THEY LOOK AT IT AS DIRTY: COMPONENTS OF FEMALE EXOTIC DANCERS'

DIRTY WORK STIGMA

A Thesis

by

KATHERINE MARIE CHALKLEY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

May 2005

Major Subject: Psychology

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ABSTRACT

They Look at It as Dirty: Components of Female Exotic Dancers'

Dirty Work Stigma. (May 2005)

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The present study explored the stigmatization experiences of dirty workers in one dirty work job—female exotic dancers—in an effort to understand the components of dirty work stigma. The framework presented here is based on the integration of existing theory regarding the components of stigma and dirty work. Grounded theory was used to guide the collection and analysis of interviews from 18 participants. Five dirty work stigma components were identified in the participant accounts (i.e., awareness of negative perceptions, type of stigma, visibility, controllability, and type of taint). These components were centrally organized around the moral taint of the dirty work job of exotic dancing.

My loving husband,

Offered constant encouragement,

Expected excellence, honesty, and persistence,

Allowed me to be me.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION

Much of what is currently understood about the components of stigma from the perspective of the stigmatized individual is based on conventionally studied stigmas, such as those resulting from psychological disorders (Smart & Wegner, 1999) or ethnicity (Crocker, Voelkl, Testa, & Major, 1991). However, little attention has been given to understanding the work-related stigma of the job that one performs, that is, dirty work. Dirty work is a term introduced by Hughes (1951, 1958, 1962) to describe those jobs that society perceives as filthy, repulsive, or demeaning.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the stigmatization experiences of dirty workers in order to understand the components of dirty work stigma. The present study focused on the characteristics dirty workers identified as factors contributing to their stigmatization experiences—those in the past, present, and future. Current theoretical perspectives regarding the characteristics of stigma and dirty work were used as the basis for the present study. These theoretical perspectives were considered simultaneously in the present study in order to form an understanding of the components of dirty work stigma. By understanding the components of dirty work stigma, theory and research can begin to address the likely consequences of possessing this particular form of stigma, namely organizational outcome variables as well as the physiological and psychological well-being of workers who are stigmatized because of the dirty work they perform. In order to understand the components of dirty work stigma, the present

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This thesis follows the style and format of *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

research simultaneously explored the applicability of the components of both stigma and dirty work, as delineated in current stigma and dirty work theory, to the stigmatization experiences of workers in one dirty work occupation: female exotic dancers.

The stigmatization experiences of female exotic dancers represent some of the most extreme experiences of dirty workers. The devalued image of exotic dancing is so ingrained in society that exotic dancer as a job title is not referenced in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles* (for an extensive discussion, see Salomone & Helmstetter, 1992) nor the *O*Net*, references that are designed as objective sources of information about jobs. Yet, other dirty work jobs such as garbage collector and mortician are cited in these reference tools. Additionally, the dirty work literature has frequently cited exotic dancers as being both subjected to negative treatment and aware of their stigmatized status due to the nature of the job that they perform (Bernard, DeGabrielle, Cartier, Monk-Turner, Phill, Sherwood, & Tyree, 2003; Maticka-Tyndale, Lewis, Clark, Zubick, & Young, 2000; Pasko, 2002; Thompson & Harred, 1992; Thompson, Harred, & Burks, 2003). Although other dirty workers (e.g., bail bondsmen; Davis, 1984) have reported negative treatment and awareness of their devalued status due to their work roles, upon comparing their experiences to those of female exotic dancers, it would seem that the stigmatization experiences of exotic dancers were more intense and pervasive than those of other dirty workers. Because integrating and testing existing theory is dependent on identifying the entire spectrum of a phenomenon, the present study focused on those stigmatization experiences that are likely to be extreme. The implications of this focus

for the generalizability of the present study's findings are provided in the discussion section.

In the present study, grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; 1994) was used as the framework for integrating existing stigma and dirty work theory in order to form an ecologically valid understanding of the components of dirty work stigma. Grounded theory is a qualitative technique and theoretical perspective that encourages the discovery of ecologically valid theory (Locke, 2002) by analyzing the data representing the phenomenon of interest as directly reported by those individuals who experience the phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory encourages investigators to develop theory as an inductive process. In grounded theory analysis, researchers have a minimal set of preconceived ideas regarding the phenomenon of interest that allow for the creation of broad research questions. These questions are what direct researchers' data collection efforts—they guide the selection of specific questionnaire items and interview topics. Participants respond to these items and topics, and researchers compile reports of participant experiences with regards to the phenomenon. Then, researchers continuously return to the participant responses in order to determine the themes that characterize the participants' experiences; the content and context of these themes are linked, based on participant experiences, in order to develop a theory of the phenomenon of interest.

Although grounded theory is generally used for the purpose of creating new theory, in the present study, grounded theory was used in order to integrate and extend existing theory. In the present study, the integration of existing theory followed an

inductive process such that current stigma and dirty work theory served as the basis for the formation of preconceived ideas regarding the components of dirty work stigma. These ideas led to the framing of several broad research questions that guided the present research:

(1) From the perspective of the workers, without regard to temporal constraints (i.e., past, present, and future), what are their experiences with stigmatization?

(2) To what extent do the characteristics of the job of exotic dancer serve as markers for these workers to be stigmatized or to anticipate stigmatization in certain social interactions?

In the following section, the theories and research that guided the development of the research questions are presented. Stigma theory is first reviewed in order to establish the basis from which the two broad questions of the present study were developed. Next, current theory and research about dirty work is discussed in the context of stigma.

Literature Review

Stigma. Stigma is a social construct, whereby through the process of stigmatization, an attribute of an individual is devalued by others, thereby leading others to perceive a *spoiled* social identity of the individual in possession of the attribute (Goffman, 1963). The devalued nature of the attribute is perceived by others as inflicting taint onto the individual in possession of the attribute. By devaluing the individual based on the attribute, the individual is prevented from being fully accepted by others in certain social interactions; thus, the individual is stigmatized.

The prevailing conceptualization of stigma has been derived from the works of Goffman (1963) and Crocker, Major, and their colleagues (Crocker & Major, 1989, 1994; Crocker et al., 1998; Crocker et al., 1991). Goffman hypothesized three categories of stigma: abominations of the body, tribal identities, and blemishes of character. Abominations of the body are physical characteristics that are abnormal, such as a facial disfigurement. Tribal identities are memberships in social groups that are devalued, such as ethnic or racial groups. Blemishes of character are "bad" or "wrong" behaviors, such as homosexuality. It is important to note that a characteristic might be categorized as a stigma in one context but not in others, such as when homosexuals are embedded in a group that does not view homosexuality as a sin, or when ethnic minorities are in a group of others with the same ethnic background.

In addition to these stigma categories, Goffman (1963) divided stigmas into two conditions: those that are known (i.e., discredited) and those that are knowable (i.e., discreditable). Stigmas that are known are those stigmatizing attributes that have already been exposed to others in social interactions. Because others know about the attribute, it is therefore likely that the individual will experience stigmatization due to that known attribute. Those potentially devaluing characteristics that are knowable but not yet known are not considered stigmas in those social interactions in which others have no existing knowledge of the existence of the attribute; these attributes have the potential to be known about, but they do not currently serve as the basis for stigmatization. However, the existence of such attributes could provide a threat of stigmatization, such that if

knowable attributes become known about, it would be likely that stigmatization would occur.

Crocker et al. (1998) expanded on the conditions of known and knowable by suggesting that in order to understand stigmatization the visibility of the attribute must be considered. Visibility is the extent to which a potentially stigmatizing attribute can be discovered in social interaction. Some attributes may be concealed or shown at will; but there are some attributes that are non-concealable—these are always visible and thus known in social interactions. More visible stigmas tend to have greater effects than less visible stigmas on others' organization of cognitions and perceptions about the stigmatized individual (Crocker et al., 1998; Frable, Blackstone, & Sherbaum, 1990; Goffman, 1963).

The visibility of potentially stigmatizing attributes can be managed by individuals in possession of such attributes. Individuals may engage in behavioral attempts to conceal or to re-label their attributes. These stigma management actions were referred to by Goffman (1963) as passing (i.e., when enacted by those whose stigmas are not yet known—the knowable) and covering (i.e., when enacted by those whose stigmas are known). In some circumstances in which stigmas are visible, individuals may manage the potential for stigmatization by compensating for their stigmas; that is, they behave in ways that contradict stereotypes society holds with regards to their attributes (Miller, Rothblum, Felicio, & Brand, 1995). Thus, individuals' behavioral attempts to hide or redefine their attributes manipulates the visibility of the stigma.

Crocker et al. (1998) described another important quality of stigmas: controllability. Controllability is referred to as the situation whereby "the stigmatized individual is responsible for the condition, or when the condition results from or could be eliminated by the behavior of the stigmatized individual" (p. 507). There are two elements of controllability, the degree to which individuals are perceived as responsible for (a) the commencement and (b) the continuation of their stigmatizing attributes (Brickman, Rabinowitz, Karuza, Coates, Cohn, & Kidder, 1982). These two elements can be conceptualized as *onset-controllability* and *offset-controllability*, respectively.

In their review of stigmatization research, Crocker et al. (1998) determined that individuals with stigmatized attributes such as ethnicity, sex, or obesity are aware of their stigmatized status and the fluidity of stigmatization across social contexts. In their research, Frable and colleagues (1990) determined that people with distinctive attributes (valued or stigmatized) that were known about by others were able to recall details of the *context* of a social interaction, whereas those with attributes that were knowable were able to recall details of the *content* of the social interaction. Their findings suggest that those with distinctive attributes such as stigmas must remain active and at heightened awareness during social interactions because it is questionable how their attributes will be valued by others from context-to-context. This burden of awareness differs depending on the degree of visibility of such attributes. Individuals with distinctive attributes are aware that their attributes will be devalued in certain social contexts but not others; thus, they remain active in social interactions in order to determine if their current situation is the one in which they will be stigmatized.

In their study of the impact of the visibility of the stigma of ethnicity, Crocker et al. (1991) found that when ethnicity was believed by Black participants to be visible by others in social interaction, these participants attributed negative feedback from others to prejudice, thus protecting their self-esteem. Smart and Wegner (1999) focused on the concealable (i.e., knowable) stigma of anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa eating disorders. They determined that by actively keeping the eating disorder from being known, these individuals experienced strain in the form of being overly preoccupied with hiding their stigma. In a study of visible and concealable stigmas, Frable, Platt, and Hoey (1998) found that individuals with stigmas that are knowable experienced lower self-esteem and more negative mood than those individuals with stigmas that were known about or those that had no stigma. Interestingly, they found an effect for context, in that self-perceptions were protected for persons with concealable stigmas when they had contact with others who had concealable stigmas.

In the present study, it was expected that the attribute of working as an exotic dancer would be perceived by these workers as a potentially stigmatizing attribute in certain social contexts. Like all stigmas, it was expected that the job of exotic dancer would not be regarded as a stigma in all contexts. Certain aspects of the job of exotic dancer were expected to indicate its potentially stigmatizing status. This job can be categorized as a blemish of character because the behaviors that one performs on the job are considered "bad." It is also a stigma of tribal identity because being a female exotic dancer marks one as a member of several groups that are devalued: sex industry worker, adult entertainment worker, person on the margins of society. Additionally, this stigma

has the potential to be known about in certain contexts—it can be difficult to hide what one does for a living in some situations. To at least a subset of the people that these workers interact with (e.g., coworkers, managers, customers, family), the fact that these women are exotic dancers is known about (i.e., visible), and this quality may either serve as referent to stigmatization or result in no stigmatization. Finally, it was expected that the onset- and offset-controllability of working as an exotic dancer would contribute to the stigmatization experiences of these workers.

Dirty work. Dirty work includes those jobs that most members of society would, when given the choice, not personally perform because the work itself—or the people, settings, or tasks associated with it—is viewed by society as disgusting, debasing, or degrading the individual who performs it (Hughes, 1951, 1958, 1962). Some examples of dirty workers are garbage collectors, grave diggers, morticians, or exotic dancers. Hughes proposed that dirty work rubs taint onto the role holder. Due to the potential transfer of the job's taint onto the individual in that work role, dirty work roles can be considered as potentially stigmatizing attributes of workers in certain social contexts (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999).

Building on the work of Hughes (1951, 1958), Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) conceptualized dirty work as a stigma that can develop from perceptions of physical, social, or moral taint associated with the work. Physical taint arises from direct contact with dirty, contaminated, or noxious objects or work environments (e.g., morticians working with corpses; Thompson, 1991). Social taint arises from possessing a submissive, servile work-related role (e.g., housekeeper) or from being in contact at

work with people who are themselves stigmatized (e.g., AIDS hospice worker; Bennett, Kelaher, & Ross, 1994). Moral taint arises from work-related behaviors that are perceived as bad, corrupt, evil, or wrong or that defy behavioral norms (e.g., exotic dancer; Thompson & Harred, 1992; Thompson et al., 2003).

The three stigma categories proposed by Goffman (1963) and the three types of dirty work taint described by Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) overlap between and within one another. Dirty work can largely be classified as a tribal identity stigma—an indicator that one belongs to a devalued group—and this particular stigma can engender physical and social taint because of the dirty conditions, objects, or devalued persons these workers must interact with while on the job. Additionally, a subset of dirty work can be viewed as a blemish of character—a stigma based on negative behavior—and have physical, social, or moral taint based on the dirtiness of the objects or people that workers must come into contact with or the questionable nature of the acts that they must perform while on the job. For example, in certain social contexts, working as an AIDS hospice volunteer may be perceived as being both a stigma of tribal identity and a blemish of character (due to a perception that it is wrong or immoral to associate with and assist persons such as homosexuals and drug addicts), whereas working as a garbage collector might be seen only as a stigma of tribal identity. However, both would have social and physical taint components.

Although work roles are concealable from others outside of the workplace, norms in Western society make it difficult to keep work roles from becoming known. The question, "What do you do?" is often queried in first interactions; this frequent

experience speaks to the extent to which in societies such as the United States, the work that one performs is often one of the most identifiable and defining features of a person (Hulin, 2002). Thus, jobs are often known or easily discovered. Even when individuals do not wish for others to know about their jobs, their jobs are knowable, and there is a potential for their jobs to be revealed at any moment in social interactions. It is unlikely that only the work role holder knows about the individual's work role. For dirty workers, it is unlikely that the situation is different—they can be asked the same ice breaking question of what they do for a living, making it difficult to escape the potential for being stigmatized for their response. Thus, dirty workers are confronted with a dilemma: experience stigmatization based on truthful responses to questions about work roles, or experience the constant pressure to continually conceal the dirty work that they perform.

In the United States, there is a prevailing belief that individuals have control over the jobs they perform. This legitimizing myth claims jobs are selected based on individual interests and motivation (Dawis, 1990; Hulin, 2002). Nevertheless, circumstances outside of individuals may restrict the extent to which individuals have a choice in the jobs they hold. For example, economic considerations might affect the decision to enter a profession, not preference alone (Wanberg, Hough, & Song, 2002). Again, it is likely that dirty work jobs are perceived this way as well. Dirty workers may be seen as having complete control over entering and exiting their line of work, even though situational pressures may belie their employment decisions.

Research regarding the experiences of dirty workers has demonstrated that these workers are aware of the stigma associated with their work role and that they actively

manage their stigmatization experiences (Arluke & Hafferty, 1996; Bernard et al., 2003; Davis, 1984; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2000; Pasko, 2002; Thompson & Harred, 1992; Thompson et al., 2003). In a study focusing on the management of stigma in a sample of medical students performing laboratory experiments on dogs, the students viewed their work as dirty and as having moral taint (Arluke & Hafferty, 1996). In an investigation regarding one outcome of dirty work stigmatization—social isolation—Davis (1984) found that bail bondsmen were aware of their stigmatization based on the work that they perform; the bail bondsmen cited the perceived dishonest nature of their job (i.e., moral taint) as a contributor to society's stigmatization and contempt for them. Several studies of the workplace experiences of exotic dancers have indicated that the performers themselves are aware that they are stigmatized by society and by people close to them due to the work that they perform (Bernard et al., 2003; Maticka-Tyndale et al., 2000; Pasko, 2002). Thompson and Harred (1992; Thompson et al., 2003) focused on the ways in which exotic dancers manage the stigmatization that they experience by dividing the social world and using neutralization techniques.

As noted above, research findings regarding dirty workers have shown that they are aware that their work is a stigmatizing attribute based on its taint, that they experience stigmatization due to that attribute, and that they manage stigmatization. The identification of the components of the stigma of these workers' work roles is rarely of central importance in the extant literature. The present study attempts to rectify this situation by focusing specifically on the components that are present in dirty work

stigma—how the characteristics of stigma and dirty work contribute to the devaluing of workers' attributes in certain social contexts.

The Present Study

In the stigma and dirty work literatures, little is known about the components of stigma due to the work that one performs. The present study addresses this issue by focusing on how the characteristics of stigma and dirty work (i.e., type of stigma, visibility, controllability, type of taint), based on the works of Goffman (1963), Crocker, Major, and colleagues (Crocker & Major, 1989, 1994; Crocker et al., 1998; Crocker et al., 1991), Hughes (1951, 1958, 1962), and Ashforth and Kreiner (1999), contribute to the stigmatization experiences for dirty workers in one profession—female exotic dancers. The present study contributes to the stigmatization literature by focusing on the components of dirty work stigma, rather than focusing on the outcomes and management of dirty work stigmatization. This study allows for an integration and extension of current theory by simultaneously examining the components of stigma and dirty work.

Importantly, the workers of interest in the present study are dirty workers; they are, nevertheless, *workers.* It is conceivable that the stigmatization these workers experience influences many of the constructs and processes that are typically of interest to the organizational psychology literatures—such as job entry, job satisfaction, attrition, and psychological and physiological well-being. By contributing to the understanding of the components of dirty work stigma, the present study will afford further insight into the phenomenon of dirty work stigmatization.

In the present study, it was expected that the dirty work job of exotic dancing would be viewed by these workers as stigmatizing attributes in certain social contexts—especially those in which certain dirty work characteristics were likely to be emphasized. Because the job of exotic dancer often requires workers to come into contact with dirty conditions or unclean materials or to interact with questionable people while on the job, it can be considered a stigma that has physical and social taint. Additionally, the exotic dance profession requires women to remove clothing and show naked body parts that are usually considered private, violating norms of chastity and modesty; thus, the job has moral taint as well. It was expected that this moral taint would be perceived by the dancers as the hallmark of their stigmatization experiences. Because it is common for jobs to be known about by others, it was expected that most exotic dancers would see the visibility of their job as having a role in the contexts in which they experience stigmatization. Finally, it was expected that perceptions regarding these workers' choice of entering or leaving the dirty work job would contribute to their experiences of dirty work stigmatization.

Conceptual Approach

Due to the nature of the research aims of the present study, grounded theory was used to guide the collection and analysis of qualitative data representing the components of dirty work stigma. It should be reiterated that although grounded theory has traditionally been used to create new theory, in the present study, it was used to integrate and extend existing theory.

Grounded theory is a qualitative analysis technique whereby theory can be created directly from the data representing a phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The goal of the grounded theory approach is to develop an ecologically valid theory of a phenomenon that faithfully represents the actual experiences of the people who experience the phenomenon (Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). It is the *process* of the phenomenon that is of central focus throughout the application of the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Researchers identify the action within the phenomenon and how and why that action is stabilized, exacerbated, or ameliorated under specific conditions so as to understand participant experiences over time (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

Although qualitative methods such as grounded theory are subjective in that they do not rely on directly measurable data, these methods can be structured in such a way so as to increase their objectivity. First, the grounded theory methodology consists of three iterative analytic steps—open coding, axial coding, and selective coding—that, when followed, increase the ability to replicate the findings. Additionally, by stipulating the research questions of interest and clearly presenting the procedures used to collect data, the methodology can be replicated, thereby allowing for a test of the conclusions of the study. Furthermore, in grounded theory analysis, data is obtained from multiple perspectives (e.g., participants) in order to increase the probability of arriving at the truth of the phenomenon of interest.

In the first grounded theory step, open coding, the data obtained from the participants (i.e., the transcripts of interviews with exotic dancers) are carefully

examined in order to ensure that the constituent components of the phenomenon are labeled appropriately (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Passages within the transcripts are examined for meaningful content; meaningful, relevant passages are assigned to concept categories.

Next, in axial coding, each category is re-examined in order to determine possible sub-categories and the action within that category. Researchers inspect the passages within each category in order to identify the antecedents, outcomes, and context of the phenomenon as experienced by the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Through axial coding, researchers can deduce and label the relationships between concept categories and their sub-categories.

In the third stage, selective coding, the full set of concept categories and sub-categories are incorporated into one meaningful network. The ultimate result of selective coding, after all the iterations among the coding processes, is the creation of a theory that represents the phenomenon of interest. Researchers identify one category as most representative of the phenomenon of interest. The remaining categories, sub-categories, and their relationships to each other and to the central category are inspected in order to describe the theory of the phenomenon of interest that represents the experiences of the participants with ecological fidelity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

METHOD

Participants

Participants for the present study were drawn from those in a larger study regarding the stigmatization, stress, health, and coping experiences of female exotic dancers. Female exotic dancers were recruited from a live entertainment establishment in a large city in the southwest United States. Initial recruitment efforts took the form of one investigator cold-calling establishments listed as *gentlemen's clubs* in the city directory and asking for permission from the manager on duty to conduct a study several months in the future with their employees as participants, on the premises of the establishment, before or after the employees were scheduled to perform. These initial efforts resulted in a preliminary agreement from several establishments to participate in the study; however, the managers of these establishments stated that because the study was several months in the future, they would not be able to give full permission until several days before the research team planned to conduct the study at their establishments. Several days before conducting the study, these managers were again approached by the investigator; all of the managers declined participation. Next, the second attempt to recruit establishments took the form of face-to-face cold-calling several of these same establishments, others that had initially declined to participate, and several that were not on the first list of gentlemen's clubs but were known about by the investigators due to their proximity to the other establishments. Only one establishment granted permission for the study to be conducted on their premises with their employees.

It was this one establishment that served as the location of the larger study and as the source for recruiting all participants in the larger study. This establishment had been identified by people in the exotic dance industry as an upscale gentleman's club—its employees, clientele, and interior design exuded an air of sophistication. All employees strictly adhered to a dress code; performers were restricted from wearing shorts, wait staff were dressed in uniforms, and management was dressed in suits and ties. Male customers were required to be clothed in collared shirts. The establishment consisted of several stages on which performers danced, as well as several rooms where the performers provided personal entertainment for their customers.

Upon receiving permission from the management of the establishment, participants were recruited over a five-month time period, over eleven visits by the investigators to the establishment. Exotic dancers performing in the establishment were recruited by one of three methods. Initially, participants were recruited by the manager on duty. After the investigators became more familiar with the establishment, they recruited participants by frequenting the locker room of the establishment and talking with the employees. Additionally, participants were recruited by word-of-mouth from participants who had already completed the study (i.e., snowball technique). All interested exotic dancers were informed that the larger study was about their experiences working as an exotic dancer, that the study included an interview and a set of surveys that would take approximately 60-90 minutes to complete, and that should they volunteer they would be compensated $25 for the surveys and $25 for the interview—for a potential total compensation of $50. On every visit to the establishment, an attempt

was made to approach every female exotic dancer who was present to ask if she would like to volunteer for the study. Each participant was allowed to participate only once in the study.

The recruitment efforts yielded 46 total participants in the larger study. The set of surveys was completed by all participants, and the interview was completed by 37 of the 46 participants. The sample of 37 interviewed participants reported an average age of 26.05 years ($SD = 4.93$) and had worked in the exotic dance industry for an average of 3.95 years ($SD = 3.08$), ranging from one day to ten years of tenure. The sample consisted of a variety of ethnic backgrounds, with the majority being Caucasian (54.05%); approximately equal proportions of African American (13.51%), Hispanic (18.92%), and other (13.51%) ethnic backgrounds were reported. The majority of the participants were married (62.16%) and had some college education (45.95%). On average, the participants earned $356.80 ($SD = 138.02$) per work shift, with work shifts averaging 7.3 hours ($SD = 0.95$).

The sample of 37 interviewed participants was divided into two groups of approximately equal size ($n = 18, 19$) such that one group would be used for the present study and the other would be used in a future study that would replicate and expand the present study. In an effort to create groups that were as similar in background as the original set of 37 participants, stratified random sampling techniques were executed, focusing on years of tenure in the exotic dance industry as well as ethnicity (see Table 1). Tenure was used as the primary stratification variable because it was the characteristic that was most proximal to the phenomenon of interest, work. Ethnicity was

Table 1

Present Study Sample Tenure and Ethnicity Strata

Tenure Strata		Frequency			
	Tenure	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic	Other[a]
0	2		2		
1	1				1
2	4	1	1	2	
3	3		2	1	
4	2	1	1		
5	2		1	1	
6	1		1		
7	0				
8	1		1		
9	1				1
10	1		1		
Present sample					
$n = 18$		2	10	4	2
$M = 3.83$		(11.11%)	(55.56%)	(22.22%)	(11.11%)
$SD = 2.89$					
Future hold out sample					
$n = 19$		3	10	3	3
$M = 4.05$		(15.79%)	(52.63%)	(15.79%)	(15.79%)
$SD = 3.32$					
Total interview sample					
$n = 37$		5	20	7	5
$M = 3.95$		(13.51%)	(54.05%)	(18.92%)	(13.51%)
$SD = 3.08$					

Note: % represents percent of sample.

[a]Other is a combination of Asian, Foreign National, and undisclosed ethnicities.

the secondary variable on which participants were stratified in order to achieve the representation of ethnicity that was present in the original sample.

In the first step, the 37 participants were stratified based on the number of years of tenure in the exotic dance industry that they reported in the demographic survey; this step yielded 11 tenure categories. In the next step, within each tenure category, the participants were stratified according to the ethnicity. Ethnicity was divided into four strata: (a) African American, (b) Caucasian, (c) Hispanic, or (d) Other—a combination of Native American, Foreign National, and other, undisclosed ethnicities as reported in the demographic survey. In the final step, participants were placed into one of two groups. For tenure-ethnicity strata possessing an even number of participants, a table of random digits was consulted in order to randomly assign each participant to one of the two groups. Several strata contained an odd number of participants, in such cases, a table of random digits was again consulted until there remained only one unassigned participant in the stratum. Next, the unassigned participants were compared, and using purposive sampling, a selection decision was made between the tenure-ethnicity strata of the unassigned participants. A calculation was conducted in order to determine the extent to which selecting one participant over another would affect the mean tenure and percent ethnicity for each group; the goal was to create participant groups with approximately equal mean tenure and percent ethnicity to that of the total sample of 37 participants.

This stratified random sampling process yielded the present study sample, a group that possessed approximately equal mean tenure and percent ethnicity values as

the future holdout sample and total sample of interviewed participants (see Table 1). In

the present study, the interviews from the group of 18 participants were analyzed.

Procedure

Interviews were conducted with each of the 37 participants who agreed to be

interviewed. All interviews were conducted on the premises of the establishment in one

of three rooms removed from the performance stage and viewing area of the

establishment; customers were not allowed access to these interview locations.

Upon entering the interview location, participants were again informed of the

purposes, the data collection methods, and the compensation schedule for the study. All

participants signed the informed consent form which stated the purposes, methods, and

compensation schedule of the study. Each participant was provided a copy of the

informed consent form for her personal records. The participants completed the survey

materials before beginning the interview. In some cases, there was a brief interval

between the surveys and the interview because the participant needed to return to her

work or to a customer; in such cases, the participant was compensated for the portion of

the study that had been completed and was informed that she could return to the

interview location should she want to continue participation in the interview portion of

the study.

Before beginning the interview, the participants were again informed of the

interview protocol, which included that the interview would be audio recorded for the

purpose of transcription, that the tapes were marked with the same, unique number code

as the set of surveys that she had previously completed in order to protect her identity,

and that the tapes would be destroyed following transcription. Participants were asked to assent to audio-taping of the interview. All participants agreed to the terms of the interview.

Each interview was conducted by one of three trained investigators; during most interviews, another trained investigator observed, taking notes on the verbal and nonverbal content of the interview. Interviews were conducted in a face-to-face dialogue format between one investigator and one participant. The interviews were semi-structured, such that the investigator had a set of topics to address in the interview, but the word choice and timing of the questions varied from interview to interview based on the responses of the participants.

The interviews began with the investigator asking the participant what word she used to describe her profession; this question was designed to allow the investigator to know what word to use in the remainder of the interview when asking specific questions about being an exotic dancer. Then the investigator asked the participant to describe when she first used that word; this question was designed to invite the participant into an active dialogue with the investigator about possible stigmatization based on her experiences of revealing her work role to others. The remainder of the interview probed into the specific content of the participant's experiences with telling others what she does; her perceptions of others' beliefs and feelings about her line of work; the impact of her job on her stress, health, and coping resources; and whether and how she believes that she and other exotic dancers are stigmatized for the work that they perform. Although the content of the interviews covered the above topics relevant to the larger

study, for the purpose of the present study, responses to the questions regarding the participants' perceptions of others' beliefs and feelings about her line of work and her accounts of stigmatization were of central focus.

The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes to one hour. After the interview, the investigator thanked the participant for her participation, paid her $50 for completing the set of surveys and the interview, and gave her a list of local safety and mental health resources available at no cost to the public. Each participant was debriefed and asked if she had any questions or concerns that the investigator could address; participants were reminded that in the future, should they need to contact the investigators with any questions about the study, the contact information for the investigators was listed on their copy of the informed consent form.

Upon completion of the study, the audio tapes were transcribed by a trained investigator and several trained student research assistants. The audio tapes were then destroyed.

Analysis

The transcripts from the interview sessions were qualitatively analyzed using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994) as a guide. Each transcript was imported into the ATLAS/ti Version WIN 4.2 software package (Muhr, 1998), a qualitative data management tool. ATLAS/ti stores categories that are created by the researcher, allowing for ease in searching for, documenting, and linking meaningful quotes between and within transcripts.

In order to carry out the grounded theory steps of open, axial, and selective coding, the following process was undertaken. Meaningful participant quotes were identified and labeled in the transcripts; that is, concept categories (i.e., ATLAS/ti codes) were assigned to each of the relevant quotes. Although some codes were preconceived based on the review of the stigmatization and dirty work literatures, other codes emerged during the careful inspection of the content of the interview dialogues. At the conclusion of this step, common themes among the list of codes (i.e., ATLAS/ti supercodes) were identified. These supercodes were then assigned to the transcripts, such that the quotes associated with the codes under one supercode were grouped together.

Although several supercodes were generated based on the interviews, for the purposes of the present study, only the supercodes regarding stigmatization experiences were used. That is, for the present study, only the interview passages in which the participants recounted their personal encounters or expectations of future encounters regarding stigmatization were considered. These stigmatization experience supercodes included five themes: (a) participant awareness of society's negative perceptions, (b) type of stigma according to Goffman's (1963) categories, (c) visibility of stigma, (d) controllability of stigma, and (e) type of stigma taint according to the categories proposed by Hughes (1951, 1958) and Ashforth and Kreiner (1999). After identifying the themes, the quotes within each supercode were scrutinized, and those that were not relevant to the theme were removed, while those that fit the thematic content of the participant accounts were retained. Thus, a refined and final set of meaningful quotes was generated for each stigmatization experience supercode.

Selective coding—in which the supercodes, codes, and subcodes are linked to form one meaningful network—was the final aspect of grounded theory used in the present study. In this final analytical step of the study, the relationships among the themes were identified in order to understand the components of dirty work stigma. This step integrated and extended existing theory regarding stigma and dirty work.

RESULTS

Awareness of Negative Perceptions

The first theme in the participant accounts was their awareness of society's negative perception of the work that they perform. This theme indicated that the participants were not oblivious that they were stigmatized due to the work that they perform. The participants were aware of the negative perceptions surrounding exotic dancing. The participants believed that the actions and characteristics of a few women in their profession maintained society's negative perceptions of all exotic dancers, and that these negative perceptions were the basis from which society stigmatized exotic dancers.

The negative perceptions the participants frequently listed as being held by society included believing that exotic dancers have sex and perform other sexual favors for money, that they engage in excessively drinking alcohol and using illegal drugs, and that they are manipulative. One participant noted that "society portrays it [exotic dancing] as being wrong because they have that [mentality] already, 'Well they're all sluts and this and that and they do drugs and they shake their ass for money'." Another participant said that society "thinks that girls [female exotic dancers] are probably just nasty whores" and later reiterated that society views exotic dancers as "nasty, trashy."

Commonly, the participants claimed that society's negative perceptions were based in truth, yet they were quick to make it known that they did not deserve to be stigmatized based on these negative perceptions. One participant described an incident in which she was consoled by her husband after a customer verbally assaulted her, stating:

Participant: I got home, and my husband of course asked me what happened. And I told him the whole nine [yards]. And then he gave me his opinion on it, and he was there to comfort me, to tell me, "You're not a whore and you're not a slut. You're not all these bad names that he called you."

Investigator: How did it feel hearing that—from your husband?

Participant: Oh it was. I know I'm not. I mean, there is [are] tons of girls [female exotic dancers] of course that—I can't really say that do extras, but you know do more of course than what I do—and I know I'm not that person. But it made me feel good to hear my husband stand behind me and be like, "You know what? Don't worry about it." Because really the way I look at it [is that] nobody else's opinion matters to me. I'm gonna be who I want to be and if you can accept me for that then you can accept me. If not, then don't talk to me.

In this dialogue, the participant explained that she was aware that other members of society, even her customers, might judge her, thinking that she is like other exotic dancers who perform sexual favors. She clearly stated that she was not that kind of person, regardless of what others think about her.

One aspect of this theme was the participants' awareness of others in their social interactions. That is, the participants acknowledged that not all people with whom they interacted held negative perceptions about exotic dancing; yet, they noted being aware that certain others in their social interactions did or would be likely to endorse the negative perceptions of exotic dancers. A few of the participants noted that their families and friends were concerned about the job they performed, and that this concern stemmed

from the families' and friends' belief that the participants would become involved with the aspects of the job upon which society's negative perceptions are based (e.g., drug abuse). However, participants also acknowledged that certain family and friends endorsed society's negative perceptions of exotic dancing, perceptions upon which the participants had experienced or anticipated experiencing stigmatization from these specific others. Participants reported being excluded from further social interactions by certain friends who held negative perceptions about exotic dancing, noting that this change in relationship and the stigmatization they experienced was due to their job. One participant noted her husband's negative perception of her work and how he devalued her based on the work she performs; she described:

> It's [exotic dancing] like so embarrassing to him [my husband]. And it's just not the way of life at all. And it's, to him, it wasn't a job . . . He thinks like everyone else thinks. The only people that actually know what it's [exotic dancing] about is if you actually work here.

Type of Stigma

A second theme to emerge from the participant accounts was the type of stigma that they identified their occupation to be. Namely, Goffman's (1963) categories of tribal stigma and stigmas that are blemishes of character were the two types of stigma that appeared in the exotic dancers' descriptions of their stigmatization experiences.

Frequently, the participants noted that they did not want to be classified incorrectly as a bad person who performs bad behaviors, thereby acknowledging their stigma as a blemish of character. However, it should be noted that this concern of being

viewed as bad also can be labeled as a fear of the moral taint of the stigma of dirty work; this possibility would be consistent with the considerable overlap between the stigma category of blemish of character and stigmas that have moral taint. One participant commented, "I don't want them [people she interacts with] to categorize me with a bad, you know, things that have happened in the past that have been bad or whatever with a dancer," making it clear that she worried that by working as an exotic dancer she would be devalued by others based on the bad behavior typically associated with other people in her profession. Many participants expanded on the concept of "bad" by explaining that they did not want to be labeled as "tacky," have their choice of work and the behaviors they perform at work seen as "wrong" or "not right." Often the fact that these workers perform their job in the nude was identified as a major component of their fear of being labeled as bad.

Typically, participants reported stigmatization experiences that can be conceptualized as being based on society's perception of being an exotic dancer as a stigma that is both a blemish of character and a tribal stigma. When an investigator asked one participant what she perceived other members of society believed about exotic dancers, the following dialogue occurred:

Participant: Easy.

Investigator: Like as in sexually easy?

Participant: Yeah, easy, out-there, psychotics or something.

Investigator: OK.

Participant: Not the typical sane person.

This response indicates that this participant viewed the dirty work stigma as being doubly stigmatizing. The job of exotic dancing is a stigma based on the bad behaviors of being sexually promiscuous; it is also a stigma due to being grouped with other stigmatized groups such as the psychologically ill as well as prostitutes. Still, other participants described experiences in which they were classified as groups of people who are abnormal, such as those with a history of being molested as children, those who are bisexual or homosexual, and those who are deviant (e.g., abuse illegal drugs or engage in sexual promiscuity). This experience can be understood by the response of one participant when she was asked about whether exotic dancers are stigmatized:

> You know, I think they think all dancers are like that [deviant], but people don't know that we actually do have normal lives, we actually do normal things. And everybody just has this impression that a dancer is a drug addict or, you know, whatever, and we're not all like that. There are some but not all of us are that way.

Frequently, the overlap between exotic dancing being both a blemish of character and a tribal stigma was described by participants' accounts of first becoming aware that people close to them devalued them based on their work. Therefore, this theme overlapped with the previous theme of awareness society's negative perceptions and its aspect of others in social interactions. For example, one participant explained that she always knew exotic dancers were stigmatized, even before entering the industry. However, she experienced stigmatization personally when she was left alone in a friend's home with that friend's husband. The friend had left with another acquaintance,

who then questioned why the wife had left her husband alone with the participant. The participant explained, "That's when I realized that even people I thought were my friends—that there was such a strong label for anybody in that profession [exotic dancing]." Here, the participant identified that people with whom she interacted categorized her as bad because it was assumed that by working as an exotic dancer, she would be sexually promiscuous, and would thus have sex with married men. Participant descriptions of such experiences often were followed by vehement statements that exotic dancers are *not* prostitutes and should not be classified as such. They asserted that prostitution was a line that most exotic dancers did not cross. Indeed, none of the participants reported engaging in sex or other sexual favors at work.

Visibility

The degree to which being an exotic dancer was able to be known (i.e., visible) by others in social interaction was another prevalent theme in the participants' interviews. This theme included varying levels of visibility, although the most frequent response was that the participants actively engaged in minimizing the visibility of their occupation. One participant spoke about the differences in the visibility of her job between when she first became an exotic dancer and the time of the interview; she said, "I was embarrassed then. I didn't want to let everyone know, but now it's like, 'Yeah I'm doing this. If you have a problem, just, you know, kiss my butt'." In the past, this participant did not want to reveal her job, and by using the word "embarrassed," this participant's hiding her job can be interpreted as being rooted in her awareness that there is a stigma attached to the work that she performs. But, over time, she decided to not be

preoccupied by its visibility because she was no longer concerned with society's perception of her job. The majority of the participants reported similar experiences of attempting to hide their jobs, passing as people who do not possess the dirty work stigma.

Frequently, the participants described being on-guard for the social interactions in which their profession should either be revealed or hidden. As follows, one participant discussed having to be aware of when she should and should not reveal what she does for a living:

> But I think a lot of them [other exotic dancers] think like I do too, as far as when it [their job] should be mentioned and when it shouldn't be mentioned 'cause I think a lot of them have children and feel like I do. They don't want people judging them by their job especially when you [they] get [have] children.

Later in the same section of the interview, this participant commented, "It's like we're just better off with some things just left unsaid." Here, the participant recognized that in some situations it is better to conceal that one is an exotic dancer or to pass as someone who is not an exotic dancer than to make one's profession known. A participant stated, "It just depends on what situation I'm in. If I try to go purchase something and they need to know where I work, how much I make, I don't [say], 'Oh, I'm a dancer'."

It was common for the participants to report that they hid their profession from people with whom they did not have close relationships, such as acquaintances, neighbors, service providers, and even future employers for fear of being treated with a "negative response" or of having others form "the wrong impression" of them (i.e.,

stigmatize them) because they work as exotic dancers. In these situations, the women either did not mention having a profession or they engaged in passing. They claimed to be an entertainer, a dancer, self-employed, or a contract worker—titles that do *somewhat* describe their industry, while at the same time not revealing the complete truth. Still, others who used to or continued to work in other, non-dirty work jobs such as legal secretary passed by only referring to those professions, not exotic dancing, when asked by others about what they do for a living. Several participants claimed to hold jobs such as waitress or toll booth teller, jobs that were neither associated with their true job nor that they had ever performed. Interestingly, in such cases, these women selected pseudo-occupations that would be difficult for others to confirm or deny that the participant held that particular work role; thus, both their true job and false job were concealed.

Additionally, several of the participants reported that even in close relationships they hide their job by engaging in passing behaviors. In many cases in which the participants kept close friends and family from knowing that they worked as exotic dancers, they cited two reasons for concealing: (a) how they earn money is no one's business and (b) they had been or anticipated that they would be "treated differently" or that others would "lower their way they view me [participant]" (i.e., stigmatize them) if their job were revealed. One participant reported that her friends and family did not know that she worked as an exotic dancer; only her husband knew. When asked about this situation she whispered, "Nobody knows . . . I don't ever want anyone [friends and family] to know. I don't want them to look at me any different." Another participant concealed her job from her "conservative" family because "they would just die if they

found out." When the investigator asked about keeping her family from finding out that she was an exotic dancer, she responded:

> *Participant*: I always have to be lying, and I hate lying. They [family] ask me about my job, and I say, "Yeah, it's OK," and I feel like I'm a terrible liar, because when you want to lie, it's easier, but when you don't want to, it's like uh. I'm so bad at it [lying].
>
> *Investigator*: What do they think you do?
>
> *Participant*: Well, I got my real estate license, and I was doin' that for a while. So, they still think I do that.

Still, other participants did reveal their work role to their families and friends. For several participants, making their job visible to a few choice people did not result in the stigmatization that they feared. It should be noted that in those cases in which the dirty work had become visible and was accepted by others, the participants emphasized that they had *not* been stigmatized based on that particular revelation. For example, one participant described telling her close friend, saying, "It was a good experience because she [friend] didn't treat me any differently for it [knowing she was an exotic dancer]. She didn't look at me differently and just went on as usual."

In other cases, making the job visible to friends and family resulted in the participant choosing to cover the stigma that had become known. One participant's parents were active members of her community, so when she told them that she was an exotic dancer, she moved to another city in order to not contaminate her parents' public image. When another participant's work role became known by her father, he told her to

never talk about her choice of profession to him. The participant described how her father stigmatized her and threatened her with humiliation, as follows:

> *Participant*: He [father] told me that if he was to walk in here, and he saw me on stage, he was gonna come up there and throw a quarter at me.
>
> *Investigator*: What does that mean to you?
>
> *Participant*: That meant, basically, like I was a cheap whore. Basically, [that] is what it made me feel like. You know, that I was just trash. I mean, throw a quarter at me . . . that was basically worth nothing.

She reported that she does not tell him anything about her job; she covers her dirty work stigma.

Controllability

The controllability of entering or continuing to work as an exotic dancer was a theme in the participant interviews. The participants noted that they and other exotic dancers that they knew had entered—or reentered—the job for one of two onset-controllability reasons: (a) economic—to finance an education, get out of financial debt, or to not incur future debt or (b) to have a flexible work schedule that allows for more family and school time. Often, these reasons were cited immediately following the participants' claims that they do not fit society's negative perceptions for the reasons exotic dancers enter the industry; they stated that they should not be stigmatized for having entering exotic dancing. For example, one participant who worked as an exotic dancer in order to save money for her daughter's future described society's perception and how it inaccurately accounts for her onset-control:

They [society] never think of you [exotic dancers] as, "Well maybe she's just

doing this to raise her money to go to school, or maybe she has a day job and she

[is] only doing this for some extra money at the night, or [to] pay [for]

something." They don't think of that. You know what they think about is that

they're [exotic dancers] in here fucking to go get high or something, [or] do coke

or crack or whatever the hell the girls do.

Interestingly, although the participants remarked that they should not be

stigmatized, several said that they were not proud of entering their profession, but that

they needed to do so. For example, one participant first described being in a car accident,

then she discussed her financial burdens, and finally she said she reentered the industry,

as follows:

Participant: I got in a car accident last year.

Investigator: So you couldn't dance?

Participant: Oh, well, I didn't want to. My pride was too good to come back. And

I kept telling myself I'm gonna keep working, doing what I'm doing, and I have

gonna to do what I have to do. But by that time I'd ended up losing my

apartment. Being behind on so many bills. My credit wasn't too good. And

finally I said, "You know what, I'm gonna come do this [reenter exotic dancing],

get myself back on my feet."

In such cases, the onset-control was explained such that the participant had no other

option other than to enter a job that they felt was beneath them. That is, they perceived

that they *lacked* onset-control.

The control over exiting the job of exotic dancing was also described by the participants. Several participants said that they were not going to remain in the industry longer than necessary. When asked about this situation, one participant explained, "I'm building up for something [education]. And, this is not where I am going to end up for the rest of my life." Frequently, the ability to end their association with the industry was referenced by comments regarding the reasons that exotic dancers retain their jobs, not why they leave. One participant said that she and other exotic dancers "keep staying with the business. It's strange. I guess we just get attached to the freedom of being able to leave when you want and choose your own hours." One participant noted that she had a choice in remaining in the industry. She said, "I just choose to do it [earn money] this way, and I've accomplished things in a small amount of time. So, that's pretty much what keeps me here [working as an exotic dancer]." These accounts explain that the participants refrained from exiting exotic dancing because of the money and flexible schedule that they maintained doing their line of work, the same reasons they initially entered the profession.

Type of Taint

The type of taint that the participants perceived as being inherent in being an exotic dancer was the final theme of their accounts. Moral taint was the only taint that was identified in the participant responses. The moral taint of the stigma of exotic dancing included the participants' perceptions that others perceive that exotic dancers are tainted due to the moral issues and work role behaviors associated with the job that they perform, such as working in the nude, performing sexual acts, and using illegal

drugs. Several times, the participant's cited the defining feature of their work, performing in the nude, as a main reason for the negative perception of their dirty work job. For example, one participant explained, "They [society] have no clue. Just walking around topless—it's so—[they think,] 'Oh, it's nudity. It's a big deal.' It's a big deal to everybody, you know?"

In addition to their discussions of nudity, the participants also mentioned other immoral aspects associated with the job, such as engaging in illegal drug use and sex with customers—what they termed "getting caught up". They acknowledged that these acts are unacceptable according to societal and industry standards and even to those that they hold for themselves. Participants saw themselves as persons who do what is right, take care of their responsibilities, or who have morals or values. One participant said, "A lot of girls [exotic dancers] here [establishment] do that, a lot of things that are pretty much illegal—drugs, nasty sex, blowjobs—[behaviors] you shouldn't do." Later in this same account, she highlighted the dirty nature of these immoral acts by claiming, "I come here to work. I'm *clean* [emphasis added] about it. I dance. I pledge [make] my money honestly." Another participant recounted heeding her mother's advice to not get caught up. In her words, "She [mother] explained to me there is [are] a lot of things that you can get caught up in this business . . . People try to do something bad, this and that." She then qualified her involvement in the industry by saying, "I do what I feel is right but try not to get caught up in the bad things that do happen in places like this. And there are bad things that do happen."

Of particular interest was one participant's view of the moral taint of the stigma of being a dirty worker. She said:

A lot of older people don't understand. Like I said, society portrays it [exotic dancing] as one thing. And in their eyes it's not good, it's not a good thing. They look at it as *dirty* [emphasis added] all the negative things about it. I take my clothes off for a living. And a lot of older people, they don't understand. They have obviously never either done it or known somebody that has done it, so the first thing that comes to mind to them is that it's not the right thing to do.

Later, this same participant summed up her perspective by claiming that "people don't like what I do." This participant's response highlights the perception of exotic dancers that they are stigmatized because of the dirty work that they perform, and that the moral taint of the behaviors that they perform on the job is believed by others to reflect immorality onto the workers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the present study, grounded theory was used to guide the design of the data collection and analysis. By focusing on the accounts of people working in a dirty work job, the present conceptualization of the components of dirty work stigma was informed by actual dirty workers, their experiences, their expectations, and their perceptions—providing a realistic, meaningful, and grounded understanding of the components of this complicated phenomenon. The continual analysis of participant accounts allowed for the uncovering of common themes regarding the specific characteristics of dirty work stigma. Several themes regarding the components of stigma and dirty work were described in the results section. Whereas several themes emerged from the interviews, the theme of moral taint centrally organized the reported experiences of the exotic dancers in this study. This discussion section will assimilate the themes into a framework in order to integrate and extend existing theory regarding the components of stigma and dirty work.

In the first theme, the participants were aware that society holds negative perceptions regarding exotic dancers—perceptions of sexual promiscuity, alcohol and drug abuse, and deceit. These negative perceptions can be categorized as characteristics that violate social norms of morality. Within this theme, the participants indicated that not all of the others with whom they interacted endorsed these negative perceptions. However, they experienced or anticipated experiencing stigmatization in social interactions with individuals who held these negative perceptions—those who perceived exotic dancers as immoral.

The stigmatization that these exotic dancers experienced was based on their work role being classified as two of Goffman's (1963) stigma categories: tribal stigma and stigmas that are blemishes of character; their attention to classification formed the second theme. Often these participants commented on being incorrectly classified as someone who is bad or is similar to others who are viewed by society as marginal members (e.g., the mentally ill), emphasizing the immoral and non-normative aspects of this form of dirty work.

In a third theme, the visibility of the stigma of being an exotic dancer was considered as flexible based on the actions of these workers to conceal their profession using passing or covering behaviors in hopes of avoiding potential stigmatization in their social interactions. Their efforts to manage the visibility of their jobs often took the form of claiming to work in some other, normatively-moral or morally-neutral profession (i.e., one that would not be devalued).

The theme of controllability of the onset and offset of dirty work demonstrated that the participants believed that economic pressures and a need for a flexible work schedule played a major role in their entrance into and their continued employment in the exotic dance industry. Although the contribution of moral taint to the controllability theme is not directly evident in the participant accounts, it can be reasoned that by explaining that they work in a dirty job because of a normal, morally-neutral reason—money or time—these dirty workers were neutralizing the immorality of their stigma. That is, these dirty workers seemed to appeal to widely accepted and understood reasons for working in an effort to deflect either perceptions that they chose the job because of

an immoral nature or to justify their association with a morally questionable occupation and industry.

The final theme of the taint of dirty work informed the previous four themes. In this central theme, the only form of taint to be acknowledged by the participants was moral taint. In their view, working as an exotic dancer was stigmatizing because of the immoral nature of the job itself (e.g., engaging in drugs, sex, nudity). Without these immoral qualities, perhaps the job of exotic dancing would not be considered a devalued attribute of these workers; thus, it is the moral taint of the work that rubs taint and its stigma onto the dirty workers.

The present conceptualization of the components of dirty work stigma is based on the accounts of 18 women, working in one sector of dirty work (i.e., exotic dancing), in one establishment, located in a particular regional setting. Therefore, this framework of the components of dirty work stigma must include a caveat when applied to workers in other establishments and working in other dirty work occupations, especially those that include men and those located in other areas of the United States or other parts of the world. It is an open question whether this conceptualization of the components of dirty work stigma will be generalizable across dirty work jobs, employees, and settings; however, the generalizability of this framework and its boundary conditions were not the focus of the present study. The aim of the present study was to explore dirty work stigmatization experiences in a sample of dirty workers in an effort to integrate current theory regarding the components of stigma and dirty work.

Again, it should be emphasized that the framework of the components of dirty work stigma offered in the present study is an integration of existing theory regarding the components of stigma and dirty work. The present study is intended to serve as a basis from which future research can further refine the current understanding of dirty work stigmatization. The framework offered here can be incorporated into other existing and future theory regarding the pattern of development, course, and outcomes of dirty work stigmatization. There remains a wealth of opportunity to establish a valid and generalizable theory of the whole phenomenon of dirty work stigmatization.

This study is limited in scope to the experiences of female exotic dancers, dirty workers who are likely to encounter extreme stigmatization when compared to other dirty workers. However, it is plausible that the conclusions reached in the present study generalize to other dirty workers with less extreme stigmatization experiences because it is likely that the features and characteristics of less extreme stigmatization experiences are also present in the stigmatization experiences of female exotic dancers.

It is important to note that not all dirty jobs have a moral taint component. For example, garbage collecting is a dirty job, but few people would judge collecting trash and working with rubbish to be immoral. Instead, the psychological dirtiness of this job is derived from the physical attributes of the job: trash is, literally, dirty. Thus, it is anticipated that one boundary condition on the extent to which this framework can generalize to other types of dirty work is likely to be the degree to which moral taint is central to the devaluation of workers. Compared to dirty work that has little or no moral taint, the understanding of the components of dirty work stigma as outlined in the

present study is likely to over-emphasize the contribution of moral taint. However, it is likely that the two other types of taint—physical and social—would centrally organize the dirty work stigma components of workers in professions that do not have a high immoral component. Therefore, research involving a broad-scale examination of dirty work across different dirty work jobs with different types of taint would be informative as to the centrally organizing nature of the taint component of dirty work stigma.

Efforts are in progress to continue the analysis of the data from which the present study has been drawn, using the 19-participant holdout sample. It is expected that this effort will test the propositions of the present study, as well as expand the current understanding of the development of dirty work stigmatization. With this holdout sample, an analysis of the participant accounts of revealing their work roles to others can be undertaken in order to inform current theory regarding the process of dirty work stigmatization. Additionally, the interviews are rich in data concerning the ways in which these dirty workers use coping as a resource to manage the stress they encounter in their stigmatization experiences. Moreover, in the larger study of 46 participants, questionnaire data were collected regarding the physiological and psychological health of these participants. The health data offer an opportunity for understanding the personal outcomes of dirty work stigma for these workers.

A limitation to the larger study and the samples from which the present study and future study were drawn is that the participants worked in the same establishment, an upscale gentleman's club in a large city in the southwestern United States. It is likely that exotic dancers working in other types of establishments in other areas encounter

stigmatization that is different from those reported here, especially with regards to the stigmatization they receive from customers and the inaccuracy of society's perceptions of their profession. Indeed, participants in the present sample indicated that the nature of the establishment in which they worked was uniquely different from others they knew of because most performers working there were mothers or students and they engaged in little to no illegal sexual behaviors and drug use. Although differences might exist in the stigmatization experiences of performers from this establishment versus other locations, it is expected that the theory represented here will apply to exotic dancers in other establishments. However, the present conceptualization of the components of dirty work stigma may underestimate the extremity of stigmatization experiences for exotic dancers at other establishments. Future studies should be undertaken in order to determine the applicability of the present conceptualization to exotic dancers in other locations.

Additionally, future research might address the longitudinal process of dirty work stigmatization across workers and settings. Such research could be designed to follow dirty workers from their point of entry into, through their term of employment in, and following their exit from a dirty work profession, sampling over time their beliefs, affect, behaviors, and the context associated with their experiences of stigmatization. This type of research would extend the present conceptualization of the components of dirty work stigma into the temporal qualities of the phenomenon of dirty work stigmatization.

The present study described the components of dirty work stigma for exotic dancers. This conceptualization is grounded in the experiences of workers in this

particular dirty work profession. The components of dirty work stigma for the participants in the present study were centrally organized around the moral taint of their dirty work job. The awareness of society's negative perceptions of exotic dancing, the identification of the type of stigma that is exotic dancing, along with the visibility and controllability of this stigma was largely influenced by its moral taint. The present study demonstrates the importance of integrating both the stigma and dirty work perspectives in the examination of dirty work stigmatization experiences. The present study offers a framework for understanding the components of dirty work stigma.

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