategy, including 'who', 'when', or 'why' individuals were allowed access to the stigmatising information or, alternatively phrased, the side stage.

Separation of personal world was utilised in some fashion by twelve (80%) of the interviewed dancers. Nine (60%) utilised 'separation of personal world' regularly, constantly making active decisions on who to share their occupational identity with and who not to; an additional three (20%) were willing to share their stigmatised identity with all but a specific group or person. The remaining three (20%) were willing to share their stigmatised identity with anyone.

The first section of this chapter examines with whom the participants shared their stigmatised identities, why, and when. The second section, 'Undesirables' explores the tactics interviewees use to prevent disclosure of their stigmatised identity.

SECTION 4.1 WHO, WHY, & WHEN

The interviews supported dancers separated their personal lives into at least three broad categories – practical/professional contacts, social contacts, and familial contacts. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, a practical contact is a person an individual has contact to receive a practical or professional service, such as mechanics, doctors, or babysitters. A professional contact is a person an individual has contact with in a professional capacity outside of the exotic dance industry, such as through another job. Social contacts are those who the dancer interacts with on a social basis; these can include strangers, acquaintances, friends, and significant others. A familial contact is anyone who is in the dancer's family. Information regarding which of these categories the interview participants were likely to share their stigmatised identity with, as well as when and why they were likely to share, is presented in each relevant subsection.

Subsection 4.1.1 Practical/Professional Contacts

Practical Contacts

Of the nine dancers who <u>regularly</u> exercised separation of personal world as a stigma management technique, seven stated they were unlikely to share their stigmatised identity with a practical contact unless the information was relevant; none of the three who <u>occasionally</u> separated their personal life were likely to withhold their stigmatised identity from a practical contact. Often, the reason given to withhold the information from a practical contact was 'lack of relevance.'

I wouldn't necessarily want to tell my doctor as I don't necessarily want him to judge me for it. If I injured myself, I'd give him the pertinent information, like if I was dancing and hurt myself doing a pole move, I'd share. If it had question relevance, I'd share. But I wouldn't necessarily want to tell them I'm stripping. They don't need to know. It's irrelevant information.

(Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

Um, my mechanic, I guess, doesn't need to know.

If there was a reason for him to know, would you tell him?

'Well, if he needed to know, yeah!' … if it becomes important, then, obviously…

And when does it become important?

When it interferes with my health or my ability to live a stable, comfortable life.

You mean, the person not knowing would interfere?

Yeah. Like, if I were having problems getting my bond back and I had to go to Housing SA and they needed my income and payrate, then, obviously, I'd tell them. But if I were going to rent a house, my renter wouldn't need to know… they wouldn't need it. It's just dependent on if it's actually going to be an issue or not.

(Aleena, current dancer, 3-4 months of experience)

When a situation arose in which it was relevant to share an aspect of the occupation with a practical contact, many stated they would share the information which was relevant. Examples given were that a taxi driver would be given the work address one wished to go to, a doctor would be provided with the information of how the injury occurred, a babysitter would be provided with the information that the individual worked nights, and a landlord would be provided with information

about one's typical earnings. It was additionally stated that a babysitter was likely to be given the information eventually, if he/she started to gain a social footing in addition to their practical one.

My self-interview confirmed this tendency. I stated that I would tell doctors, as I would need the doctor to know who to fill out the medical leave note to – i.e., it was relevant. I also suggested I would be more hesitant to tell other practical contacts, as I did not want to utilise time or energy handling poor reactions.

> Practical contacts. Makeup technician, mechanic, doctor. If they asked what you did, do you tell those people? If it came up in conversation?
>
> Make up, I might. Especially if it's false eyelashes …. I might. It's relevant. … Cab drivers, I used to share. One of them was really annoying, so I think I stopped for a bit. ... And, I think, I didn't feel the same with cab drivers after that. Like, why tell them? They might try to save me. They might try to flirt with me. They might try to hit on me. I don't want to deal with that. … Doctor? Yes. Because if I was seeing a doctor, it was to get a medical note so I wouldn't be fined for not working when I was sick. So, the doctor had to know what I did for an occupation to know who to address it to.
>
> So, it sounds like you mostly chose based on relevancy?
>
> Yeah, pretty much.
>
> (Me, former dancer, 5-6 years of experience)

Professional Contacts

If a contact had access to a dancer or her partner in another occupational role, the dancer was cautious in disclosing her stigmatised identity, current or former, unless enough quality interactions had occurred for the person to be perceived as lying primarily in the dancer's social circle. Two of the interview participants were exceptions to this. One had chosen to mention her stigmatised

occupation in a job interview as she assessed the work environment as ‘super-chill’ and ‘didn’t care’ if she was hired, as her primary interest in the job was sociability instead of income generation. The other exception was the reverse – one interview participant stated she would never reveal her stigmatised identity to those whom she or her partner interact with professionally.

> Honestly, I wouldn’t tell if we were at a corporate function or whatever. I wouldn’t tell. Or John’s work colleagues or whatever. I wouldn’t tell.
>
> So, people who might affect your partner?
>
> Yep, exactly. Yep, people who affect him and the way that would perceive him and, yep, people who would affect our lives. I wouldn’t even chance it. Even if I think they’re a good person and have a connection. I wouldn’t want him to be affected by my decision to do this.
>
> (Kelly, current dancer, 6 weeks of experience as a dancer and 6 years of experience in the industry)

The reason attributed to the decision to avoid disclosure was potential harm, with concerns that it would affect future/ongoing employment and standing in a professional community. I can affirm this. As a former dancer, I have often shared my former stigmatised identity with friends and romantic partners; however, I only shared the information with one social contact who knew me through another occupation. I would not share the stigmatising identity with anyone who knew me through an alternative professional capacity unless I had developed a strong and trusting social relationship with that person.

Subsection 4.1.2 Social Contacts

The general guideline for social contacts appeared to be that a person was more likely to be aware of a dancer's stigmatised identity the closer that person's relationship with the dancer was.

Strangers, Acquaintances, & Friends

'Strangers' were an occasional exception to the guideline stated above. Two interviewed dancers indicated they were more likely to tell a stranger than an acquaintance, as it 'doesn't matter' what a stranger thinks.

> I wouldn't tell anyone unless I feel like they're going to be part of my life in the long-term. Or if they're going to be so fleetingly in my life that it doesn't matter.
>
> (Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

> There have been times I've been in town, spoken to people, and been like 'Yeah, I'm a stripper.' Cause they're these complete strangers that I'm never going to see again.
>
> (Aleena, current dancer, 3-4 months experience)

I had thought this was separate to my own point of view, but when I reviewed my self-interview, I discovered a similar concept.

> In that situation, I wouldn't be likely to ever meet them again. It might not matter. [So, I might tell them.]
>
> (Me, former dancer, 5-6 years of experience)

The primary reason given for sharing the stigmatising information with anyone of an acquaintance level or higher was not closeness (though this could be inferred), but, rather, 'not being ashamed' and 'not wanting to hide' from someone. The consensus was that the closer a social contact was to the interviewee, the more likely the topic was to arise in conversation and the more the interviewee wanted that contact to be privy to a wide range of information about herself, including her occupation. Most of the interviewed dancers explained that if a closer social contact (e.g. friend or romantic partner) did not look well upon the occupation or a person performing the occupation, then this resulted in a beneficial self-selection – i.e., self-initiated removal of people with qualities (such as close-mindedness) which the dancer did not want to have in her life.

> If you were making a new friend … How long would it take you to tell them?
>
> Uh… until I knew they weren't going to run. Again, I'm pretty liberal. It's something about me. It's like 'yeah, this is what I do for a living and, if you can't handle that, I don't necessarily want you in my life.'
>
> (Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

Additional considerations appeared to be used for lower level contacts, such as acquaintances. In a situation with an acquaintance or a low-level friend, the interviewed dancers often considered the quality of interactions with the person. If the dancers had a decent quality of interaction with a social contact and intuited a 'good vibe/feel/read', they were also likely to tell the person.

> There is no real timeframe [for disclosing]. … I try to go with my gut feelings.
>
> (Kelly, current dancer, 6 weeks of experience as a dancer and 6 years of experience in the industry)

A general inclination towards liberal attitudes or acceptance increased the likelihood of disclosure. Alternatively, poor quality interactions, bad vibes, older age, conservativism and/or strong religious faith generally prompted a dancer to not be forthcoming in disclosure.

So, what makes you decide to tell someone?

If they seem to have similar political feminist views. Whereas if they're going on a homophobic rant, I'm going to steer clear, cause obviously they're not very open-minded.

(Gabrielle, current dancer, 1 year of experience as a dancer and 1.5 years of experience in the industry)

So, what makes you decide to tell someone versus what makes you decide to hold back?

Relevancy … what they're going to think of me. It does play through my head.

How do you think they're going to think badly of you? How do you read them that way?

Well, for example, it's going to sound so biased, but, my ex-boyfriend had very, very Christian parents…

(Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

I've only told about two of my close friends. The rest, I'm not sure what their reaction would be. So I just kept that under in case. Like, as much as I'd like to tell my friends things, these ones might be a bit judgmental.

(Elisa, 3-4 months of experience)

The interviewed dancers indicated they did not view their occupation as their most important personal characteristic or identifying feature, and, as such, were not always certain if they shared information with an acquaintance as it simply may not have arisen in a conversation. This is in direct contrast to documented societal attitudes which perceive the stigma to be so pervasive as to be a dancer's 'master status' or primary identifying feature (Adler & Adler 2006; Ashforth & Kreiner 1999; Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008)

> How do you decide which friends to tell and which not to tell?
>
> Um, pretty much, if I remember to tell them. Like, I'm actually pretty sure ALL my friends know what I do. Because it's not something I want to hide. … I'm proud of what I do.
>
> (Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

In sum, any social contact on the scale from 'acquaintance' to 'close friend' may or may not have had the information disclosed to them, with the higher the person was on the spectrum of closeness, the more likely the person was to have received the information. Additional reasons for disclosure (after closeness) included quality interactions ('good vibe/read') and liberal traits. Reasons for non-disclosure included lack of closeness, first and foremost, followed by bad vibes, conservative tendencies [of the contact], and a failure of the topic to arise in conversation. Further reasons to omit disclosure included a lack of regular and/or quality contact.

For myself, I found that telling a person typically involved a process. When information related to the occupation arose in a conversation, I often shared the relevant information without directly stating the occupation. Eventually, when enough relevant bits were shared, the conversation would invariably include the occupation. Essentially, I would reveal my occupation to a social contact slowly. My reasons for disclosure would be relevancy and closeness – if the occupation itself was relevant to the conversation and/or if the contact was in my life for enough quality and duration that he/she could be deemed more than a passing acquaintance.

When would you tell someone in general?

When you're avoiding it ... When it begins to feel like you're hiding it and it's not simply something that hasn't come up. I wouldn't hide it. I wouldn't bring it up if I wanted to discuss another topic. But, sooner or later, you bring up enough things around it. You say you work night shift, you say you work in a bar. Maybe you say you wear make-up or heels [at work]. Sooner or later, you just say it. And I find they've had enough prep that … (laughs) well, they're still shocked. But they're probably less shocked than if you said it at the first go.

(Me, former dancer, 5-6 years of experience)

As indicated, one reason I would not disclose was if I was interested in the present topic of conversation and did not wish to change it by introducing the information. Other reasons I was reluctant to share the information with acquaintances and budding friendships were my concerns about how they would react, how it would bias their perception, and how much time would be consumed addressing the bias. This was expressed in my quote about the process I would undergo when telling someone – that it often resulted in weeks of questions regarding how accurately their preconceptions about exotic dancers fit me.

So, most people you tell, they have this idea of who you are. And they have this idea of what a stripper is. And the two (laughs) Do. NOT. Connect. Imagine a Venn diagram with no overlapping circles. And so they try to bring the circles together. So, after you tell them - the next couple of weeks, maybe months, you get questions like 'Oh, so what do you do when your manager pressures you to have sex with a customer?' Or 'Do you ever get tired flirting with the customers?' If they've gotten to know you, they ask questions like, 'Do the other girls judge you for not using drugs?' They still have the

> stereotypes [even after getting to know you]. Trust me, those aren't true. … But, anyway, they'd ask you these questions. They'd try to figure out what was inaccurate – was it their stereotypes about strippers or their idea of you? And I find that the earlier you tell them, the more they question their idea of you. So, in the beginning, if they have a *small* knowledge of what they think of you and a *large* knowledge of what they think a stripper is, they'll base their questions on that. Like, 'how *often* do you have sex for money' would be the question, whereas, if they know you a bit more, they'll say 'How do you respond when people *expect* you to have sex for money?' So, there's still the stereotypes, but, the more they know you, the less likely they are to base their questions on what they think a stripper is. So, you go through that process and you deal with their preconceived notions.
>
> (Me, former dancer, 5-6 years of experience)

Though none of the interviewed dancers experienced a similar process of questioning, they did affirm a typical reaction upon disclosure involved time-consuming questions. One dancer disclosed the information to strangers and acquaintances depending on her mood – i.e., depending on if she wanted to answer an endless array of questions.

> You know, sometimes, I'll be in a supermarket and someone will be like 'What do you do for work?' and I can't be fucked, so I'll be like 'I'm a bartender.' And sometimes I'll be at a hairdressers, getting my hair done, getting my make up done, and someone will be like 'What do you do for work?' and I'll be like 'I'm a stripper.' I'll admit, it all depends on my mood. It all depends on if I want to sit there and answer 25 questions about being a stripper. And, sometimes, people will be like 'What do you do?' and 'Oh, I'm a bartender.' 'Oh, do you enjoy it?' 'Yeah, I do.' That's the end of the conversation. I say to someone 'I'm a stripper' and it goes 'Do you enjoy it? How long have you been doing

it for? Where do you work? How did you get into it? Have you been doing it long?' Like, it just goes on from there and there. 'What dramas have you had?' By then, you're just like 'Can you just cut my hair, please? Please! Just cut my hair!'

(Lyssa, current dancer, 2 years of experience)

It would appear one reason not to disclose the stigmatised identity to practical contacts, strangers, and acquaintances might be lack of desire to utilise one's patience and time. Another reason was to avoid judgment by those who do not know one well.

I don't like to tell people, sort of, straight off-the-bat. … I don't actually like lying to people. I like to be honest. But sometimes it's easier to lie. If you're only going to see them once. You might get a fairly harsh response.

(Gabrielle, current dancer, 1 year of experience as a dancer and 1.5 years of experience in the industry)

Romantic & Sexual Partners

Romantic and sexual partners followed a similar scale to other social contacts. If the individual was not well-known (i.e., a romantic 'acquaintance', such as one on a first date or two), he or she might not be told until further closeness developed. The interviews had not often addressed sexual partners separately from romantic partners; however, two of the interviewed dancers initiated the topic by stating they were likely to tell short-term sexual partners as this tended to increase the partner's interest.

It helped with hooking up, since everyone has a bucket list. 'I slept with a stripper.'

(Daisy, former dancer, 4-4.5 years of experience)

Similar to other social contacts, all ‘close’ romantic partners and sexual partners were told of the dancer’s stigmatised identity and allowed onto the side stage. The timeframe non-close partners were told depended on the participants’ individual tendencies. The majority (9 out of 15) preferred to share before the first date, others implied they preferred to wait until it appeared a connection might be developing. Only one indicated she would wait more than three dates.

For myself, I had indicated in my self-interview that all romantic contacts during my primary tenure in the exotic dance industry were already aware of my stigmatised occupation before the first date. When I briefly re-entered into the industry years later, I typically told a potential romantic partner within the first few dates.

> Ideally, I’d like to tell someone in the beginning, because I don’t want to feel like I’m hiding something. And it does sort of feel like you’re hiding something in the beginning. But you do skirt around it, it is a question they ask. I wish I could tell them immediately, but it would change how they perceived me. … Once I thought it was a relationship or that the few dates might turn into a relationship? Yeah, told them.
>
> (Me, former dancer, 5-6 years of experience)

Subsection 4.1.3: Familial Contacts

‘Familial contacts’ was a category treated with more caution than social contacts. As was stated in an interview with Gabrielle, ‘you love your family, but you don’t choose them’. Whereas the interviewed dancers often did not want to remain close to social contacts who disapproved of the occupation, they did want to remain close to family members who disapproved of the occupation. Nearly half (6 of the 15) of the interviewed dancers were concerned that though they personally

believed the occupation was an ethically acceptable, skilled career choice, some of their family members would hold different beliefs.

> [M]y mum is a lot older than me. So, she has very different views of what the industry is and she's less open-minded about the sex industry as a whole.
>
> (Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

Overall, five of the interviewed dancers had told none or a limited amount of their close family, one had told an equal proportion, and nine had told the majority or all of their close family. I had told the majority of my close family by the time I left the occupation, having only purposefully excluded a religious sibling from the knowledge. I specify 'close family' as many of the interviewed dancers had indicated puzzlement at being asked about extended or estranged family members. The considerations for disclosure were different for 'adult familial contacts' and 'underage familial contacts'.

Adult Familial Contacts

The main reason not to tell adult family members was concern of judgment, disappointment, or discomfort.

> So, is it more that you're, um, trying to protect their comfort or that you don't want them to judge?
>
> For family, it's a bit of both. I don't want to lose my [highly religious] family just because they disapprove. But I also don't want them to disapprove because I don't want them to be upset. …My [minister] dad would be upset and disappointed, as 100%, it's because I'm his little girl. And I wouldn't want to hurt him.
>
> (Later)

I don't think it'd be the worst thing if they found out.

Your family or other people?

Other people. No, no. I don't want to get disowned. I'm cool, like… having a family.

(Aleena, current dancer, 3-4 months of experience)

My dad is old. I just don't want to break his heart, I guess.

Do you think it would?

I think it would upset him, yeah. A lot. Because it was always just me and him. I was always his little girl. And, now…

Are you the only girl?

I'm not anymore. My baby sister is one. But until she come [sic] along, I was, yeah. And I had an older sister, as well, but she passed away. And that was Dad's first daughter. So I think it was a little [like I] want to impress him, make him happy, make him proud. And I don't think I'll do that, being a stripper.

(Lyssa, current dancer, 2 years of experience)

Why wouldn't you want to tell your parents?

It would just worry my mother. … She's got a very negative idea of what stripping is and what strip clubs are. She thinks there's a lot of drugs and she thinks it's basically a prostitution ring. That's what her idea is.

So, she thinks it's like a slippery slope of bad things?

Yes. And she thinks I'm a bartender and even that she's uncomfortable with, as she thinks I'm around unsavoury people. And she thinks all strippers are forced into what they're doing. She thinks none of them are there against their- from their own decisions. She thinks they've all been forced into doing it.

Forced by, like… desperation… or?

> Yeah, desperation. Men. Society. Yeah, she's got a very negative idea about it. And I wouldn't want her to worry about me more than anything.
>
> (Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

An additional reason to avoid disclosure of one's occupational identity to certain family members was 'strategic separation of personal world' – i.e., there were some family members the dancer did not want to inform, so she chose not to tell other members who might be put in the uncomfortable position of being asked to keep a secret.

> I tell him [my brother] a lot of secrets and I know he can keep his trap shut but I don't want to put him in a situation where he has to cover for me. I've done that to him before and he's good about it, but there's some things- I don't want to make people, you know, uncomfortable. With things they're not comfortable with. Because, you know, I want people to be respectful of me and I also want to be respectful of other people.
>
> (Aleena, current dancer, 3-4 months of experience)

A final reason not to share was being directly asked not to share – one dancer was requested by her father not to disclose her occupation with his side of the family.

It appeared dancers' concerns of disappointment might be valid. Many of the interviews indicated that when dancers disclosed their occupations to their family members, 'negative' (undesirable from the perspective of the interview participant) reactions were common; 'positive' reactions of support were mentioned, but rarer. The interviewed dancers who were reluctant to share were more likely to encounter negative reactions than those who had assessed the situation as acceptable to share immediately.

The BIG issue is my parents. I was still living at home when I first started. So, basically, because of my situation, because I was bartending and just switched over, I didn't tell them. I had been planning to tell them, but it didn't seem the right time. So, it had been about 2 months, maybe, into me dancing, they started to get a bit suspicious. I stopped talking about the bar, I stopped going in my uniform. One night I came home, they asked me, I didn't want to lie. It started this whole, couple of months' thing. Massive arguments. They were okay with it, not okay with it, okay with it, mostly not okay with it. I quit for a month with it for them, but I was very unhappy with that. I felt like my time with it wasn't over. ... I just felt like quitting for someone else and not for me wasn't the best thing to do. I know it's hard for parents. They don't want to picture their little girl like that.

So many people have mentioned that parents can't picture their little girl doing that or can't handle it. Why do you think that is?

I think because, for me, in particular, my parents don't know much about my sex life. That's quite normal, I think. ... But, when you work in the sex industry, 'you' and 'sexiness' kind of come into a job, which is something you usually talk about with your parents – as in, the job side, you usually talk about, but not the sex side. So when it comes into one, it's just a bit more daunting. I think, for me, my dad … just pictured me as his little girl. Not like I was my own kind of sexual being. That was sort of coming through as the stripper. ... I don't know where I was going with that.

Oh, that was because I asked why you thought parents couldn't accept it. But, before that, you were saying how there were issues when your parents found out, how they were sort of supportive, then not, then sort of-

Yeah, my dad kept making up different excuses. He said, because I suffer from depression and anxiety, 'Oh, well, maybe if you weren't on your anti-depressants, maybe I could support it.' Trying to say that because I was depressed, I wasn't thinking

clearly and shouldn't be doing this. Telling me I needed to quit and then, maybe, in 6 months, I can start again. Just stupid excuses like that. … It was hard. We had lots of arguments and lots of talks. … Oh, another thing – I was getting compared a lot, my dad was comparing me to a meth addict. ... And a drug dealer and stuff like that. I was saying to him that what I was doing was not illegal. And he was saying that it was basically immoral.

How is it like now?

The relationship has gotten better now ... I understand the issue the whole time was them wanting to protect me, worrying about me. While also, you know, not letting me do what I wanted with my body.

(Gabrielle, current dancer, 1 year of experience)

In Gabrielle's situation, as with many of the interviewed dancers who were reluctant to share their occupation with their parents, negative reactions did occur.

Newer dancers were more likely to withhold their occupational identity from family than long-term dancers. Three of the seven participants (nearly half) who had danced for less than two years had told the majority of their adult-aged familial contacts, in contrast to seven of the eight (nearly all) participants who had danced for more than two years.

Underage Familial Contacts

Underage family members, including siblings and children, were rarely told. The reasons given were the children's lack of ability to comprehend, lack of ability to keep a secret, and the hassles telling them would pose.

[M]y sister, who's 11, she's not old enough to comprehend what that means. And I don't want her to have a skewed image of me. And because her image of the world is so strongly based on what my mother says, I don't want her to have a skewed image of me based on what she's heard my mother say.

(Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

He's too… he won't get it. He's too young.

What about it do you think he won't understand?

The whole, like, everything. The concept of it.

The concept of people paying you to take clothes off?

The fact that I tell him he can't go out into public naked, but Mummy has. It's quite contradicting. He'll want to be out there, naked. … It's, yeah. He'll probably want to come. I like to make it sound boring. 'Mum's got to go to work.'

(Natalie, current dancer, 13 years of experience)

They're only 8. They're too young. When they're 12 or 13 – probably 12 – I'll start to introduce it. When they head to their end of primary school.

What [about the job] do you think they're too young to understand?

Well, for starters, they can't keep a secret for shit. Um, I don't know. It's just I think that exposing them to that sort of lifestyle at this age is too much for their brains. I don't want them to be too curious. They ask 400 questions about anything I do, anyway.

(Jessica, current dancer, 1 year of experience)

All the interview participants who have children indicated they planned to tell their children someday.

Do you plan to tell them about it?

Yeah, when they're old enough to be know, I plan to be open about it. I plan to be open to them about everything. There's no point in lying. I don't want them to be, like, 26 and be like 'You've been lying to me my whole life'. ... I don't want that for my kids. I want to have a good relationship with them and have them feel they can come to me.

(Jessica, current dancer, 1 year of experience)

All of the childless interviewees also indicated they would tell children if they had any.

My biggest thing is my [future] kids. I don't want to ever lie to my kids. Like, when they're adults. I wonder, when I'll tell them, if they'll think of me differently.

(Aleena, current dancer, 3-4 months of experience)

Hypothetical children, would you tell them?

Yep. … I want them to know when they can understand, because I want them to understand everything.

(Ivy, current dancer, 2 years of experience)

If I had children, I'd tell them. I'd be proud of it.

When would you tell them?

When they ask the question.

What question would that be, exactly?

'What are these pictures, Mummy?' You know? I'm not going to hide anything from them.

(Franki, current dancer, 11 years of experience)

Most indicated they would tell the child from an age between 12 and 18, though some indicated they would be willing to tell the child as soon as he/she was old enough to 'ask' or 'figure it out'. Reasons to tell were the desire to be honest, to have the children 'know' their mother, and to not lie. This universal willingness of the interviewed dancers to share the stigmatised occupation with children when they became of a certain age or cognitive awareness is in direct contradiction to a previous study, which had interpreted the lack of willingness to tell an underage child to be an indication of 'internalised stigma' (Thompson, Harred & Burks, 2003). This study suggests an avoidance of sharing is not related to internalised stigma; instead, an avoidance of sharing with children is due to concerns about their age, ability to comprehend, and ability to critically analyse the societally-applied stigma. In general, avoidance of sharing appears to be a reluctance to handle the negative effects of the stigma with those who 'don't matter' or simply 'can't understand.'

Overall, the factors which affected if a dancer was willing to share her occupational identity included relevancy (among practical contacts), closeness (among social and familial contacts), and concern of potential harm (across all three categories of contacts). 'Concern of potential harm' included expenditure of time and emotional energy, the handling of poor reactions, and concerns of discrimination or ostracism.

SECTION 4.2 UNDESIRABLES

In addition to understanding who dancers allowed onto the side stage and what factors would affect the decision to allow someone onto the side stage, the interviews also offered insights into how dancers prevent 'undesirables' from entering the side stage. One method was 'strategic separation of personal world', as previously mentioned. The five dancers who utilised this method would purposefully avoid sharing their stigmatised occupation with those who had contact with the individuals with whom they did not want their occupational identity shared. Another method utilised by eight dancers was obscuring – a method which allowed the participants to separate from their

stigmatised identity (a tactic suggested by Goffman 1968 and Kreiner, Ashforth and Sluss 2006) by using titles in which the occupational role was obscured and/or avoided. Most who utilised this method chose not to present untruths; instead, they would present truthful statements which did not clearly reveal their occupation

> I say I work in hospitality.
>
> (Hazel, current dancer, 10 years of experience)

> I just say I work in a club.
>
> (Elisa, current dancer, 3 months of experience)

> Oh, I just tell them I work at a pizza bar and I'm at uni. I'm not lying. I'm omitting, I guess.
>
> (Aleena, current dancer, 3-4 months of experience)

> I do one of those little, like, cheeky not-lyings where I'm like 'Yeah, I work in a strip club' and I just neglect to say what job I do there. And then they can interpret it based on what they want to think.
>
> (Cheryl, current dancer, 7 months of experience)

For myself, I did something similar:

> If I didn't tell them, I'd probably say 'Eh, I work in a bar in town.' If they ask where, I'd say 'Nowhere special.' I wouldn't actually hide it, but I would use a tone that implied it's not important. I might not actually tell them, if they said 'where', specifically. I might tell them the street.'

(Me, former dancer, 5-6 years of experience)

As indicated in my self-interview, some utilised additional techniques of subterfuge by misdirecting when asked for further information ('Which bar?'/'In the city') or using a tone which would indicate it was boring.

'Obscuring' was often utilised among contacts whom the dancer did not have a strong connection with; when this technique was utilised with someone the interviewed dancer actively did not want to have knowledge of her occupation, such as a family member, untruthful statements were more likely to be reverted to. The most common untruthful description was 'bartender', a term that was used by four participants.

A small number of dancers (three) indicated they would also avoid situations in which someone on the 'side stage' (i.e., someone who knew their stigmatised identity, such as a customer or co-worker) interacted with someone on the 'front stage'. However, those who stated they would avoid a person on the side stage when with someone on the front stage often indicated the reason was not to avoid sharing their stigmatised identity, but, rather, they did not wish to spend their personal time performing conversational duties with customers. The remainder expressed a lack of concern about potentially encountering the situation, as co-workers and other members on the side stage typically understood and respected the desire to withhold information. This provides mixed support for avoidance, or social separation from stigmatised role. Though a few dancers did exhibit social separation from stigmatised role, they did not appear to do it to maintain separation of social world, but, rather, to avoid performing occupational duties in their personal time. None of the interviewed dancers indicated they avoid social encounters or relationships with their colleagues, further discrediting the use of social separation from stigmatised role or 'avoidance'.

One additional method was utilised by an interviewed ex-dancer – physical separation of social world. She lived in one city; danced in another. She was willing to allow anyone in the city she

danced in to know her stigmatised identity; she was rather conservative on who she would share her stigmatised identity with in her home city.

SECTION 4.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Though 'separation of social/personal world' was well-supported as a stigma management technique, not all of the interview participants utilised it. Of the participants, 9 out of 15 regularly used this technique and an additional three used this technique with a select group of people. Three did not separate their personal life at all, but shared the information with all relatively close social and familial contacts, as well as with any practical contact, stranger, or acquaintance who asked.

It would appear 'separation of personal world' is a common stigma management technique for reducing stigma by preventing 'undesirables' from knowing of the stigmatised identity. In this technique, individuals chose who to share their stigmatised identity with (who to allow onto the side stage) and who to avoid sharing it with (who to prevent from allowing onto the side stage). Those who regularly used this strategy separated their personal life into three areas – practical/professional contacts, social contacts, and familial contacts. Practical contacts were often told if relevant, professional contacts were rarely told, social contacts were told based on closeness and comfort, and familial contacts were told if it was believed acceptance was likely or if one believed one intended to be in the occupation for a significant length of time. Reasons to disclose involved closeness and comfort; reasons not to disclose involved risk assessment (an assessment of potential harm), a lack of closeness, fear of judgment/poor reactions, and a lack of patience/time to handle poor reactions. Strategies to avoid disclosure involved strategic separation of personal world and separation from stigmatised identity through obscuring (verbal separation from stigmatised identity). Avoidance (social separation from stigmatised identity) was not supported as a strategy to avoid disclosure**.** These findings are consistent with that which was implied in previous studies, offering support to Goffman's theories on stigma, staging, and 'separation of social world'. The three participants who did

not utilise ‘separation of personal world’ offer support for Goffman’s theories on stigma management in relation to discreditable and discredited persons, for he suggested some discreditable persons will voluntarily be discredited, choosing to manage reactions instead of information.

The interviewees’ use of ‘separation of personal world’ as a stigma management technique to maintain a positive external identity and positive interactions supports the argument that exotic dancers use stigma management techniques for externally-applied stigma, in order to maintain a positive external identity and positive social interactions. Though stigma management techniques may also be used for internalised stigma, they are nevertheless required to manage external stigma due to its potential effects on their personal lives. All the interviewees indicated the primary considerations when choosing with whom to reveal their stigmatised identity were based on external pragmatic and practical factors instead of internalised shame.

CHAPTER 5 MAINTAINING A POSITIVE EXTERNAL IDENTITY

The exotic dance industry, which markets highly sexualised dances for purchase, receives a significant amount of stigmatisation (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999). Those who perform in the exotic dance industry experience this stigma not just in their professional lives, but also in their personal lives. It manifests in several ways, including concern (Hubbard & Colossi 2013, Hubbard & Colossi 2015), undesirable reactions (Goffman 1968; Hannem & Bruckert 2012), and stereotypes (Biernat & Dovidio 2000). This thesis argues exotic dancers use stigma management techniques for externally-applied stigma, in order to maintain a positive external identity and positive social interactions. Though stigma management techniques may also be used for internalised stigma, they are nevertheless required to manage external stigma due to its potential effects on their personal lives.

Previous studies have examined how those performing in the exotic dance industry have negotiated stigma to maintain a positive internal identity (Grandy 2008; Rambo Ronai & Cross 1998; Thompson, Harred & Burkes 2003), but none have examined how they maintained a positive external identity. Likewise, some studies have previously considered how exotic dancers maintain positive interactions/relationships (Bradley 2007; Murphy 2003; Philaretou 2006), but none have examined the strategies in a systematic fashion. This study addressed those gaps, asking the main research question of 'How do exotic dancers manage the stigma which manifests in their personal life in order to maintain a positive externally-defined identity and positive interactions?'

The research drew on Goffman's (1968, 1971) theories of stigma, social identity, impression management, and staging; as well as Jenkins's (2016), Murphy's (2003) and Wosick-Correa and Joseph's (2008) extensions of those theories. The literature was interpreted as indicating that one method through which those in the exotic dance industry manage externally-applied stigma would be 'separation of social [personal] world' or 'side staging'. This idea suggests that people separate their social world into three stages – a front stage, a side stage, and a back stage. Those on the front stage

are only intended to have access to the impressions an individual wishes to provide, such as that he/she does not have a character blemish or stigma (as perceived by others). Those on the side stage have access to some personal/stigmatising information of the individual while still experiencing impression management. Those on the back stage have full access to information about the stigmatised individual and are willing to help maintain whatever impressions he/she wishes to present. This thesis focused on the side stage, addressing who was allowed onto the side stage, when/why those individuals were allowed, and how some people (undesirables) were prevented from entering the side stage. Exploring these nuances furthers knowledge of 'separation of social world' as a stigma management technique and supports the argument that exotic dancers use stigma management techniques for externally-applied stigma, in order to maintain a positive external identity and positive social interactions. Though stigma management techniques may also be used for internalised stigma, they are nevertheless required to manage external stigma due to its potential effects on their personal lives.

While previous studies have often overlooked questions regarding 'separation of personal world', they did offer insights into aspects of this strategy. For example, it was anticipated that dancers would be unlikely to allow practical/professional contacts, strangers, or acquaintances onto the side stage (Barton 2000; Barton 2002; Lewis 1998; Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Morrow 2012; Perrucci 1999; Sweet & Tewksbury 2000b), but likely to allow friends and romantic partners (Bowen & Daniels 2006, Bradley 2007, Forsyth and Deshotels 1998, Lewis 1998, Philaretou 2006, Thompson & Harred 1992, Thompson et al 2003). Previous studies also implied dancers were unlikely to allow family members onto the side stage (Barton 20002; Bowen & Daniels 2006; Forsyth and Deshotels 1998; Lewis 1998; Murphy 2003; Thompson, Harred & Burks 2003). However, no information was provided in previous studies as to why or when certain people were allowed onto (or, alternatively, prevented from entering) the side stage.

To answer these questions, I undertook a qualitative study which had autoethnographic and ethnographic aspects. For the autoethnographic aspect, I interviewed myself, a former dancer, in

accordance with the systematic sociological introspection method utilised by Rambo Ronai and Elis (1998) and Egan (2003) in their self-interviews. For the ethnographic aspect, I interviewed fifteen current and former exotic dancers on the same topics, using a feminist interviewing approach.

The information from both the autoethnographic and ethnographic interviews supported the notion of 'separation of social world', or, as I refer to it, 'separation of personal world'. Twelve of the fifteen interviewees utilised this strategy in some fashion, with nine actively making decisions regarding who is allowed access to stigmatising information and the remaining three allowing anyone access to the stigmatising occupational information outside of a select group of individuals.

The possibility that those within the exotic dance industry separate the contacts in their personal life into three broad categories was supported, with the three categories being 'practical/professional contacts', 'social contacts', and 'familial contacts'. Generally, those who regularly utilised 'separation of personal world' as a stigma management technique did not share their stigmatised identity with practical contacts unless the identity was directly relevant. Professional contacts were rarely told, due to the potential harm they posed to one's future occupational possibilities or reputation [in occupations outside of dancing].

As to social contacts, the general guideline was that the closer one was to the performer within her personal life, the more likely the person was to receive the information of her identity. Serious romantic partners, close friends, and friends were generally informed; low-level friends and acquaintances were often not. An exception to this was 'strangers'. Some dancers indicated they were more willing to inform a stranger than an acquaintance, as strangers did not pose potential long-term repercussions.

For familial contacts, dancers were likely to be more cautious in revealing their stigmatised identity to adult family members and highly unlikely to have revealed it to underage family members, including their siblings and children. Adult family members were treated with caution due to concerns about stigma-related reactions, including judgment, disappointment, and general doubts. Dancers indicated this hesitation was not due to shame or internalised stigma, as hypothesised in a previous

study (Thompson, Harred, & Burks 2003), but an awareness of loved one's likelihood to offer limited acceptance. Underage family members were treated with caution due to concerns about their discretionary skills, as well as concerns about their cognitive ability to critically access societal judgments. Dancers indicated underage family members would eventually be allowed onto the side or back stage, once they became old enough to comprehend the industry and form critical opinions on it.

As to the reasons why individuals were allowed onto (or prevented from) the side stage, the main ones have already been indicated. Concerns about expenditure of time and mental energy responding to reactions from practical contacts prevented those individuals from being easily welcomed onto the side stage; the exception to this was relevancy. Concerns about the potential harm professional contacts posed inhibited individuals in that category from being likely to be invited onto the side stage; the exception to this was social connection. Professional contacts who had also developed a strong social connection to the dancer would be invited onto the side stage. Social contacts were allowed onto the side stage if they had a significant enough relationship (or general quality of interactions) with the dancer; the underlying reason which was provided was the dancer did not want to hide aspects of her identity from the contact. Alternatively, social contacts were not allowed onto the side stage if they had a low quality relationship/interaction with the dancer or generally exhibited a tendency towards conservativism, as the dancers did not feel such people needed to know and/or would react well. Age also appeared to be a factor in the decision on with whom to share the stigmatised identity. Those in the dancer's generation were more likely to be told than those who were not. A final reason an individual might be prevented from the side stage is if he/she was assessed as having a high 'potential of harm', such as if the individual was in contact with those the dancer explicitly did not want to have access to the stigmatising information, such as family members.

Exotic dancers prevented undesirables from entering the side stage through a few strategies, with 'strategic separation of personal world' being one of the most common ones. This strategy

involved purposefully preventing an undesirable's contacts from learning of the dancer's occupation. . Another common method was separation from stigmatised role. One tactic of this was supported – obscuring (also referred to as 'verbal separation from stigmatised role'). In this tactic, dancers obscured their occupational role through misleading titles/tones or false information. The second suggested tactic, avoidance (also referred to as 'social separation from stigmatised role'), had limited support. In this tactic, stigmatised individuals avoid social contact with those who have knowledge of the stigmatised role. Though some participants indicated they would avoid situations in which someone from the side stage would meet someone on the front stage, the reason was rarely to prevent the stigmatising information from being shared**.** Likewise, participants did not indicate they were likely to remove themselves from social relationships with industry-related individuals – or, alternatively, embrace such social relationships to the exclusion of others. This further limited the support found for this tactic.

Overall, the research found that 'separation of personal world' is a commonly used stigma management technique for maintenance of positive external identity. However, this technique was not utilised by all interviewees. Twenty percent only applied the technique to a few select groups; another twenty percent did not utilise the technique at all. This offers strong support to Goffman's theories of stigma, staging, and impression management. In particular, it supports Goffman's (1968) theorised division between 'discredited' and 'discreditable' stigmatised persons. Those who chose to manage the stigma as discreditable persons used information control, separation of social world, and staging, as Goffman (1968, 1971) predicted, and those who chose to manage the stigma as discredited persons used impression management to manage reactions (Goffman 1968). The majority of the participants in the study chose to manage their stigma as 'discreditable' persons and a minority of the participants chose to manage their stigma as 'discredited' persons.

This study not only supports Goffman's theories (1968, 1971) of stigma, but also extends knowledge of the application of his theories of 'staging' and 'separation of social world' by examining which categories of individuals are allowed onto (or prevented from entering) the side stage and which

traits increase the likelihood of a contact being invited onto (or prevented from) the side stage. It additionally extends the theory by examining why and when categories of contacts are allowed onto the side stage, as well as how groups are prevented from entering the side stage.

This study also supports Jenkins (2016) suggestion of an externally-defined identity. Previous studies have demonstrated dancers have to manage stigma to maintain a positive internally-defined identity and positive relationships, with some studies arguing dancers' use of 'separation of social world' demonstrates dancers have internalised the stigma and need to manage the 'shame' associated with it. In contrast, this study suggests that dancers' interactions demonstrate management of external stigma which was not about shame, but rather more practical and pragmatic considerations.

A limitation of this study is its sample size and range. Though multiple exotic dance clubs throughout Australia were contacted regarding advertising for research participants, a limited range of participants volunteered. All were located in the same city and many were working within the same club. A wider range of participants might offer more insights into the nuances of the stigma management technique which was explored; however, it is expected that the overall tendencies would remain intact. One reason for this expectation is 'separation of social world' is a commonly utilised technique among stigmatised individuals and occupations, with multiple studies previously offering information which demonstrates support for this technique (Ashforth & Kreiner 1999; Kreiner, Ashforth, & Sluss 2006; Pescosolido 2008).

In retrospect, further aspects of the research question could be explored. As of yet, no study has directly examined how stigma manifests in exotic dancers' lives, which could offer further insights into stigma manifestation and the need for its management. Furthermore, the question of how stigma is managed for those allowed on the side or back stage could be explored. Though this study obtained information which would address that question, word constraints prevented an exploration into that line of questioning. Examining that question would extend an understanding of how the discredited (those whose stigma is known) manage reactions.

By distinguishing between externally-applied stigma (and external identities) and internalised stigma (and internal identities), this study addresses some misconceptions about exotic dancers and the reasons behind their stigma management techniques. I have argued that exotic dancers manage others' access onto the side stage to control the levels and types of externally-applied stigma. In essence the dancers seek to maintain a positive external identity and positive social interactions and minimise the impact of others on their personal lives.

The significance of these findings are in identifying stigma management techniques that do not directly stem from internalised stigma or shame, but, rather, reflect an awareness of the practical and pragmatic (albeit mainly negative) effects of externally-applied stigma. By utilising dancers' voices, this study sought to address potential misrepresentations of the industry and its workers. The research extends our understanding about the exotic dance industry, its workers, the stigma surrounding both, and the need to manage this stigma. The findings assist in limiting the power of stigma, which can be perpetuated by misrepresentation of the stigmatised, particularly in legal and academic works (Hannem & Bruckett 2012). Though many studies note that stigma is the primary source of disempowerment among exotic dancers (Maticka-Tyndale et al. 2008; Hubbard & Colossi 2013), most studies use this to argue the industry is disempowering and should be limited. This thesis sought to take an alternative approach in which the stigma itself was viewed disempowering and how, through taking the perspective of exotic dancers, this can be managed in ways that are not damaging to their sense of self but rather through limiting who gets access to the side stage. As such, the study contributes to increasing the awareness of exotic dance as an industry and exotic dancing as an occupational identity.

APPENDIX 1: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

FINAL APPROVAL NOTICE

Project No.:	**8088**
Project Title:	Stereotypes & Strippers: A [Discourse] Analysis of Societal Beliefs about Exotic Dancers
Principal Researcher:	Miss Dawn Parks
Email:	park0721@flinders.edu.au
Approval Date:	24 August 2018
Ethics Approval Expiry Date:	**1 November 2019**

The above proposed project has been **approved** on the basis of the information contained in the application, its attachments and the information subsequently provided with the addition of the following comment(s):

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Background:

- How long have you danced?
- What got you into dancing?
- Age, Education, sexuality, relationships status?
- How many clubs have you worked at?

Stigma & Stereotypes:

- Do you think there is a stigma about exotic dancing?
- Do you think there are stereotypes associated with stripping & strippers?
    - How have you experienced them?
    - Are they positive, negative, or neutral stereotypes?

Openness/Who do you tell (when)

- When you introduce yourself to people, what do you say you do? (Does it depend on who you're introducing yourself to?)
- Generally, who have you told?
- How open are you about your occupation?
    - How do you decide who to tell?
    - At what point in a friendship or relationship do you think it's important to tell?
- Are you likely to tell people who don't matter (i.e., strangers)?
- Do you think you'll eventually tell family members (if you haven't already)?

Why

- What makes you decide to tell someone?
- What makes you decide to hold back?

Avoiding Telling

- If you don't want to tell someone, how do you avoid it?

Examples of Reactions

- Do you think people perceive you differently after you tell them? How?
- What were some of the best, worst, and typical reactions you've had?

Other:

- What did you think of stripping before you ever had contact with the industry? Has your opinion changed?
- What is something you wish people knew about exotic dancing?

Tactics

- Do you have many friends in the industry?
    - Do you hang out with friends from work?
    - What proportion of your friends are from work or home?

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