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**Occupational Image, Organizational Image and Identity in Dirty Work: Intersections of Organizational Efforts and Media Accounts**

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Keywords:	dirty work, media, occupational image, organizational identity, organizational image, sex work, exotic dancers
Abstract:	<p>This paper proposes that media representations of an occupational category may intersect with organizations' efforts to construct a positive organizational identity and image. We fuse three streams of literature namely, organizational identity and image, media and the social construction of reality, and dirty work to extend extant literature on organizational identity and image. Attention is drawn to occupational image as the position of an occupational category in society. We contend that occupational image is likely to influence the decisions and actions taken by organizations and its members, in particular when the occupation is central to the organization's mission. Occupational image is partly informed by the media. We analyze one year of media coverage of a dirty work occupation, specifically exotic dancing, and identify various ways in which the media portrays the exotic dancing occupation and the organizations providing these services. We focus upon two of these categories, namely Public (dis) Order and Art and Entertainment. We also draw upon a variety of data from one organization, For Your Eyes Only, to explore how organizational efforts to construct a positive organizational identity (based upon professionalism and legitimacy) and image (based upon fantasy, exclusivity and high quality service) intersect these media representations.</p>

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**Occupational Image, Organizational Image and Identity in Dirty Work: Intersections of  
Organizational Efforts and Media Accounts**

For Peer Review

## **Occupational Image, Organizational Image and Identity in Dirty Work: Intersections of Organizational Efforts and Media Accounts**

Rhodes and Parker (2008) argue that popular culture (television, radio, popular music, cinema, printed media) can serve as a representation of working life, while simultaneously providing a response to working life or informing how working life happens. They go further to note that popular culture 'is a resource in organizations' (p. 632). Images of organizations in popular culture sometimes begin from a position of opposition (Rhodes and Parker, 2008) and we argue that this is often the case for occupational categories or organizations that are stigmatized in some way or perceived to be dirty work. Dirty work refers to jobs that are viewed as undesirable and degrading (Hughes, 1958) and these jobs can be physically, morally or social tainted (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). There is a diverse range of occupations that can be considered dirty work (e.g., garbage collectors, prison guards, exotic dancers, social workers). The occupational image, or position of an occupational category in society, is at least partly influenced by popular culture. In this way popular culture can construct and sustain stigma associated with dirty work occupations. We can see the negative role that popular culture plays in sustaining stigma associated with sex work from Halgrimsdottir et al.'s (2006) media analysis of the sex industry. They contend that media texts, as one form of popular culture, 'are key cultural sites at which stigmas of sex work are produced and consumed by the majority of citizens'(2006: 267). Here we are interested in exploring how popular culture portrayal of an occupational category considered to be dirty work, specifically exotic dancing, intersects with organizational efforts to construct a positive organizational identity and image.

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Similar to Rhodes and Parker (2008) we interpret popular culture to include a broad array of sources. We understand popular culture to be that which is mass produced and mass consumed. We analyze newspaper articles as a form of popular culture. Unlike Rhodes and Parker (2008), who conceptualize popular culture as that which is ‘not too serious, or is a trivial matter being taken seriously’ (p.633), we include ‘high’ (e.g., quality press), ‘hybrid’ and ‘low’ (e.g., tabloid) culture (Danesi, 2008) in our conceptualization of popular culture.

We explore how an organization in a stigmatized industry attempts to construct a positive organizational identity and image, under the media glare. Specifically, our research objectives are: to identify various ways in which the media portray a specific type of dirty work, exotic dancing, thus partly informing the occupational image of the work; to explore one organization’s efforts to construct a positive organizational identity and image in a stigmatized industry; and, to explore the possible intersections of media accounts and the organization’s efforts to construct a positive organizational identity and image. We are not looking at causal relationships between organizational identity, image and media, although we believe these are likely to exist. We are interested in teasing out the possibilities of how images constructed by the media, intersect (come together at common points), and may possibly serve as a resource and impediment to the organization in the construction of identity and image. Indeed, we could look to any number of macro considerations (e.g., politics, legislation, religion) that might intersect with the construction of organization identity and image in a dirty work site. We focus upon one of these considerations, printed media in the form of newspapers.

Our contribution is three-fold. First, we posit that organizational identity and image are more than an internal activity undertaken by organizations and that the re-construction of both is likely to be complex. For example, media reports and organizational efforts likely intersect,

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whereby organizations counter and embrace media constructions of the organizational image (Gioia et al., 2000). Further, as Hughes (1970: 149) posits, 'if a certain problem turned up in one occupation, it was nearly certain to turn up in all'. We extend this line of thinking to the organization: if the construction of organizational identity and image is complex in one type of organization, it is likely to be complex in others. This research identifies the need for further work that addresses how the media (and 'occupational image' in general) might play a role in the construction of a positive (or negative) organizational identity across a variety of industries. Second, as Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) and Kreiner et al. (2006a) argue there is still much to learn about dirty work occupations in organization studies. We extend the existing literature and offer an account of the complexities faced by organizations and individuals employed in dirty work occupations and how broader macro considerations, such as the media, create and sustain stigma, while also providing opportunities for re-shaping constructions of dirty work. Third, our analyses of newspaper content over a one year period, along with corporate documents and interview data, demonstrate the richness of a mixed methods approach to understanding the construction of organizational identity and image.

In the literature review, we fuse three streams of work, namely, organizational identity and image, media and the social construction of reality, and dirty work. We begin with an overview of the extant work on organization identity and image and argue that occupational image should also be considered in the construction of organizational identity and image. We also contend that the media is likely to play an important role in the construction of occupational image. We provide a discussion of the role of media in the construction of reality and introduce the notion of dirty work, arguing that it will difficult for organizations associated with some dirty work occupations to form a positive organizational identity and image. We focus upon exotic

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3 dancing as a form of dirty work and introduce a particular type of exotic dancing establishment,  
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5 the 'gentlemen's club'. An overview of our research design is presented, followed by an  
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8 overview of six categories of media constructions of exotic dancing and a detailed discussion of  
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10 two categories. We explore how the organization under study, *For Your Eyes Only (FYEO)*,  
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12 attempts to construct a positive organizational identity and image in this context. Finally, we  
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14 highlight the theoretical contribution of our work.  
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### 20 **Organizational Identity, Image and the Media**

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22 Traditionally, organizational identity has been defined as that which is stable, enduring, unique  
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24 and central to the organization's character (Albert and Whetten, 1985; Balmer, 2009). Moreover,  
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26 organizational identity is understood to be singular and shared among all internal constituents of  
27  
28 the organization. More recently, it has been argued that organizational identity is more flexible,  
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30 dynamic and adaptable, than originally proposed (Corley, 2004; Gioia et al., 2000). Identity  
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32 differentiation is also a possibility, whereby multiple interpretations of organizational identity are  
33  
34 likely to exist (Corley, 2004; Kreiner et al., 2006b). Overall, organizational identity answers the  
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36 question 'who do we think we are as an organization?' Organizational identity comprises the  
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38 perceptions held by members about what makes the organization unique from other  
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40 organizations and it can also serve as a basis for presenting images of the organization to  
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42 outsiders (Alvesson, 1990; Balmer, 2009; Corley, 2004; Gioia et al., 2000).  
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48 Organizational identity is a social construction, created through ongoing interactions with  
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50 internal and external constituents including media, government, customers, suppliers, employees  
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52 and management (Gioia et al., 2000). While management may direct the development of  
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54 organizational identity, it is never completely controlled because of ongoing interactions with  
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3 various constituents (Kärreman and Rylander, 2008). Over time, the organization receives  
4 feedback about the portrayal of the organization (Gioia et al., 2000) and this feedback is often  
5 transmitted through the media. Gioia et al. (2000) argue that if there is a discrepancy between  
6 how members view the organization (identity) and how external constituents see the  
7 organization, this serves as a cue to take action. In effect, the discrepancy is a surprise event that  
8 triggers sensemaking by the organization (Louis, 1980). In order to resolve any tension, the  
9 organization can attempt to change the organizational identity or alter the impression held by  
10 constituents (Gioia et al., 2000). It is during these periods of feedback that the intersections of  
11 organizational identity and image are illuminated.  
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24 Organizational identity is that which is held close by internal constituents, while  
25 organizational image is generally understood to be organizational members' perceptions of how  
26 others (external constituents) see them and the organization (Gioia et al., 2000). Gioia et al.  
27 (2000) distinguish among several conceptualizations of image including, construed external  
28 image, projected image, desired future image, corporate identity, transient impressions and  
29 reputation. We extend Gioia et al.'s (2000) conceptualization to include an additional image,  
30 namely 'occupational image'. Occupational image is conceptualized as the perception of the  
31 position of an occupational category in society (Birnbaum and Somers, 1986, 1989; Caplow,  
32 1954). Occupational image is constructed over time by various historical, social, cultural and  
33 political factors. We are interested in drawing specific attention to the *possible* role of the media  
34 in the construction of occupational image and in turn, the various other forms of image.  
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50 Drawing upon the work of Berg (1985) and Grunig (1993), Gioia et al. (2000) describe  
51 transient impressions as short term impressions of the organization held by constituents based  
52 upon direct or indirect information supplied by the organization. We extend this understanding of  
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3 transient impressions to include impressions based upon information supplied by the  
4 organization, as well as other sources, including the media. We contend that the media's  
5 portrayal of a particular occupational category, individuals performing the work and the  
6 organizations that supply the good or service, may influence how individuals perceive others to  
7 view them (construed external image). We also build upon the conceptualization of reputation  
8 offered by Gioia et al. (2000) to consider the position of an occupational category in society  
9 (e.g., respected versus despised). Gioia et al. (2000) describe reputation as the relatively stable,  
10 shared judgments of an organization held by outsiders (Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun and Shanley,  
11 1990). We theorize that occupational image plays a role in the reputation of organizations  
12 associated with the occupational category. Further, the media can play a role in creating,  
13 sustaining and modifying the position of an occupational category over time, and in turn the  
14 organization's reputation.  
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### 34 **Media and the Social Construction of Reality and Organizational Life**

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36 Mass media play an important role in organizing knowledge we have of our own life, inside and  
37 outside organizational boundaries (Adoni and Mane, 1984; Allen and Hatchett, 1986). In their  
38 research on the media's construction of a merger of two pharmaceutical companies (Astra and  
39 Zeneca), Hellgren et al. (2002: 123) contend that the media can be both 'sense-maker' and  
40 'sense-giver' (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Media can be a sense-maker in that individuals may  
41 draw upon media accounts as one source of information in developing a framework for  
42 understanding complex phenomena; individuals use media accounts to help them make sense of  
43 a particular phenomenon such as the success of mergers, how to motivate employees or  
44 appropriate levels of executive compensation. Media can also act as a sense-giver in that it can  
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3 influence the meaning making of individuals toward particular realities; the media can report  
4 stories that focus only on excessive executive compensation to influence public perception in a  
5 particular way. The distinction that Hellgren et al. (2002) make highlights that as sense-maker,  
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8 the media ‘takes part in’, while as sense-giver it ‘influences’ (p.123).  
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13 Adoni and Mane’s (1984) conceptualization of the relationship between the media and  
14 the social construction of reality illustrates the important role that the media can play in the  
15 meaning making process of individuals and in turn, the meaning making processes of  
16 organizations. Similar to Adoni and Mane (1984), we view the creation of reality(ies) as a social  
17 process. Reality is re-constructed through social interaction between individuals and individuals  
18 and institutions (social, cultural, political) over time. Adoni and Mane (1984) present a two-  
19 dimensional framework to explain the relationship between the media and the social construction  
20 of reality. One dimension involves the *type of reality* (objective, symbolic, subjective) and the  
21 other dimension involves the *perceived distance or closeness / remoteness of social reality* to the  
22 individual’s everyday life experiences. Objective social reality is that which is perceived to be  
23 factual, emerging from the ‘objective world’ existing outside the individual. Symbolic social  
24 reality is comprised of the representations or ‘symbolic expressions of objective reality’ (Adoni  
25 and Mane, 1984: 326) (e.g., literature, theatre, media content). There are multiple symbolic  
26 realities. Symbolic social reality provides a particular *interpretation* of objective reality mediated  
27 by an institution, group or individual. For example, a newspaper will portray events through a  
28 particular interpretation of objective reality (Liu, 2006). In addition, media accounts of objective  
29 reality will be interpreted in a particular way by the individual (thus media as sense-giver and  
30 sense-maker). Finally, subjective social reality is the lived experience of the individual informing  
31 the individual’s social actions. Objective and symbolic social realities serve as inputs into the  
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3 individual's subjective social reality, informing her meaning making in everyday life. While  
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5 acknowledging organizational members are not a homogeneous group, we argue that individuals'  
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7 subjective social reality (that of managers, owners and employees) inform organizational level  
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9 realities including culture, change, identity and image.  
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13 We build upon Adoni and Mane's (1984) work and argue that the media's portrayal  
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15 (symbolic social reality) of occupational categories related to the individual's profession and  
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17 place of employment (close zone) are likely to influence the individual's construction of her  
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19 identity at work and in turn, the organization's identity and image. We also theorize that media  
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21 reports and organizational efforts are likely to intersect (Rhodes and Parker, 2008). The  
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23 meanings that individuals construct about their working lives (e.g., occupations, organizations,  
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25 management, identities, social relations at work) can be informed by the media's portrayal of  
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27 organizational life (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000). At the same time, organizational members use the  
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29 media as a resource from which they can embrace, deflect, reconstruct or deny images of  
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31 organizational life that they encounter or wish to change. Our interest lies in how the media  
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33 constructs images of a particular occupational category (exotic dancing) and how those  
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35 constructions intersect with organizational efforts to construct a positive organizational identity  
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37 and image.  
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44 In this research, we look to a dirty work (Hughes, 1958) site where we expect to see a  
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46 complex relationship between organizational identity and image because of the way the work is  
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48 positioned in society. Grandy (2008), Heinsler et al., (1990), and Tracy and Scott (2006) argue  
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50 that the marginal place that some dirty work occupations hold in society means that those who  
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52 perform the work struggle to secure positive identities. Individual identity construction is a  
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54 complex process whereby the individual has to grapple or balance various considerations  
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3 including, macro (e.g., media portrayal, societal discourses, organizational rules), meso (e.g.,  
4 social groups) and micro (e.g., agency) resources (Dick, 2005; Grandy, 2008; Tracy and Scott,  
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6 2006). We build upon the extant literature that links individual and organizational identity  
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8 construction in dirty work occupations (e.g., Kreiner et al., 2006a). We theorize that  
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10 organizations that provide 'dirty work services' will have to work hard to construct a positive  
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12 organizational identity, external construed image, transient impression and reputation.  
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### 20 **Dirty Work, Exotic Dancing and Gentlemen's Clubs**

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22 Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) elaborate upon what Hughes (1958) refers to as physical, moral and  
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24 social taint of dirty work. Physical taint occurs where an occupation is associated with various  
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26 human (or otherwise) fluids, waste, and death or performed under dangerous or noxious  
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28 conditions (e.g., butcher, janitor, exterminator, funeral director, miner, farmhand, dentist). Social  
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30 taint occurs where an occupation involves regular contact with other stigmatized groups (e.g.,  
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32 social worker, prison guard, police detective, public defender) or when the tasks appear to be  
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34 subservient to others (e.g., maid, shoe shiner). Moral taint occurs where occupations are  
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36 associated with sinful activities or intrusive, deceptive or confrontational techniques (e.g., tattoo  
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38 artist, casino manager, bill collector, tabloid reporter, telemarketer). Ashforth and Kreiner (1999)  
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40 also note that the boundaries between these categories are undoubtedly blurry and many jobs are  
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42 tainted on various dimensions.  
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48 Occupational prestige as a composite of status, power, quality of work, education and  
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50 income, can depict the wide scope and variety of dirty work occupations (Ashforth and Kreiner,  
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52 1999)<sup>1</sup>. Some of these occupations will be viewed as dirtier than others given the occupational  
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54 prestige of the occupation. More recently, Kreiner et al. (2006a) extend Ashforth and Kreiner's  
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3 (1999) typology of dirty work sites to illustrate that all occupations can be considered dirty to  
4 some extent. They focus upon breadth (the proportion of work that is dirty) and depth (intensity  
5 and direct involvement with stigmatized aspects of the work). The extent to which a job is  
6 considered dirty is also context specific in that it may not be considered dirty in all places for all  
7 people (Dick, 2005) and the position of an occupation as dirty work may change over time.  
8 Further, the aspects of an occupation that a worker considers dirty may be different from that  
9 which is perceived to be dirty by others (Dick, 2005).  
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20 The stigma attached to the dirty work is transferred to those who perform the work, so  
21 that they in turn become stigmatized and dirty workers. Important to our research is the possible  
22 link between the dirty occupation (occupational image) and the organization's identity and  
23 image. Kreiner et al. (2006a) contend the more important the work (or occupation) is to the  
24 organization's core business or mission, the more likely that the occupational image will define  
25 the organization as a whole. In a dirty work site, 'the greater the occupation's centrality, the  
26 more the dirty work will define the organization as a whole' (Kreiner et al., 2006a: 630). We  
27 expect that in these situations organizations will carry a tainted transient impression and  
28 reputation (Gioia et al., 2000), making the process of developing a positive organizational  
29 identity and image difficult.  
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43 There is research that examines how dirty work organizations strive to develop a positive  
44 organizational identity and how they communicate that to constituents. For example, Bruckert's  
45 (2002) and Wood's (2000) research on exotic dancers reveals that club owners and managers of  
46 exotic dancing establishments use 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) techniques in their  
47 own dress attire (e.g., suits), as well as through house rules that dancers must follow. In this way,  
48 these organizations actively construct an organizational identity, corporate identity and projected  
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3 image based upon professionalism. We build upon this research and look to an organization in  
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5 the sex industry to explore how the organization actively constructs the organization's identity  
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7 and image and how media reports intersect with these efforts.  
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10 We understand sex work to be a form of sexual or erotic labour that entails a variety of  
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12 activities including, prostitution, go-go dancing, stripping, phone sex, pornography video  
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14 production and dominatrix work (Brewis and Linstead 2002; Chapkis 1997; Frenken and  
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16 Sifaneck 1998; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2000; Weitzer, 2000). The sex industry includes the  
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18 organizations, workers, managers, owners and customers involved in sex work (Weitzer, 2000).  
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20 There has been much debate about sex-as-labour (Sanders, 2005) and we recognize that sex  
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22 workers face a diverse range of risks (e.g., criminality, violence, labour rights). The work and  
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24 those performing the work are economically, socially and culturally disadvantaged relative to the  
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26 mainstream labour market (Sanders, 2005).  
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31 For this research, exotic dancing is understood to be a form of sex work that involves  
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33 either topless or nude dancing (Wesley, 2002). Exotic dancers have been referred to and refer to  
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35 themselves as strippers, entertainers, go-go dancers, lap dancers and pole dancers (Liepe-  
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37 Levinson, 2002; McCaghy and Skipper, 1969; Ronai and Ellis, 1989; Skipper and McCaghy,  
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39 1970). We are not claiming that experiences of exotic dancing are the same for all dancers, nor  
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41 are we equating all forms of sex work. Organizations that offer seemingly similar services will  
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43 have different organizational cultures and individuals will experience these environments  
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45 uniquely.  
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50 The position of sex work as marginalized (as dirty) has been discussed extensively (see  
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52 for example, Brewis and Linstead, 2000; Hollway, 1989; Rubin, 1993). Exotic dancing in  
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54 general, as a form of sex work, can be seen to be dirty in that it is physically tainted (in contact  
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3 with bodily fluids through unprotected client interactions or dancers using the same stage and  
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5 poles to do tricks without cleaning between sets), socially tainted (associated with criminals),  
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7 and morally tainted (e.g., commercialization of sex, public sex). The position of sex work in the  
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9 organizational world is a function of various political, cultural and societal considerations  
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11 occurring over time (Rubin, 1993). In the exotic dancing context, Bradley-Engen and Ulmer  
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13 (2009) explore the social order of exotic dancing clubs. They argue that future research should  
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15 extend studies of exotic dancing establishments beyond the club level because 'clubs are  
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17 embedded in larger social contexts; they both influence and are influenced by larger social,  
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19 political, and economic institutions in their local communities and beyond' (Bradley-Engen and  
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21 Ulmer, 2009: 57). This means that the media is likely to serve as an important resource in the  
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23 construction of exotic dancing work in certain ways. The media plays a role in establishing the  
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25 position of work in society, but just as importantly the media serves as a feedback mechanism to  
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27 organizations about the image it attempts to construct. We take our lead from Bradley-Engen and  
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29 Ulmer (2009), Hallgrimsdottir et al. (2006) and Rubin (1993) to explore how broader macro  
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31 forces, specifically the media, intersect with the construction of organizational identity and  
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33 image in the exotic dancing context.  
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41 It was the mid 1990s when topless dancing clubs emerged in the UK (Bindel, 2004).  
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43 There are more than 150 clubs legally operating throughout the UK (Bindel, 2004) with lap  
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45 dancing as 'one of the fastest growing areas in Britain's sex industry' (quoted in 'Lap Dancing  
46  
47 Contest Cancelled', 2001, cited in Bindel, 2004). This growth, has been met with controversy and  
48  
49 confusion from regulatory bodies (granting and monitoring of licenses varies across  
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51 municipalities), religious groups, women's rights groups (e.g., Object) and organizing bodies  
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53 (e.g., International Union of Sex Workers, GMB – Britain's General Union). Within the exotic  
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3 dancing industry, ‘gentlemen’s clubs’ occupy a position of exclusivity and present exotic  
4 dancing establishments as professional, legitimate and law-abiding (Forsyth and Deshotels,  
5 1997). This makes them a particularly interesting site to explore media representations, dirty  
6 work, occupational identity and image. These clubs offer high quality service and upscale  
7 entertainment in a fantasy-like atmosphere. Gentlemen’s clubs also impose various rules upon  
8 clients and dancers to create this image of ‘classy entertainment’ (e.g., dress code for clients,  
9 dancers and other staff, table-side service, no contact policies). The physical surroundings in the  
10 club usually support this image (e.g., plush / leather seating areas). Our research focuses upon a  
11 chain of gentlemen’s clubs located in the UK, *FYEO*, to explore how an organization in a  
12 stigmatized industry attempts to construct a positive organizational identity and image, under the  
13 media glare.  
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### 32 **Research Approach**

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34 The research follows a social constructivist approach, understood as a perspective whereby  
35 individuals continually construct and negotiate to make sense of experiences (Denzin and  
36 Lincoln, 2000; Schwandt, 2000). Those around us and specific historical, cultural, social and  
37 political contexts inform these constructions. Social constructivism adopts a relativist ontology  
38 through which local and specific, multiple, constructed realities emerge (Burrell and Morgan  
39 1979; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). However, by acknowledging specific historical, cultural and  
40 political contexts informing construction we adopt a position that takes account of material  
41 effects produced by these specificities (e.g., stigma). We offer a particular reading of the media,  
42 corporate documents and interview accounts and approach our research as co-constructors of the  
43 ‘realities’ presented. In this way, the findings result from our interpretations (based upon our  
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3 own reflexive practice) of the individual experiences expressed by those involved in the research  
4  
5 and our readings of the secondary data (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000; Thomas and Davies, 2005).  
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### 10 *Data Collection*

11  
12 This research was a part of a larger exploratory project undertaken by the first author which  
13  
14 focused upon individual identity construction and drew upon formal and informal semi-  
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16 structured interviews (21 dancers, 3 managers, 1 general manager, 1 owner), participant-  
17  
18 observation (e.g., pole dancing course), diary notes and archival material (corporate and  
19  
20 newspapers) to provide a diverse spectrum of perceptions from which to compare, challenge and  
21  
22 support conclusions emerging from one particular source. Here we draw upon four sources of  
23  
24 data including, interviews conducted in 2003 and 2004 with managers at two UK *FYEO*  
25  
26 locations, UK newspaper archives on exotic dancing over a one year period (hereon referred to  
27  
28 as general media analysis), observations recorded over 2003 and 2004, and newspaper archives  
29  
30 and corporate documents about *FYEO* during the period 2001 to 2005.  
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36 Initial interviews and observation were conducted in 2003 and follow-up interviews and  
37  
38 observation occurred over a number of months into 2004. Available corporate documents,  
39  
40 website information and newspaper accounts of *FYEO* (using the LexisNexus database) were  
41  
42 reviewed between 2001 and 2005. Interviews were conducted at two UK locations (Newcastle  
43  
44 and Mayfair London) before and during regular working hours of the clubs. All managers were  
45  
46 male and their experience in the sex industry ranged from nine months to nine years, both in the  
47  
48 UK and in the US. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants. Similar to the approach of  
49  
50 Coupland (2001), participants were not asked about identity directly, rather they were asked to  
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52 talk about their work and the organization to allow discussion of identity construction to emerge.  
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The general media analysis of exotic dancing occurred after the initial data collection and analysis of *FYEO* when it became apparent that multiple levels of interacting forces played a role in how individual and organizational identity was constructed. For example, political and social forces evident in legislative changes permitting fully nude dancing, as well as controversial municipal decisions to grant licenses (e.g., newspaper accounts of city councillors protesting on behalf of various interest groups' concerns including the exploitation of women and increasing criminal activity in affected areas) helped explained some of the experiences of individual participants. In order to increase trustworthiness of the identity construction accounts, a general media analysis of newspaper accounts was conducted. This analysis did not aim demonstrate a causal relationship between the stories of participants and the media portrayal, however, it did produce interesting and novel insights into how institutional resources (social, cultural, historical) mediated through the media, might intersect with individual and organizational identity construction.

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The intent of the one year general media analysis was to explore how the images of exotic dancing as work, exotic dancing establishments and exotic dancers were constructed in UK newspapers. UK newspaper articles for 2004 were collected through the LexisNexus database. The search words 'pole dancing', 'lap dancing', 'table dancing', 'tableside dancing', 'stripping', 'strippers' and 'exotic dancing' were used. Articles included were those that referred specifically to exotic dancing in some way. Letters from readers or articles about Britons outside the UK were not included. Relevant articles from 'quality press' (e.g., *The Guardian*, *The Financial Times*, *The Herald*), 'middle market' (e.g., the *Daily Mail*, *The Mail on Sunday*), tabloid (e.g., *The Sun*, *The News of the World*, *The Daily Star*), national and regional (e.g., *Cornish Guardian*) newspapers were included. In total 215 articles were of relevance which

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3 ranged in length from 200 to 3,000 words. Similar to Chen and Meindl (1991) and Gunther and  
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5 Grandy (2009) we acknowledge that media accounts are not neutral and do not necessarily  
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7 represent the views of one person; they are often written by more than one person, entail various  
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9 stages of production and may reflect the values of the owners of the news organization.  
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### 12 13 14 15 *Data Analysis*

16  
17 Data collection and analysis were an iterative process and informed by the work of Charmaz  
18  
19 (2006), Corbin and Strauss (1990) and McCracken (1988). Initial data analysis was conducted by  
20  
21 the first author, then through multiple re-readings of the data, both first and second authors  
22  
23 agreed upon the final six categories from the general media analysis, organizational identity and  
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25 image and supporting data presented here.  
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29 Analysis of the interviews took place through ‘rummaging’ (McCracken, 1988); reading  
30  
31 and re-reading transcriptions to categorize content. Each interview transcript was analyzed  
32  
33 individually using initial and focused coding (Charmaz, 2000) and the text was sorted into broad  
34  
35 themes. This was followed by a process of reinterpretation focusing upon the nature of the work  
36  
37 performed at the clubs, organizational efforts to ‘manage’ internal operations, competitive  
38  
39 positioning of the clubs and organizational efforts to influence internal and external constituents’  
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41 perception of the clubs. Finally, a process of constant comparison across themes and interview  
42  
43 transcripts took place.  
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49 The newspaper articles from the general media analysis were analyzed using the tenets of  
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51 the long interview (McCracken, 1988) and grounded theory (Corbin and Strauss, 1990) through a  
52  
53 three stage coding process including: *themes* or *codes* that served as anchors or key points for  
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55 initial data analysis; *concepts* that served as a collection of themes of similar content; and  
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3 *categories* that served as broad groups of similar concepts moving us closer to generating theory.  
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5 Each newspaper article was analyzed separately to identify themes. Themes were refined into  
6  
7 concepts as comparison across articles occurred. Concepts were refined and organized into  
8  
9 categories. More than 80 themes were identified and refined into 20 concepts. These concepts  
10  
11 were revisited, refined and organized into six categories, Public (dis)Order, Deviance and  
12  
13 Immorality, Criminality, Art and Entertainment, Surveillance, and Growth.  
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17 Secondary information about *FYEO* was analyzed in a similar formulaic way, with each  
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19 document analyzed individually first, followed by a comparison and refinement phase across  
20  
21 documents. Finally, we looked across all sources of analysis to explore the intersections among  
22  
23 the findings. Our findings first present the general media analysis with a focus upon two of the  
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25 categories, Public (dis)Order and Art and Entertainment, followed by a discussion of the case  
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27 study site.  
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### 34 **Front Page News**

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36 The intent of the media analysis was to explore how the media constructed exotic dancing as an  
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38 occupation, exotic dancing organizations and exotic dancers. Our primary focus here is upon  
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40 *FYEO*, however, we felt that a general media analysis of exotic dancing provided understanding  
41  
42 of the broader context under which *FYEO* management carried out various activities related to  
43  
44 organizational identity and image. Our research reveals six categories of media construction  
45  
46 including: Public (dis) Order, Deviance and Immorality, Criminality, Surveillance, Art and  
47  
48 Entertainment, and Growth. No one category is more dominant than others, however,  
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50 cumulatively the first four represent exotic dancing in a negative light. The Public (dis) Order  
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52 category portrays exotic dancing as a risk to public order, evoking public disapproval and fear,  
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3 affecting a broad range of constituents including children, community and dancers working in  
4 the clubs. The Deviance and Immorality category highlights the moral taint associated with the  
5 work; exotic dancing diverged from acceptable social and sexual behavior norms. The Deviance  
6 and Immorality media accounts also portray the work (and workers) as dishonourable,  
7 unpleasant and unclean in some way. Media accounts categorized under Criminality construct  
8 exotic dancing as unlawful and thus dangerous, dishonest and worthy of suspicion, while  
9 accounts under Surveillance draw attention to how the industry and clubs require close  
10 observation in order to minimize public (dis)order, limit criminality, and control growth.  
11 Surveillance media accounts imply or explicitly state that if the industry is not closely monitored,  
12 the regulation of society will be lost and chaos will result (e.g., exploitation of women,  
13 unionization, licensing requirements).  
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29 As noted, the first four categories portray a negative view of the occupation,  
30 organizations and dancers, whereas the Growth category illuminates both positive and negative  
31 constructions of the industry. Exotic dancing is described as having a positive impact upon  
32 tourism and consumer spending, while growth also implies that bigger may not necessarily be  
33 better: expansion results in taking over communities, changing the values and norms of society  
34 and threatening safety (as discussed under Public (dis) Order). In contrast to others, the Art and  
35 Entertainment category portrays exotic dancing in a positive light, as an acceptable leisure or  
36 cultural activity. Dancing is also portrayed as a professional, skills-based and artistic occupation.  
37 We now discuss two categories in detail, namely Public (dis) Order and Art and Entertainment,  
38 which exemplify opposing media accounts of exotic dancing.  
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### 55 *Exotic Dancing as Public (dis) Order*

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3 In many media accounts exotic dancing was presented as a risk to public order, evoking public  
4 disapproval and fear. Exotic dancing establishments negatively impacted community reputation  
5 and threatened the safety of residents. Clubs were seen to damage community image and  
6 reputation to such an extent that residents would have to leave the community and visitors would  
7 re-consider visiting.  
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15 In response to a license approval for a club in Ripley, Derbyshire a local vicar indicated  
16 not only would customers suffer from using the clubs, the negative impact of such activities  
17 would extend to the economy as a whole and the reputation of the town.  
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25 The Rev David Gough, vicar of Codnor and Loscoe said that he was very sad that the  
26 licence had been granted. He said: 'It is a downward step. Already middle-aged and older  
27 people are not wanting to go into Ripley on Friday night because of its reputation for a  
28 lively club scene and this will only add to the problems'. In a letter to the council he said:  
29 'This club will attract only a limited group of people, but the negative reputation that its  
30 presence will engender would soon spread and have an adverse effect on the whole  
31 economy and social integrity of the town'. (quoted in 'Dismay at lap dance approval',  
32 2004:7)  
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37 Similarly, a minister from Nottingham voiced concern over the approval of a club in the  
38 area by noting, 'I think it's wrong for the city, it's the wrong image and it doesn't help us respect  
39 Nottingham' (quoted in Bevan, 2004:8). Exotic dancing clubs were seen to be a source of  
40 community disruption and a burden upon local policing authorities. References were made  
41 regarding the threat of declining property value for residents and retailers of areas populated by  
42 clubs (Braiden, 2004; Jones, 2004; Murray, 2004; Woolcock, 2004). Community groups  
43 responded sharply to the risk of public disorder, damage to community reputation and decline of  
44 real estate value perceived to follow the opening of clubs.  
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Public (dis) Order media accounts also evoked fear. Exotic dancing was dangerous, likely to cause pain or unpleasant outcomes, and threaten the safety of vulnerable individuals. Most significant were references made about the welfare of children. The clubs were positioned as a risk to lure unaware, young adults into the activities (Cronin, 2004; Sandall, 2004). In turn, the innocence of youth was threatened. In November 2004, a pole dancing class targeted at youths as a source of physical fitness in Birmingham was cancelled due to outraged parents. A local councillor commented, 'this sort of thing is not suitable for 11-years-olds. For a start I'm not sure how you'd take the sexual element out of pole dancing and children are bound to want to know more about the adult version...it's still nice to try and keep a little bit of innocence in our children's lives' (quoted in Hendrick, 2004:1). Also the location of clubs was often highlighted as inappropriate. An application for a club license in Chorley was refused on the basis that the proposed location would mean children walk by it on a regular basis (Cronin, 2004). These media accounts served as cues to a most basic fear, the threat to children's safety. Safety was also a concern more generally. Some accounts made reference to the risk posed to dancers working in clubs ('Nude dancing club gets the green light', 2004), as well as to the community in general through increased incidence of violence ('Sex dancers get go-ahead', 2004; Mcmillan, 2004). Overall, through emphasizing the negative impact upon community image and reputation, real estate value, community services (policing), and safety, exotic dancing was constructed as causing public (dis)order.

### ***Exotic Dancing as Art and Entertainment***

In contrast to public (dis)order, exotic dancing was also constructed as current, popular and novel in nature. We labeled this category Art and Entertainment. Relevant media accounts revealed a

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2  
3 sense of acceptance that exotic dancing was a new fashion, a form of artistic expression, and a  
4  
5 pleasurable and upscale form of entertainment.  
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8         There were numerous accounts of celebrities (of varying degrees and mostly males)  
9  
10 visiting lap dancing clubs throughout the UK including, Christan Slater, Robbie Williams, Colin  
11  
12 Farrell and Sting ( 'Kiss and tell: Robbie's so mean', 2004; Callan et al., 2004a, 2004b). Some  
13  
14 accounts did link exotic dancing with other forms of sex work or infidelity, thereby positioning it  
15  
16 as bad sex. At the same time, however, in drawing attention to celebrities seeking it as a source  
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18 of entertainment or demonstrating how former dancers made it rich, exotic dancing was granted  
19  
20 'star status'. There were also accounts of celebrities enrolling in pole dancing courses. For  
21  
22 example, Kate Moss, Jennifer Aniston, Kelly Brook, Madonna, Demi Moore and Carmen Electra  
23  
24 pole danced for fitness and fun ('Pole dancing workshops return', 2004; Singh and Graham,  
25  
26 2004). As a result, there was a sense of glamour and even legitimacy associated with exotic  
27  
28 dancing. Overall, the celebrity status that emerged exemplified the 'coolness' of exotic dancing.  
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34         Other media accounts re-told stories of dancers who drew attention to the expression and  
35  
36 application of human creative skill, imagination and physical agility, strength and conditioning.  
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38 Accounts emphasized how personal trainers and fitness instructors taught the 'art' of dancing  
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40 (Batters, 2004; Culley, 2004). Pole dancing classes transferred from exotic dancing clubs into  
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42 fitness centres (Fitness First in Burton-on-Trent and Coventry) and into colleges (Mcdougall,  
43  
44 2004) aligning it with other fitness activities. Pole tricks were likened to the skill and agility that  
45  
46 gymnastics require (Bass, 2004). The move into colleges granted exotic dancing the esteem and  
47  
48 legitimacy associated with other trades-based diploma programs including aesthetics, welding,  
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50 information technology and teacher training. Those teaching and learning the skills were also  
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52 afforded the same sense of professionalism attributed to athletes, tradespersons and artists.  
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Some media accounts categorized under Art and Entertainment made reference to the leisure aspects of exotic dancing. As entertainment, exotic dancing was portrayed as a source of amusement, pleasure and fun for clients and for those working in the industry. Clubs were generally licensed under a Public Entertainment License, rather than the sex trade. To defuse the serious cries of immorality and criminality the entertainment aspect was emphasized. In an attempt to generate support for a license application for a club called *Privilege*, located in Glasgow, club owners argued exotic dancing was an institutionalized aspect of the entertainment world that was integral to the culture of most European cities (Simpson, 2004).

In the accounts, many clubs also defended the industry and their position in it through highlighting the stylish, elegant and exclusive nature of their organizations. Challenging the deviance and immorality often associated with the work, dancers were often described as tall, thin and beautiful. Clubs exerted efforts to manage their image through the atmosphere of the clubs, strict house rules, trendy feel and select clientele. One club, *Wildcats*, a chain of clubs launched in Leeds, was aimed at ‘a youthful and fashion conscious market’ (quoted in ‘Matthew is a bit of a Wildcat’, 2004:1). Media accounts emphasized the strict adherence to ‘no touching’ rules and the extent of nudity at the clubs (e.g., topless only). Corporate clients were highlighted as a target market for some clubs in an attempt to demonstrate the ideal type of client, that is, hard working, well dressed and deserving of respect. By association, clubs attracting these types of clients should also be viewed as legitimate businesses and, in turn, respected. One article detailed *Spearmint Rhino*’s attempts to ‘clean up’ its reputation. *Spearmint Rhino* hired a former Scotland detective, Graham Melvin, to review the club’s operations. Melvin was quoted, ‘I think you will find it is a very well-run operation, one of the finest-run in the West End’ (quoted in ‘Spearmint Rhino Hires Ex-Detective to Clean up Club’s Act’, 2004:19). He noted how dancers’

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3 IDs were checked before employment, no touching and no drugs rules were strictly enforced and  
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6 mystery shoppers were used to ensure the club was adhering to the license terms. The emphasis  
7  
8 upon Melvin's former employment portrayed him as a man of integrity and honour, committed  
9  
10 to public safety and order. We infer that by association, clubs associated with a man of such  
11  
12 integrity should also be viewed as professional and honourable. Overall, exotic dancing was  
13  
14 positioned as respectable entertainment demanded by professional and corporate clients. In  
15  
16 media accounts, *Spearmint Rhino* attributed much of its success to business clientele who sought  
17  
18 out these services as a form of corporate entertainment (Armitage and Prynne, 2004; Walsh,  
19  
20 2004). References were also made to other clubs that positioned exotic dancing as a form of  
21  
22 entertainment for those who enjoy major sporting and cultural events (Simpson, 2004).  
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28 Overall, the construction of exotic dancing as physical fitness and a novel form of  
29  
30 entertainment, appropriate for corporate clients, is a possible resource available to organizations  
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32 (and individuals working in them). As can be seen from the media accounts about *Wildcats* and  
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34 *Spearmint Rhino*, organizations draw upon and use the media to counter claims highlighted by  
35  
36 the category of Public (dis) Order (and other negative media accounts) and position the  
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38 occupation, organization, industry and those who work in it, more favourably.  
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#### 44 ***Good Sex / Bad Sex Divide***

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46 The categories revealed by the media analysis illuminated a good sex / bad sex divide. The  
47  
48 categories of Public (dis) Order, Criminality, Deviance and Morality and Surveillance are similar  
49  
50 in that these categories reconstruct dualist notions of good sex versus bad sex. Exotic dancing  
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52 represents bad sex, that is, unsafe, dangerous, dirty, sinful, commercial, and public. By  
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54 association, establishments offering these services and individuals working in the industry are  
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3 marginalized and stigmatized, relative to good sex (e.g., consensual, private, safe, pure). We did  
4  
5 not aim to re-construct a genealogical account of the positioning of sex work or exotic dancing as  
6  
7 done by Brewis and Linstead (2000), Hollway (1989) and Rubin (1993), however, the dualisms  
8  
9 of good versus bad sex did resonate in our research. Sex work, in general, exists in the  
10  
11 marginalized position of the other in the dualism and the divide between what constitutes good  
12  
13 sex and bad sex, as these researchers contend, is constantly shifting.  
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17 The category Art and Entertainment stands in contrast to the bad sex categories. We  
18  
19 explore media accounts for only a one year period and as a result are uncomfortable claiming  
20  
21 these categories as 'discourses'. Weedon's (1987) description of 'reverse discourse', however,  
22  
23 provides a fitting explanation for the place of Art and Entertainment among the bad sex  
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25 categories. Weedon uses the term to refer to opportunities for reversal and resistance to dominant  
26  
27 discourses (and subject positions defined by dominant discourses). She notes, 'while a discourse  
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29 will offer a preferred form of subjectivity, its very organization will imply other subject positions  
30  
31 and the possibility of reversal' (1987:106). Exotic dancing as an established form of skilled art,  
32  
33 an accepted form of entertainment or trendy pastime was common in the accounts. This  
34  
35 construction of exotic dancing challenges the position of exotic dancing as bad sex and may over  
36  
37 time serve to shift the position of exotic dancing towards good sex. The dominance of the bad  
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39 sex categories, however, was more evident in accounts. As Weedon (1987) argues not all  
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41 discourses come from a secure institutional location and this limits the social power and  
42  
43 authority of those discourses. In this case, the categories Criminality and Public (dis) Order may  
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45 be more powerful in positioning exotic dancing in particular ways. At the same time, however,  
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47 'in order to have a social effect, a discourse must at least be in circulation' (Weedon, 1987:197).  
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49 As such, the portrayal of exotic dancing as Art and Entertainment offered alternative subject  
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3 positions from which organizations and individuals could draw upon.  
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5 We now direct attention to the case site and explore the organizational identity and image  
6 of *FYEO* and how the efforts of the organization intersect with the media's construction of exotic  
7 dancing.  
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### 12 13 14 15 **For Your Eyes Only** 16

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20 Classic entertainment for the modern gentlemen... Welcome to FYEO the UK's first and  
21 foremost tableside dancing experience. Consider this an invitation to the ultimate adult  
22 Disney where a personal dance will only cost you £10.00. We pride ourselves in offering  
23 the very best entertainment, first-class service and the most exciting dancers in the world,  
24 in venues that are luxurious, relaxing and safe (*FYEO*, 2003a).  
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27  
28 *FYEO* was one of the first UK exotic dancing clubs, with the first club opening in 1995. At the  
29 time of data collection, seven UK *FYEO* clubs operated including, Newcastle, Bournemouth,  
30 Croydon, Park Royal (London), Mayfair (London), Bradford and Southampton. In 2003, the  
31 *Ladhar Group*, a leisure and property group based in Wallsend, England, purchased four of the  
32 clubs (Newcastle, Bournemouth, Croydon, Park Royal) from *SFI Group* in a multi-million pound  
33 deal. In 2010, the *Ladhar Group* owned several exotic dancing clubs, some of which were under  
34 the *FYEO* brand and some under others (e.g., *Blue Velvet*). Overall, the secondary and primary  
35 data reveals an organizational identity based upon professionalism and legitimacy and an  
36 organizational image based upon fantasy, exclusivity and high quality service.  
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### 49 50 51 52 ***Constructing a Positive Organizational Identity and Image: Intersections of Organizational*** 53 ***Efforts and Media Accounts*** 54

55  
56 The growth strategy of the *Ladhar Group* was sometimes dampened by the negative media  
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3 attention and public outcry against the clubs' operations in certain locations. The Newcastle club  
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5 in particular had been the site of substantial controversy since the beginning. The community  
6  
7 discontentment surrounding the opening of *FYEO* Newcastle in November 2001 was highly  
8  
9 charged. On its opening night, individuals representing various interest groups were present with  
10  
11 cameras taking pictures of customers as they entered or left the club ('Table dancing club opens  
12  
13 to cries of shame', 2001). In May 2002, nearly 900 people officially objected through letters and  
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15 petitions to the renewal of the club's license (Hastings, 2002). The reactions from various  
16  
17 stakeholders, including licensing magistrates, city councillors, members of christian groups, rape  
18  
19 crisis centres, students' unions, *FYEO* employees, management and owners, were varied and  
20  
21 complex. They ranged from claims of increasing violence against women, to causing marital  
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23 problems, to exploiting women in a region historically characterized by low wages, to providing  
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25 more flexible working arrangements, to empowering women.  
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32 Again in the autumn of 2003, *FYEO* was the center of debate when it was granted its  
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34 license request for an additional *FYEO* in Newcastle, only after an appeal decision. Various  
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36 groups, including city councillors and other community groups, expressed concerns over another  
37  
38 club operating in Newcastle. A city resident was quoted saying, 'there is a real danger of  
39  
40 Newcastle becoming a city of sleaze, not a city of culture' (quoted in Higgerson, 2003:2). At the  
41  
42 time, Glenn Nicie, *FYEO* Operations Manager, expressed publicly that he had hoped the public  
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44 involvement would be less controversial than when the first establishment was opened in  
45  
46 Newcastle two years prior.  
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53 I hope they'll not be any objections this time. Last time we made an application there  
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55 were a lot of fears but we understood those as we'd faced them and they have proved  
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57 to be unfounded. We provide a safe, friendly environment. It takes time and attention  
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59 to get it right. You need the right management, staff, dancers and customers. We are  
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discreet, we do think of the public and the city centre. We liaise with the police and councillors. There is no intention to cause offence to anyone (quoted in Cartmell, 2003:1).

We argue here that the media's portrayal of exotic dancing in general does intersect with the efforts of *FYEO*. For example, in August 2004, a Constable in Mansfield objected to the licensing of a club, 'believing it will create an adverse affect on public order' (quoted in Marley, 2004:11). While this media account was published in 2004 and not specific to *FYEO*, Nicie's comments in 2003, are illustrative of the portrayal of UK clubs in general and suggests that management of *FYEO* is aware of this portrayal and that they respond to and draw upon the media in constructing a positive organizational identity and image. In contrast to media accounts noted under Public (dis) Order, Nicie was keen to emphasis *FYEO* was 'safe' and 'discreet' so as to not offend the public or degrade the city centre. He went further to note that Northumbria Police had no complaints about the management of the premises, nor had there been any reports of indecency in the area since it opened (Cartmell, 2003; Mcmillan, 2003). This intersection is further illuminated if we examine another media account from 2004 which detailed 'outrage' about *FYEO*'s request to extend operating hours on Sunday in Newcastle. Interestingly, in that piece there was also coverage that indicated 'magistrates were shown a letter from the city's Chief Insp Dave Jackson which said there had been no increase in crime or activity around the Carloliol Square club since it opened' (quoted in 'Sunday dance plan outrage', 2004:2). Creating a corporate identity and projected image that defused harsh criticisms of public disorder, immorality and criminal activity was integral to *FYEO*'s growth strategy.

Despite this backdrop of controversy, *FYEO* exerts considerable efforts to create a unique position (corporate identity, projected image) within the exotic dancing industry. Corporate documents and management refer to the club as a 'gentlemen's club', that is, a club offering

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3 'high quality' service and upscale entertainment in a fantasy-like atmosphere. One media  
4 account described the interior of *FYEO* as 'cultivated intimacy' with plush red velvet sofas and  
5  
6 dimmed lighting (quoted in Neil, 2004:26). Management and corporate documents emphasize  
7  
8 the entertainment aspect of the work and downplay the 'sex work' image of the industry. Jim, a  
9  
10 *FYEO* manager, highlights the fantasy-like experience that *FYEO* offered. He redirects attention  
11  
12 from the negative (e.g., exploitation, family destruction, violence) associated with exotic dancing  
13  
14 by critics and emphasizes the harmless and non-consequential business of *FYEO* – if it is 'not  
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16 real' like a fantasy, then 'real' outcomes as claimed do not materialize. To make his argument  
17  
18 more persuasive he defuses criticisms of immorality and criminality by contrasting the activities  
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20 of other, non-law abiding clubs to that of *FYEO*.  
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29 It's an entertainment that is on the whole accepted by most people. There are so many areas  
30 that are being missed. Non-UK citizens coming in as dancers and or dressing themselves  
31 up as dancers and really being prostitutes and escorts. It's bringing something that  
32 shouldn't be within this industry. We deal with non-contact fantasies. Bring in touching  
33 and all that sort of thing they're reality, that's physical, you can quantify that. Whatever  
34 goes through some guy's head while a girl's dancing you can't quantify it. Three minutes  
35 of a dance and that's it. She goes off and it goes back to normality.  
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40 Here, *FYEO* is positioned more positively and more entertainment-like, rather than as a  
41 form of sex work. Jim's efforts mirror the general analysis media accounts that detailed how  
42 management of other clubs made reference to their clubs as 'not criminal' (McKenzie, 2004).  
43  
44 However, in numerous accounts from the general media analysis references were made to raids  
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46 on lap dancing clubs that uncovered sexual activities extending beyond the operating licenses of  
47  
48 the clubs. A report in August 2004 on the sex trade in London identified 66 lap dancing clubs  
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50 that were offering sex to clients, although the clubs' licenses did not permit such activities  
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52 ('8,000 sex slave toll', 2004). While *FYEO* was not mentioned in any report, it is understandable  
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3 why Jim would exert efforts to position *FYEO* as entertainment rather than sex work. In order to  
4 separate it from other clubs in the exotic dancing industry, and other forms of sex work, *FYEO*  
5 shifts attention to the less safe, less clean, more dangerous, and even criminal aspects of other  
6 clubs or other forms of sex work. In this way, *FYEO* constructs a more positive projected image  
7 by constructing an inferior ‘other’ (e.g., dirty clubs, prostitution). In comparison to the inferior  
8 ‘other’, *FYEO* has a more positive transient impression. This can also serve to facilitate the  
9 club’s ability to build a positive reputation of the organization over time.  
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19 In order to further create this image of exclusivity, art and entertainment and ‘high  
20 quality’ service, *FYEO* expects staff, that is, management and dancers, to behave in certain ways.  
21 Some of these rules are explicit and formalized in the house rules of the clubs, while others are  
22 more implicit and emerge through informal interaction and unwritten rules<sup>2</sup>.  
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29 In their research, Bradley-Engen and Ulmer (2009:56) label gentlemen clubs as ‘show  
30 clubs’ and note that these clubs ‘are characterized by strict management and conduct norms, with  
31 a formalized work order and highly regulated customer and dancer conduct’. In a similar way,  
32 *FYEO*’s house rules prescribe various rules to govern dancers’ behaviours to ensure  
33 professionalism, legitimacy and consistency in the high quality service it provides. This scripting  
34 of activities via *FYEO* house rules ensures fantasy-like experiences within the confines of  
35 legitimate and professional art and entertainment. For example, the clubs enforce rules on  
36 appropriate drinking behaviour. Drinking in excess is vaguely defined as ‘alcohol influencing  
37 your dancing or attitude whilst in the club’ (*FYEO*, 2003c:1). Dancers are disciplined if they  
38 drink in excess (e.g., removed from the floor, fined, suspended, fired) as such behaviour is seen  
39 to negatively affect the upscale entertainment image the club attempts to create. Simultaneously,  
40 dancers are encouraged to accept drinks from customers to increase sales and commissions of  
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3 waiting staff. Terry, a manager in Newcastle, expresses that drinking is often a part of the  
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5 socializing aspect of the job. If dancers do not want to drink, the club creates a way for dancers  
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7 to accept offers from clients (and thus not risk upsetting clients by refusing offers of free drinks)  
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9 by indicating that ‘a cocktail “with a straw” means you would like it made without alcohol’  
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13 (*FYEO*, 2003c:1).

14  
15 Terry indicates that *FYEO* in Newcastle tried to enforce a ‘no dating clients’ rule,  
16  
17 however, given the small size of the city it was difficult to enforce and monitor outside work  
18  
19 boundaries. *FYEO*, however, continues to limit what managers interpret as potentially  
20  
21 confrontational situations (e.g., ‘No partners, boyfriends or husbands allowed in the club at all’.  
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23  
24 (*FYEO*, 2003d:1) that might upset the serene, respectful and ‘ordered’ atmosphere of the club.

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27 The house rules at *FYEO* Mayfair are also explicit about appropriate behaviour when  
28  
29 dancing for a ‘guest’ to ensure the line between fantasy-like experiences and reality, as Jim  
30  
31 notes. Dancers are expected to be ‘erotic not explicit’ (*FYEO*, 2003c:3), not ‘spread their legs’  
32  
33 while dancing (*FYEO*, 2003c:3), and not place their ‘head into or near a customer’s lap’ (*FYEO*,  
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35 2003c:3). The formalization of appropriate behaviour to create an image of exclusivity,  
36  
37 legitimate art and entertainment and high quality service establishes a situation whereby what  
38  
39 many would consider acts of ‘commercial sexuality’ become scripted, mundane acts of everyday  
40  
41 organizational life. For example, House Rule 3 states, ‘do not lick your nipples or anybody’s  
42  
43 else’s’ (*FYEO*, 2003c:3), while House Rule 12 (*FYEO*, 2003c:3) states, ‘underwear must be fully  
44  
45 removed, not just around the knees or ankles while performing fully nude’. This aligns with the  
46  
47 general media analysis of exotic dancing as Art and Entertainment whereby a fantasy is *created*  
48  
49 for the client, and dancers form one part of this fantasy. Exotic dancing is portrayed as a form of  
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3 harmless fun (yet strictly regulated) which caters to the entertainment needs of clients, many of  
4  
5 whom are corporate clients (business professionals).  
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8 *FYEO* also creates expectations about particular ‘feeling rules’ (Hochschild, 1983)  
9  
10 required for job performance. In the *Pole and Tableside Dancing School Manual* (*FYEO*, 2003b)  
11  
12 guidelines of engagement for dancers are described. These emphasize the importance of a  
13  
14 positive attitude, smiling, not engaging in particular types of conversations (e.g., religion,  
15  
16 politics) or feelings (e.g., sarcasm, humour) and docility. Adherence to these feeling rules or  
17  
18 expected behaviours is equated with professionalism and ‘high quality’ service. *FYEO* draws  
19  
20 directly upon other types of public and private activities to illuminate the professionalism of such  
21  
22 behaviours (e.g., car merchandising, politics). Dancers are also referred to as ‘entertainers’ in this  
23  
24 section of the manual<sup>3</sup>.  
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32 Smiling is OK. The most powerful expression available is the old faithful: the sincere  
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34 smile. It’s an expression that works wonders everywhere on earth. The sincere smile  
35  
36 has helped to sell used cars, launch love affairs, win political office, soothe hurt  
37  
38 feelings, and spread warmth and good cheer. Guests love it when you smile. They  
39  
40 often ask entertainers who aren’t smiling to do so. They never ask smiling  
41  
42 entertainers to stop (*FYEO*, 2003b:10).  
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45 Through its various informal and formal rules *FYEO* attempts to distinguish itself from  
46  
47 competitors and position itself uniquely in the sex industry as ‘not sex’. Its policies of escorting  
48  
49 customers to their seats, tableside bar service, elaborate and comfortable surroundings, non-  
50  
51 contact policy imposed upon dancers and clients, codes of appropriate conduct and appearance,  
52  
53 and protection provided to dancers (e.g., escorting dancers to their cars after a shift) offer *FYEO*  
54  
55 a means through which to construct its organizational identity and image. These efforts also  
56  
57 serve to challenge *FYEO*’s position as dirty work. Creating a safe, professional working  
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3 environment also challenges media accounts of exotic dancing as Public (dis) Order which evoke  
4  
5 fear about the unsafe environment it creates for dancers and the communities where the clubs are  
6  
7 located.  
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10 Building upon Gioia et al.'s (2000) and Louis' (1980) work, we contend that the media's  
11  
12 portrayal of exotic dancing serves as one trigger for sensemaking by the organization. The  
13  
14 owners and managers construct an organizational identity centred upon professionalism, art and  
15  
16 entertainment and legitimacy, investing considerable efforts to construct a corporate identity and  
17  
18 projected image based upon fantasy, exclusivity and high quality service. Given the media's  
19  
20 interest in the exotic dancing industry and in particular *FYEO*, individuals who work for and in  
21  
22 *FYEO* confront opposing construed external images. Some images portray exotic dancing as a  
23  
24 legitimate form of entertainment, while others depict far more tainted images. *FYEO* attempts to  
25  
26 alter the negative transient impressions held by constituents. As theorized by Gioia et al. (2000),  
27  
28 the data we collected and analyzed illuminates the intersection between organizational identity,  
29  
30 as that which internal constituents view to be unique about the organization, and organizational  
31  
32 image, as that which is linked to the perception of others. We contend that our multi-method  
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34 approach facilitated our ability to do this effectively.  
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41 In some ways, *FYEO* may contribute to the creation of the media's representation of  
42  
43 exotic dancing as Art and Entertainment through its press releases and communication with  
44  
45 journalists. Yet in other ways, *FYEO* may use the media's portrayal as a resource in emphasizing  
46  
47 the novelty of the service it provides, shifting cultural times and the professionalism of the club  
48  
49 and dancers. In this way, the intersections of organizational life, specifically identity and image,  
50  
51 and the media begin to surface (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000; Rhodes and Parker, 2008).  
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55 Overall, the media may serve as a sense-maker (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991) to various  
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3 constituents of *FYEO*, in that it provided six alternative frameworks from which to interpret the  
4 industry and the organizations and individuals associated with it. The media may also serve as a  
5 sense-giver (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991) persuading constituents to see exotic dancing in  
6 particular ways. We refer to this positioning of the exotic dancing occupational category as  
7 occupational image. The organization both suffers and benefits from the symbolic social reality  
8 as constructed by the media. *FYEO* denies its position as dirty work. Interestingly, however, in  
9 some incidents *FYEO* uses this symbolic social reality to position itself differently from other  
10 clubs, rather than denying the negative claims about the exotic dancing occupation and industry  
11 or sex work in general. In this way, the media provides the organization with an inferior other  
12 (dirty clubs, prostitution) from which the organization can create a more positive projected image  
13 and in turn, transient impression. Moreover, the media's positive representations of exotic  
14 dancing, as evident in the Art and Entertainment media accounts, can serve as a valuable  
15 resource in constructing the organization's image of fantasy, exclusivity and high quality service.  
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34 Given the service-based nature of the work, *FYEO*'s ability to successfully maintain a  
35 positive identity and transient impression, as well as construct a positive reputation over time, are  
36 also very much dependent upon the dancers and managers working in the clubs. Here we include  
37 accounts of some managers, however, stories from dancers will also affect this. In this way, the  
38 subjective social realities of individuals working in the organization inform the organizational  
39 identity and image.  
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### 51 **Concluding Thoughts**

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53 In exploring how media constructions of a dirty work organization intersect with the  
54 organization's efforts to construct a positive organizational identity and image, we illuminate the  
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3 complexity of organizational identity and image<sup>4</sup>. Organizational identity and image are directed  
4  
5 by management and employees but it is not entirely an internal process (Kärreman and Rylander,  
6  
7 2008). Broader social, political and historical considerations play a role in the construction of  
8  
9 organizational identity and image. This we can see vividly in dirty work occupations (Dick,  
10  
11 2005; Grandy, 2008; Tracy and Scott, 2006). Our research provides support for Gioia et al.'s  
12  
13 (2000) model of identity-image interdependence and extends it by including an additional form  
14  
15 of image, occupational image. We also emphasize the role of media in the development of  
16  
17 occupational image as a trigger for sensemaking and in turn illuminating the possible  
18  
19 intersections of organizational image and identity, and occupational image. The transferability of  
20  
21 our findings is limited by our coverage of only one year of media accounts, however, the  
22  
23 research does provide fruitful discussion and a basis for future research. Furthermore, we  
24  
25 recognize that there are other macro forces that play a role in how exotic dancing is constructed  
26  
27 in society, as well as the organizational identity and image of *FYEO* and other exotic dancing  
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29 clubs<sup>5</sup>.  
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36 We conclude that the position of an occupational category in society, that is, the  
37  
38 occupational image, will likely influence how internal and external constituents perceive the  
39  
40 organization (construed external image). Occupational image also influences the organization's  
41  
42 desired future image and the development of corporate identity. It influences outsiders' and  
43  
44 members' short term impressions of the organization (transient impression) and the long term  
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46 collective judgments by outsiders of an organization's actions and achievements (reputation).  
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48 This influence becomes apparent as the organization, members and outsiders respond to the  
49  
50 positive or negative occupational image over time. We suggest that future research explore the  
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52 intersections of organizational identity and image and various other macro forces (e.g.,  
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3 legislation, politics, union organizing). In addition, we recommend comparative studies of  
4 identity and image of organizations operating within the same dirty work industries, across  
5 different dirty work industries, and across dirty work and less stigmatized organizations. This  
6 will further expose the similarities and differences between dirty work organizations and  
7 organizations in general, as it pertains to the complex relationship among occupational image,  
8 the media, organizational identity and image.  
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## 20 Notes

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22 1. We contend that occupational prestige informs occupational image in some way, however, measuring  
23 occupational prestige was not the focus of our study. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) do note that exotic  
24 dancing has a relatively low occupational prestige.  
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- 27  
28 2. While not the focus of our study, undoubtedly organizational control as a form of identity regulation  
29 (Alvesson and Willmott, 2002) over managers and dancers also played an important role in *FYEO*'s  
30 construction of a positive identity and image.  
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34 3. We acknowledge that the constructions of professionalism and 'high quality' service are also linked to  
35 particular notions of femininity and even heterosexuality. These exaggerated expressions of femininity  
36 (e.g., passivity, compassion) are also techniques through which *FYEO* constructs gender scripts that  
37 the organization perceives to be required for this work.  
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41 4. We recognize that the 'realities' of sex work are often a far cry from the picture depicted in this  
42 research. The violence, abuse, exploitation, health and safety issues and emotional drain that many sex  
43 workers confront on a daily basis (e.g., Bindel, 2004; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2000; Wesley, 2002)  
44 make it hard to re-direct attention from such concerns to issues of organizational identity and image as  
45 we have done. While many of these harsh 'realities' did not emerge through the stories told to us at  
46 *FYEO* it does not mean they are not there, nor does it mean that these stories are reflective of the  
47 industry as a whole.  
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3 5. For example, research conducted by Jones et al. (2003) on planning and licensing policies and  
4 regulation of lap dancing clubs in the UK indicates that standards vary from region to region. In the  
5 London location of *FYEO*, Jim indicates that Westminster Council was one of the last in England to  
6 permit fully nude dancing. Jim notes that clubs in Westminster had to 'prove ...that they can run a  
7 safe, clean environment' before the fully nude prohibition was removed.  
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