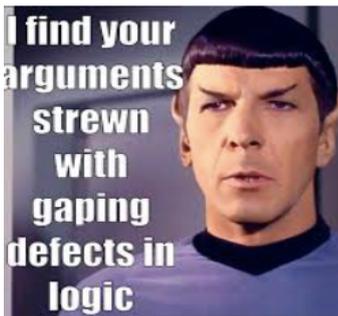


# 'Going Underground'

[or the 'Lap Dancing will Go Underground if you Don't License it, so You *Must* License It' Argument]

It is frequently suggested by supporters of the strip industry that if there aren't licensed strip clubs, the industry will go underground. This argument is even used to claim that it is actually *pro-equalities* to license lap dancing clubs because otherwise women will have to work in unlicensed venues.

## Illogical



This is a circular argument, as by that logic, nothing should be made illegal because then it will just 'go underground'.

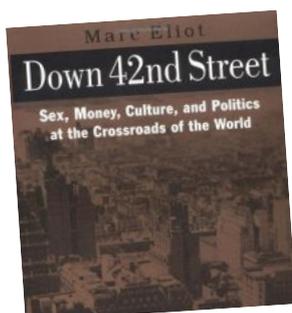
if there are unlicensed clubs they are operating in breach of the law and can be shut.

## No Evidence

There is absolutely no evidence that *not* licensing the strip industry drives it 'underground'. When Not Buying It contacted Local Councils who did not license strip clubs, not one had found any evidence of an underground industry.

The only 'evidence' to support the claim that lap dancing will go underground (as used by Sheffield City Council and others) appears to come from a research paper by Colosi <sup>1</sup>, a self-confessed fan of the lap dancing industry who describes it as 'fun'.

In this paper, Colosi cites a book she wrote as a PhD student <sup>2</sup>, for which she worked for a short time in a strip club. This book seems to merely state that working in an unlicensed environment can be more dangerous for dancers. No evidence appears to be given that such unregulated environments increase in the absence of licensed strip clubs.



Colosi also cites a book about New York by Marc Eliot <sup>3</sup>

But this book is not research evidence. Described as a 'rambunctious' (aka 'wildly boisterous') commentary on Amazon, it was written by a man who co-authors books with Erin Brokovitch and Barry White!

## Illegal Clubs can be Found and Shut

When illegal clubs set up they can always be found and shut down. If punters can find them, so can the authorities, as has happened across the USA:

Atlanta: Man busted for running illegal strip club in his home <sup>4,5</sup>

San Jose: Illegal clubs being shut after press reports <sup>6</sup>

Phoenix, 'stripper cage fighting', openly advertised on Facebook, shut by authorities <sup>7</sup>

## Illegal Strip Clubs or Just Illegal Activities and Legal Strip Clubs?

Many of the clubs dubbed 'illegal' and underground by casual observers might not be 'illegal' at all (as in unlicensed), but rather operating in breach of that license (which, after all, is standard across the industry) <sup>8, 9</sup>.

## Licensed Clubs Already Act like an Underground Industry

The greatest irony of this argument is perhaps the fact that the licensed strip trade already operates like an underground industry. This is exposed by research <sup>10</sup>, countless testimonies from lap dancers <sup>11</sup> and dozens of press exposés <sup>8</sup>.

## A Private Party is **NOT** an Underground Strip Club

On closer probing, it appears that the 'going underground' argument actually seems to refer to 'private parties with strippers'. **This is not an underground strip club.** Private parties that hire lap dancers (or prostitutes) are sadly going to happen regardless. But they are surely more likely to happen and be seen as totally acceptable in a culture that condones the High Street presence of strip clubs.

The rationale for stating performers will be driven into unsafe private hire parties appears then to be that lap dancers can't do anything else. We elaborate on the fallacy of this separately <sup>12</sup>. But we would highlight here, yet again, that we call on all Councils that close strip clubs to provide meaningful exit support for women the trade.

## The Legalised Industry Drives the Illegal Industry

But perhaps most importantly, the central premise that not licensing the industry will drive it underground is on its head. **It is actually the legitimising of the sex industry that drives the underground trade** – as has been found in every country that has legalised or decriminalised the pimps and punters in prostitution <sup>13</sup>.

### Read More

1 <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/social-policy-and-society/article/over-sexed-regulation-and-the-disregarded-worker-an-overview-of-the-impact-of-sexual-entertainment-policy-on-lapdancing-club-workers/EF5C70AFF281F37B83C8C6BCA7FA158B>

2 <http://eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/3407/>

3 <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-446-52571-8>

4 <https://www.wsbtv.com/news/local/dekalb-county/man-60-accused-of-running-illegal-strip-club-in-home/473973225>

5 <https://www.11alive.com/article/news/crime/illegal-strip-club-busted-next-to-daycare-church-in-dekalb/85-362385752>

6 <http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2015/12/08/san-jose-police-illegal-strip-clubs-crackdown/>

7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DuR1EwaXJI>

8 [www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleaze](http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleaze)

9 [www.notbuyingit.org.uk/UnfitUnsafe](http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/UnfitUnsafe)

10 <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8107&>

11 <http://notbuyingit.org.uk/strip-publications#Performers>

12 [www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Poverty](http://www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Poverty)

13 Find out more here: [www.nordicmodelnow.org](http://www.nordicmodelnow.org)