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Kalgoorlie's Sex Trade and the *Kalgoorlie Miner*: 1896–1903

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ABSTRACT

Kalgoorlie and the sex industry are synonymous. Around the time of Federation, significant attempts were made by the community to rid itself of prostitution. An important contributor to this endeavour was the local long-running daily newspaper, the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. To date, research has overlooked its significant role in building community and reinforcing hegemony. The *Kalgoorlie Miner's* framing of prostitution as the “social evil”—antithetical to Christian living, morals and civility—was a successful position because it appealed to the buying public and maintained pressure on the problem. This article explores the place of newspapers in a given community, Federation Kalgoorlie, and its prostitution. It finds that gatekeeping and community Christianity, particularly the laity, played an essential role in challenging and opposing prostitution.

KEYWORDS

Kalgoorlie; prostitution; Federation; *Kalgoorlie Miner*; news framing; community

Introduction

Andrew Hobbs argues that “locality has not been problematised in the same way as the concepts of nation and national identity, despite the fact that most of us live our lives at a local level”.¹ Personal and family identity typically includes an individual's community, whether current or not, and its influence on their world view, interactions with others, and affinity. Sociologists have long been interested in identity and its transcendent forces. Talcott Parsons distinguishes person-to-person from person-to-collective attachment with the latter focusing on the social order that makes for a stable and functioning system that binds people together as a motivation and value orientation.² Yet sociologists' interest in societal or cultural norms, beliefs and morality has not received the same attention as motivation. Nonetheless, of the available research, an interest in values and social order provides important insight. For instance, Ralph Turner has observed that some people view social order as a set of shared values, and others as constraint.³

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¹Andrew Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town: The Provisional Press in England, 1855–1900* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2018), 367.

²Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York: Free Press, 1951).

³Ralph H. Turner, “The Real Self: From Institution to Impulse,” *American Journal of Sociology* 81, no. 5 (1976): 989–1016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777553>.

In a community, this tension can be seen in conflicting views on resource use, local laws, and community social expectations and characteristics. Values, according to Margaret Marini, arise out of needs when cultural and social expectations occur.⁴ Steven Hitlin and Jane Piliavin provide the example of sex: a need for it “might be culturally reconstituted as a value for love. The expression and satisfaction of more biological needs can be reflected through culturally prescribed values, but these values are not needs”.⁵

Edward Royle proposes that communities are humanely created and are thereby shaped and subject to change according to the “political, not the geographical map”.⁶ Geography, unlike politics, remains relatively stable. Kalgoorlie is located on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain and the Great Victoria Desert, with low natural water access and a desert or local steppe climate.⁷ Politically, the Country of the Wangkatha peoples was colonised by a settler mining camp, then a town and now a city of commerce, houses, employment, and social and sporting facilities. It was first administered around the time of Federation by the Kalgoorlie Local Government in the Goldfields region of Western Australia.

As a snapshot in time, newspapers reflect the locality’s culture, traditions and character by publishing items that draw on local beliefs, attitudes and values. Hobbs identifies the importance of visible relationships that bind a community, such as religion, family, class and race.⁸ In particular, Hobbs posits that local newspapers play an essential role in identifying and developing local identity, framing the location and building community.⁹ Such an examination, however, has received little scholarly attention.¹⁰ This article seeks to respond to this deficit by examining Federation Kalgoorlie’s prostitution concern, as reported in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* newspaper. By applying the theoretical lens of news framing that Robert Entman defines as “culling a few elements of perceived reality and assembling a narrative that highlights connections among them to promote a particular interpretation”,¹¹ I hypothesise that the *Kalgoorlie Miner*—the community’s voice—promulgated the view that prostitution was apart from, or at odds with, the “new” Kalgoorlie. In short, there was no place for the “social evil” of prostitution in Kalgoorlie’s community: white, Christian, moral and civil.

The Rise of Kalgoorlie

Kalgoorlie’s prostitutes, brothels, pimps and clientele were nothing extraordinary for a mining camp and town dominated by single men—and money. The prostitutes were a typical mix of local and international from the British Isles, Europe and Japan (the *Karayuki-san*). A similar demographic of miners and prostitutes existed during the mid- to

⁴Margaret Mooney Marini, “Social Values and Norms,” in *Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. E. F. Borgatta and R. J. V. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 2000), 2828–40.

⁵Steven Hitlin and Jane Allyn Piliavin. “Values: Reviving a Dormant Concept,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 359–93.

⁶Edward Royle, “Introduction: Regions and Identities,” in *Issues of Regional Identity in Honour of John Marshall*, ed. Edward Royle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 2.

⁷Cold winters and warm summers in a semi-arid location.

⁸Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 269.

⁹Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 271–73.

¹⁰Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 221.

¹¹Robert Entman, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 5.

late 19th-century goldrushes in Victoria, Australia, Otago (Aeterea New Zealand) and the United States of America—in Alaskan-Yukon and Spokane (Washington). As in Kalgoorlie, the local¹² newspapers reported prostitution as a problem in their growing communities.¹³ At the turn of the 20th century, Kalgoorlie reflected a change from individual miners to mining companies with management on and off site, publicly listed companies, machinery, and disciplined and skilled workers. Kalgoorlie had become what Weston Bate observed as a complex organism whose ethos reflected its economic base and its inhabitants' social, religious and national composition.¹⁴ Newspaper editors, the mercantile class, local government councillors, church and union leaders expressed the “voices ... hopes [and] enlarge[d] conceptions”¹⁵ of what Kalgoorlians wanted their community to be. The establishment and pillaring of the churches in towns such as Kalgoorlie, especially the popular Anglican and Roman Catholic faiths, enabled the imposition of control: by clergy and laity civilising the township with Christianity, schools, hospitals, convents, businesses, social and sporting organisations, as well as in newspaper ownership and reporting. This is not to suggest that local newspapers were substitutes for church publications, or that the two main religions reconciled their differences in Kalgoorlie, but rather that they shared the same community ethos of Christian values and morals.

Meredith Lake observes that Australia's Christian hegemony challenges the “stereotype of a godless ex-convict community, happiest to keep the church at a stance”.¹⁶ Evidence of high and increasing church attendance rates during the mid- to late 1800s culminated in a boom of community exposure to the Bible and Christian ideas and teaching: its world view and how best to live and socialise in it.¹⁷ In 1891, 89 per cent of the Australasian population was Christian, and a decade later, 93 per cent;¹⁸ in Western Australia in 1891, 93 per cent of the population was Christian—the same in 1901.¹⁹ In 1901, 93 per cent of the Kalgoorlie community was also Christian.²⁰ It is therefore hard to overlook the presence and influence of the church in shaping and determining the Kalgoorlie community's moral and civil values. While some have argued, as Tom Frame does, that church allegiance included those of “nominal membership and token participation ... ‘performing one's religious duties’”,²¹ it does not discount the presence and

¹²Hobbs defines local or provincial “in opposition to ‘metropolitan’” (i.e. the *Sydney Morning Herald*) to mean “published outside of London”, rather than “narrow and uncultured”. See Andrew Hobbs, “Provincial Periodicals,” chap. 16 in *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers*, ed. Andrew King, Alexis Easley, and John Morton (London: Routledge, 2016), 8222.

¹³Lael Morgan, *Good Time Girls of the Alaska-Yukon Gold Rush* (Fairbanks, AK: Epicenter Press, 1999); Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria 1851–1861* (Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 1977); Ian Breward, *A History of the Churches in Australasia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

¹⁴Weston Bate, “The Urban Sprinkle: Country Towns and Australian Regional History,” in *Urbanisation in Australia: The 19th Century*, ed. C. B. Schedvin and J. W. McCarthy (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1970), 110–12.

¹⁵Bate, “The Urban Sprinkle,” 108.

¹⁶Meredith Lake, *The Bible in Australia* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018), 115.

¹⁷Anglicanism and Catholicism. See Len Smith, Tim Rowse, and Stuart Hungerford, “Historical and Colonial Census Data Archive (HCCDA),” Australian Bureau of Statistics; Australian Data Archive, doi:10.26193/MP6WRS, ADA Dataverse, V5 (accessed 1 November 2022); Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 115–16.

¹⁸The data include New Zealand. The increase in percentage was an increase in Church of England adherents. See T. A. Coghlan, *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia, 1901–1902* (Sydney: William Applegate Gullick, 1902), 838.

¹⁹Smith, Rowse, and Hungerford, “Historical and Colonial Census Data Archive (HCCDA)”. Please note that these data exclude Indigenous peoples. Interestingly, despite the Western Australian population increasing by 3.7 times in 10 years, the Christian community percentage remained static.

²⁰Smith, Rowse, and Hungerford, “Historical and Colonial Census Data Archive (HCCDA)”.

commitment to the Christian world view and way of living. Christian leadership and presence would have been found across the community—in all its civility, and as reported in Kalgoorlie newspapers, just like others across the nation.²²

Kalgoorlie's mayors and commercial leaders, like mine managers, represented various Kalgoorlie Christian denominations,²³ but Catholicism and Anglicanism dominated. Within the workings of the community, Christianity was evident in organisation membership and leadership including Catholic Very Rev. Father O'Gorman, who chaired the Pioneer Hurling Club. Catholic John Collins was president of the Hannan's Football Club, and Anglican Mrs J. W. Fimister was the host of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.²⁴ In addition, the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society supported (Catholic miner) members with welfare entitlements such as sick pay and funeral benefits. As Christianity was "an integral part of the fabric of Western Australian and Australian society",²⁵ a hegemonic moral and civil outlook dominated. It is of little surprise, then, that Jeanne MacKenzie, in her book *Australian Paradox*, highlights the way that Federation Australian attitudes and social patterns in towns and cities were intolerant towards social deviance such as prostitution and lawlessness.²⁶

Communities such as Kalgoorlie imputed the necessities of civil and Christian living that promoted social cohesion—whether a law was required or not. Nicholas Fyfe, Jon Bannister and Ade Kearns explain that civility is a composite of "proximate social behaviours" including politeness, courtesy, respect and sociability, but it also includes "diffuse" ones regarding the effects our behaviours may have on others.²⁷ Hence, community membership is equated to civic equality, where a subscription to common conditions gives rise to the responsibility of being civil to others. In Kalgoorlie, the rise of civility coincided with the arrival of the mercantile and professional classes, churches, respectable families, non-mining labour and interests in the arts and sport that flowed into demands of industry and local government. For instance, in 1899 the Lake View and Boulder Junction Gold Mining Company created a sports ground on its lease. Refinement, another form of civility like self-grooming, home presentation and cultural activities, was reflected in Kalgoorlie's growing population. For example, J. J. Dwyer's photographs of the long Victorian period in Kalgoorlie provide a visual documentary of work, activities and living.²⁸ Noticeably missing, however, are images of the *uncivil*:

²¹Tom Frame, *Losing my Religion: Unbelief in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2009), 73.

²²For a greater discussion on this, see Michael Gladwin, "The Journalist in the Rectory: Anglican Clergymen and Australian Intellectual Life, 1788–1850," *History Australia* 7, no. 3 (2010); Lake, *The Bible in Australia*.

²³For mayors, consider John Wilson (1895–1896), Anglican; Harold George Parsons (1896–1897), Anglican; Robert McKenzie (1897–1898), Anglican; John "Jack" William Fimister (1898–1900), Anglican; Miles Staniforth Smith (1900–1901), Anglican; Sir Norbert Michael Keenan (1901–1905), Catholic; and Jimmy (James) Hurtle Cummins (1905–1907), Catholic. For mining magnates, consider Captain Henry Richard Hancock, Moonta Mines, Methodist; R. D. Thompson, Hannan's Gold Estate Company, Catholic; Charles L. Hunt, Hannan's Propriety Development Company, Presbyterian; and George Arnell, Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines, Anglican.

²⁴"Kalgoorlie Pioneer Hurling Club," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 April 1899, 8; John Collins Bailie died 20 June 1941, aged 70, Roman Catholic, Kalgoorlie Cemetery (see <https://www.kalgoorlieboulderdercemetary.com.au/search/browse.php?s=500&np=44#store-top>); "Football," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 22 April 1898, 42; "Bailie Bros, Kalgoorlie," *Weekly Times*, (Melbourne), 10 August 1989, 54; "Items of News," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 14 July 1900, 4; "Local," *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 13 August 1901, 16.

²⁵John Cowdell, "The Anglican Church in Western Australia during the Great Depression," *Studies in Western Australian History* 9 (1987): 83.

²⁶Jeanne MacKenzie, *Australian Paradox* (Melbourne: F. W. Cheshire, 1962), 125.

²⁷Nicholas Fyfe, Jon Bannister, and Ade Kearns, "(Incivility) and the City," *Urban Studies* 43, no. 5/6 (2006): 854–55.

²⁸Robert Pascoe and Frances Thomson, *In Old Kalgoorlie: The Photographs of J.J. Dwyer* (Welshpool, WA: Western Australian Museum, 2012), 13.

prostitutes, criminals, pimps and sly grog shops. This omission could be explained as a reflection of Dwyer's Roman Catholic morals or, as Susan Priestley and Jeanne MacKenzie observe, the church's influence on the social and moral order being intolerant towards social deviance.²⁹ But it also tells of exogenous "othering": the included (moral and respectable) and excluded (immoral and disrespectable) Kalgoorlian.

Kalgoorlie Prostitution

A growing body of academic literature exists on Western Australian prostitution and then of the Eastern Goldfields around the time of Federation, particularly the presence of non-Indigenous female sex workers and from a labour and feminist perspective. Of note, Elaine McKeown, in her book *The Scarlet Mile: A Social History of Prostitution in Kalgoorlie, 1984–2004*, "aims to give 'scarlet women' a voice ... denied historically",³⁰ while Raelene Frances's extensive work on Australian, especially Western Australian, prostitution casts a light on women's lives, the history of prostitution and the sex economy.³¹ The Eastern Goldfields Historical Society has also published stories about the area's sex industry.³² Alongside these are publications that explore prostitution as a concern of the British Empire: the international traffic of women from Europe and Japan.³³ A common tenet of prostitution research, Ronald Weitzer observes, is its essentialisation of sex work by "radical feminism as the quintessential form of male domination over women—the epitome of women's subordination, degradation, and victimisation".³⁴ Put another way, it assumes that female prostitutes are without agency. Frances likewise challenges such an argument by locating prostitution within the historiography of work and then as a political necessity and historical reality.³⁵ Similarly, Norma King points out how agency was demonstrated by "a lot of the prostitutes in the [Kalgoorlie] Goldfields", who "were in the profession by their own decisions".³⁶ In brief, money was to be made, especially as the Kalgoorlie male population in 1898 dominated at 75 per cent, still 61 per cent in 1901.³⁷

²⁹Margaret Kiddle, *Men of Yesterday: A Social History of the Western District of Victorian 1834–1890* (Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 1967), 111–13; Susan Priestley, *Echuca: A Centenary History* (Brisbane: The Jacaranda Press, 1965), 57–59.

³⁰Elaine McKeown, *The Scarlet Mile: A Social History of Prostitution in Kalgoorlie, 1984–2004* (Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2005), 2.

³¹Raelene Davidson (formerly Frances), "Prostitution in Perth, Fremantle and the Eastern Goldfields, 1898–1939" (MA thesis, University of Western Australia, 1980); Davidson R. Crawley, "As Good a Bloody Woman as any other Bloody Woman: Prostitutes in Western Australia, 1895–1939," in *Exploring Women's Past: Essays in Social History*, ed. Patricia M. Crawford (Carlton, VIC: Sisters Publishing, 2007); Raelene Frances, *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1983); Simon Adams and Raelene Frances, "Lifting the Veil: The Sex Industry, Museums and Galleries," *Labour History* 85 (2003): 47–64; Raelene Frances, "White Slaves' and White Australia: Prostitution and Australian Society," *Australian Feminist Studies* 19, no. 44 (2004): 185–200; and Raelene Frances, "Australian Prostitution in International Context," *Australian Historical Studies* 27, no. 106 (1996): 127–41.

³²Norma King, "Ladies of the Night," chap. 6 in *Daughters of Midas: Pioneer Women of the Eastern Goldfields*, ed. Norma King (Carlisle, WA: Hesperian Press, 1988), 71–86; Sheryl Milentis and Peter Bridge, eds., *The Scarlet Stain: Harlots, Haridans and Hellholes of Old Kalgoorlie* (Carlisle, WA: Hesperian Press, 2004).

³³For example, Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality; The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991); Phillipa Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

³⁴Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality*; Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics*.

³⁵Frances, "Australian Prostitution in International Context," 127–41.

³⁶King, "Ladies of the Night," 76.

³⁷Compare "Population of Municipalities," *Western Mail*, 22 March 1898, 23 with data from "1903. Western Australia," Seventh Census of Western Australia, https://hccda.ada.edu.au/Collated_Census_Tables/WA-1901-census_02.html (accessed 1 May 2023).

McKeown confirms that brothels were the most popular workplace for prostitutes instead of street work. Brothel keepers were among Kalgoorlie's early property owners and business entrepreneurs, belonging to the mercantile class.³⁸ Kalgoorlie prostitutes and/or madams became wealthy with large disposable incomes and financial portfolios, for example, in the Western Australian pearl industry and small businesses.³⁹ Not discounting the number of indentured prostitutes in Kalgoorlie who worked for pimps and madams and surrendered a percentage of their earnings, some participants can be said to have had significant agency. Additionally, the sex industry offered great returns for landlords, who would charge exorbitant rent for brothels in exchange for the social risk of supporting immorality and breaching local council regulations.⁴⁰

Dirty Work and Whiteness

While Kalgoorlie remained a prosperous economy for prostitution (the male-to-female ratio remained high and the gold boom continued until World War I), the *Kalgoorlie Miner* associated prostitution with "dirty" work. According to Blake Ashford and Glen Kreiner, dirty work is a socially constructed term for disgusting or degrading employment,⁴¹ such as morally tainted prostitution. News reports published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of innocent white girls and women forced into the dirty work of prostitution through international trafficking rings were framed as contemptuous: an assault on whiteness and its global agency. The idea that white women were subject to a breach of liberty, agency and morality amounted to a "dirty" fear. Notably, the same concern was not expressed for "outsiders", including the Karayuki-san. The Anti-Asiatic League of Western Australia and Kalgoorlie associated Japanese brothels with a dirtiness reflecting demoralisation, debauchery and diseases such as leprosy.⁴² Such racism and marginalisation were part of Federation Australia's social thinking,⁴³ which considered non-whites, or Others, as less human. Prostitutes, especially foreign, were considered ready transmitters of disease, not only for the apparent risk they posed to client health but also to the moral and disease ruination of white society. Couched as global sabotage, sexual diseases inflicted on whites were believed to damage their virility.

Local Newspapers

Brian Fletcher observes that during the 19th century, "all newspapers, in varying ways, showed interest in religious issues" for reader resonance and interest,⁴⁴ alongside denominational and sectarian doctrine differences, including in the church and commentary on community, morality, justice, welfare and government matters.⁴⁵

³⁸McKeown, *The Scarlet Mile*, 18.

³⁹Frances, "'White Slaves'," 189.

⁴⁰"Municipal Elections," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 January 1900, 8.

⁴¹Blake Ashford and Glen Kreiner, "'How can you do it?': Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity," *Academy of Management Review* 24, no. 3 (1999): 413–34. The term "dirty work" was first coined by Everett Hughes in 1962. See Everett Hughes, "Good People and Dirty Work," *Social Problems* 10, no. 1 (1962): 3–11

⁴²"Japanese in Kalgoorlie," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 29 July 1896, 2.

⁴³Phillipa Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 151–54.

⁴⁴Brian H. Fletcher, "Christianity and Free Society in New South Wales 1788–1840," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 86, no. 2 (2000): 99.

⁴⁵Fletcher, "Christianity and Free Society," 98–102.

Newspaper owners and editors, such as Catholic John Kirwan of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*,⁴⁶ Presbyterian David Syme of Melbourne's *Age*, Congregationalist John Fairfax of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and Anglican Alf Chandler of the *Coolgardie Miner*, may or may not have been conscious of how their Christian world view shaped their moral outlook. Nevertheless, it influenced the content, tone and perspective of news published in their papers. Lucy Salmon reinforces this point by observing that newspapers in the 1890s "maintain[ed] an intimate relationship with the Church as an organisation and with the leading persons connected with it".⁴⁷ For example, they published complementary church matters in their newspapers including sermons, church services, and talks and lectures by esteemed clergy. It appealed to hegemonic Christian readers, like those of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. It also ensured newspaper circulation numbers, which then generated advertising interest and profitability.⁴⁸ A similar comparison of the time can be made to nations where the dominant religion and identification among the citizenry can also be observed.

Rod Kirkpatrick argues that the establishment of local newspapers and the community place afforded to them requires a heightened political focus,⁴⁹ which he refers to as "community-ism: an editorial preoccupation with the growth and prosperity of one's city", town or location.⁵⁰ Looking closely, we can see that news stories reporting on local and state government decisions (or lack of), as well as community groups' social interests and concerns, were the preoccupation of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. However, the "dirty work" of prostitution also received constant attention in the newspaper's columns: in items of news, police court reporting and letters to the editor, along with news on Municipal Council meetings, Progress Committees, and addresses by visitors and political candidates. In short, the newspaper played a central role in collecting, deciphering and sharing information about Kalgoorlie prostitution.

To be looked upon as a trustworthy source of news, editors, Salmon observes, need to juggle the complementary relationship of news and profitability alongside community or public expectations or impositions regarding "religion, property, residence, education, race or sex".⁵¹ A screening or filtering of news then takes place. Walter Lippman, in his seminal 1922 book, *Public Opinion*, observed the same: newspapers engage in a detailed process of selecting what to report on when it goes to press (if at all) and where it might appear.⁵² Put more simply, journalists and their editors engage in gate-keeping of what is published. In his 1950 article, "'The Gate Keeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News", David White reiterates the importance of personal choices in this selection process: "The newspaper editor sees to it (even though he [*sic*] may never be consciously aware of it) that the community shall hear only those events which the newsman, as the representative of his culture, believes to be true."⁵³

⁴⁶Later known as Sir John Kirwan.

⁴⁷Lucy Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1923), 93.

⁴⁸Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*.

⁴⁹Rod Kirkpatrick, *Country Conscience: A History of the New South Wales Provincial Press 1841–1995* (Canberra: Infinite Harvest Publishing, 2000), 115

⁵⁰Kirkpatrick, *Country Conscience*.

⁵¹Salmon, *The Newspaper and the Historian*, 252.

⁵²Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1922), 63.

⁵³David Manning White, "'The Gate Keeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1950): 390.

When applied to the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, this understanding describes the way in which news and advertising decisions inevitably filtered through editor John Kirwan's world view.⁵⁴ By gatekeeping, he pushed to banish prostitution, preferably entirely, from the town.

Interestingly, Kirwan's view on prostitution outside of the newspaper can only be conjectured or surmised: biographer Anne Partlon observes that his "private life was a closed book".⁵⁵ Nonetheless, writing about Kirwan's public life, Partlon, Pat Simpson and Norma King together describe him as being a liberal political radical: morally conservative, independent, democratic and sensible, with a great sense of humour, while abstaining from alcohol and gambling. He was community-spirited, friendly with the clergy and Catholic Irish.⁵⁶ In other words, Kirwan was a man of whiteness, civility and Christian morals.

News Framing

The *Kalgoorlie Miner* determined that Kalgoorlians wanted a "stable, middle-class, family-friendly growing population [with a] changing social composition" to attract newcomers and forge a respectable community for themselves.⁵⁷ The ongoing presence and display of prostitution in the town was considered a problem. Diagnosing the prostitution "problem" and advancing solutions were of great interest to the newspaper. It included reporting on and agitating for community and council action and improved law enforcement. If, as Rod Kirkpatrick argues, a local newspaper plays an instrumental role in defining and shaping a town, then it is community-centric.⁵⁸ Journalist salience for newsworthiness keeps a newspaper in print and can represent the difference between a short- and long-lived one. It includes knowing that what is newsworthy in one community may not be the same in another. To David Copeland, editors became influential community individuals in shaping public opinion. Demonstrating an awareness of the community's beliefs and attitudes and framing the news to best appeal to the buying public keeps them in business.⁵⁹ Indeed, newspaper editors traditionally controlled what the community was told.⁶⁰ Copeland, however, is quick to point out that it would be a mistake to assume community members were thoughtless followers and never questioned what they read because "editors had to convince [a] readership when controversial issues arose".⁶¹ In the case of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, identifying and

⁵⁴On becoming editor of the daily *Kalgoorlie Miner*, he was likewise responsible for the weekly Kalgoorlie newspaper *Western Argus*, as both newspapers were owned by Hocking & Co. I concentrate on the *Kalgoorlie Miner* because of its frequency and news dominance.

⁵⁵Partlon, "Mightier than the Sword," 13.

⁵⁶Partlon, "Mightier than the Sword," 3–7; Pat Simpson, "Kirwan, Sir John Waters (1869–1949)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2006), <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kirwan-sir-john-waters-6978/text12125> (published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 15 November 2022); Norma King, *The Voice of the Goldfields: 100 Years of the Kalgoorlie Miner* (Kalgoorlie, WA: Hocking & Co, 1995), 44–45. In addition, he supported, like most Australians at the time, a White Australia: where coloured and "undesirable" immigration would be excluded, where the nation would view Japan as potentially hostile, and where he "was a working man of limited financial means". *Evening Star*, "Boulder (WA), 15 March 1901, 3.

⁵⁷McKeown, *The Scarlet Mile*, 34.

⁵⁸Rod Kirkpatrick, "Regional Press," in *A Companion to the Australian Media*, ed. Bridget Griffen-Foley (Kew: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2014), 408–11.

⁵⁹David Coupland, *The Media's Role in Defining the Nation: The Active Voice* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 104.

⁶⁰Rural newspapers selected information, including syndicated news, that could affect or be of interest to readers (for example, on the Boer War, Federation, Western Australian miner politics and the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme).

⁶¹Coupland, *The Media's Role in Defining the Nation*, 104.

proposing solutions to the social evil was one such example. The newspaper and its editor were keenly interested in reorientating Kalgoorlie's prostitution reputation from its early but tolerated "Wild West" days to one subject to the Christian principles of being respectable, chaste, God-fearing, civilised and law-abiding.

Robert Entman, an early writer on news framing, determined that news is all about "selection and salience". He writes: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. Frames then diagnose, evaluate, and prescribe a point."⁶² In 2004, Entman narrowed this to "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution".⁶³ Entman's framing typology remains pertinent and continues to shape much research,⁶⁴ and I will use Entman's narrowed approach to media framing to analyse how prostitution was framed in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* between 1896 and 1903: "defining effects or conditions as problematic, identifying causes, conveying a moral judgment and endorsing remedies or improvements".⁶⁵ The benefit of this approach is that it provides an omnibus examination, and narrowing the focus to prostitution during the "roaring nineties" (specifically 1896–1903) enables a critical study of Kalgoorlie's civilising through the lens of the editor's gatekeeping role.

Methods

Entman's four principles together help us understand how the *Kalgoorlie Miner* framed news on prostitution, by examining the patterns, biases, understandings and ideas that emerge when explicitly looking at the causes and impacts of prostitution through desired community, moral judgement, law and order, and commerce. The National Library of Australia's Trove newspaper archive contains all *Kalgoorlie Miner* newspaper publications, including during the study period (1 January 1896 to 31 December 1903). This period also corresponds with John Kirwan's arrival in Kalgoorlie to the end of his term in the First Federal Parliament.⁶⁶ He became editor-in-chief of the paper until he lost the second parliament election. All *Kalgoorlie Miner* newspapers were searched by employing the triangulated terms "prostitute", "brothel" and "social evil". The initial search retrieved 717 articles. Because I was focusing on the municipality of Kalgoorlie, I excluded articles about other locations, along with duplicates.⁶⁷ After they were

⁶²Robert Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 52.

⁶³Robert Entman, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 5–6.

⁶⁴See Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Dietram Scheufele and David Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models," *Journal of Communications* 57, no. 1 (2007): 9–20; Pamela J. Shoemaker and Stephen D. Reese, *Mediating the Message* (White Plains, NY: Longman, 1996); Daniela V. Dimitrova and Jesper Stromback, "Mission Accomplished? Framing of the Iraq War in the Elite Newspapers in Sweden and the United States," *International Communication Gazette* 67, no. 5 (2005): 399–417; Holli A. Semetko and Patti M. Valkenburg, "Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News," *Journal of Communication* 50, no. 2 (2006): 93–109; Yu-Kang Lee and Chun-Tuan Chang, "Framing Public Policy: The Impacts of Political Sophistication and Nature of Public Policy," *The Social Science Journal* 47, no. 1 (2010): 69–89.

⁶⁵Entman, *Projections of Power*, 5.

⁶⁶Defeated by the Labor candidate, C. E. Frazer.

⁶⁷Duplicate refers to an article that was counted under one or more search terms.

removed from the count, 244 articles remained. I then read and categorised every article according to the search terms to generate a list of frames, causes and impacts.

Creating a Desired Community

The most popular frame I found in 53 per cent of articles I reviewed was creating the desired community that controls and preferably abates prostitution in the emerging family-friendly and civil Kalgoorlie community. Promoting respectable and civil values was most evident in local council politics: representation, decisions and debates. In a 1901 article, for example, the prostitution problem was summarised as one of a lack of council action on public decency:

Councils are representative of the people who elect them, and reflect in the main the opinions of those people. So long, therefore, as the public attitude towards the social evil was one of tolerant carelessness and apathetic indifference, so long would the policy of the council naturally be a policy of "laissez faire." The faults of the Kalgoorlie councils have been of omission rather than of commission. They have forgotten that in this matter of public decency they have been trustees for the future as well as for the present. Where they should have been ahead of public opinion, they have lagged behind it.⁶⁸

The drivers of this frame were primarily articles and letters to the editor reflecting community opposition to prostitution.⁶⁹ They promulgated a shared view to rid the town of prostitution or, at the very least, to take the first step towards containing it to a dark and segregated corner of the municipality. Where that would be was a matter of debate because no neighbourhood wanted it in their backyard: "We, the ratepayers and residents of West Kalgoorlie, strongly protest against the Kalgoorlie Council ... to remove all brothels [from the central business district] to water right 5398, between Egan street and the Kalgoorlie racecourse [some three miles from the Kalgoorlie Post Office] ... a serious wrong would be done to the residents in the locality named. The site recommended was almost directly fronting [family] properties between Mile and Throssell streets ... and a proposed school."⁷⁰ It would also "force [residents] to listen to something approaching hell on earth, at night".⁷¹

Pressure on the council to find a suitable location remained an unresolved matter. By and large, most articles about the council criticised its laggard approach. The council and staff were believed to not be doing enough: "An evil which might have been easily fought at the outset becomes more difficult to combat as it is allowed time to gather strength; and that every month of inaction makes action all the harder."⁷² The evil, of course, was prostitution, which "flaunts itself more unblushingly in the open eye of day, an outrage to the feelings of decent people, and a grievous offence to children".⁷³ All in all, containing the social evil from blatant to hidden to expelled emerged as a key theme.

Hobbs points out that newspapers focusing on moral campaigns reflect the editor's position and, astutely, the community's construction of its local identity.⁷⁴ Defined by

⁶⁸Editorial, "The Social Evil," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 November 1901, 4.

⁶⁹For instance, the West Kalgoorlie Progress Committee, neighbourhoods with brothels and the Kalgoorlie District Roads Board.

⁷⁰"The Social Evil—A Vigorous Protest," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 12 November 1901, 4.

⁷¹Disgusted, "Letter to the Editor: Social Evil," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 11 November 1901, 3.

⁷²"Letter to the Editor: Social Evil".

⁷³"Letter to the Editor: Social Evil".

⁷⁴Christians dominated the profession at the time. See Lake, *The Bible in Australia*, 136–65.

“neighbourhood, workplace, town, region and nation ... local identities were the most powerful [influence on a person] on a day-to-day basis”.⁷⁵ Subsequently, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* newspaper played a fundamental role in promoting a local identity devoid of prostitution. Both reflecting and shaping the municipality’s dominant Christian population, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* projected the shared morals and demands for respectability and civility: a social order opposed to prostitution. Importantly, if the newspaper did not align with community opinion, it would soon be out of a readership and business. Giving important word space in the newspaper to the shared Christian community voice therefore focused on overcoming prostitution. It included a variety of means, including reporting on crime and local council civilising laws, printing letters to the editor about residents directly impacted by prostitution, and highlighting voluntary Christian organisations focused on healing and reforming prostitutes to take their place in civil society.

Another element of note was the newspaper’s racism towards non-British prostitutes, predominantly Asian and French, frequently othering prostitutes and pimps by emphasising their heritage in article titles and police court reporting—for example, in the titles “Japanese in Kalgoorlie – Raid by the Police – Sentence of Two Months’ Imprisonment” and “The French Section – A Successful Prosecution”.⁷⁶ It appears that Kirwan’s concept of whiteness further narrowed his gatekeeping on prostitution; to Kirwan, even continental European prostitutes were not “white enough”.⁷⁷ That is not to say British prostitutes were acceptable; however, they did not receive the same level of differentiation under Kirwan’s editorship.

Moral Judgement

Eleven per cent of the articles focused on prostitution as the antithesis to community values and wellbeing, social mores and family. As Kalgoorlie grew in space and people—with more and more families arriving to join their menfolk—the homes and neighbourhoods typically alongside brothels became a battleground for place, position and respectability.⁷⁸ In 1897, writing to the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, “Job March” observed that “is it of no importance that the wives and families of common people, like myself, who are compelled to live in that neighbourhood should often be offended by the gross displays of sensuality and vice when journeying to their homes? Has the Council no authority in this matter, and do they not recognise the hateful influence this evil is exercising on the town?”⁷⁹ According to “Disgusted” in 1901, the problem remained: “The language I heard used a few nights ago ... is certainly not what I should like a sister or mother of mine to hear. I should say it is impossible for anyone to pass

⁷⁵Hobbs, *A Fleet Street in Every Town*, 267.

⁷⁶“Japanese in Kalgoorlie – Raid by the Police – Sentence of Two Months’ Imprisonment,” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 5 August 1896, 2; “The French Section – A Successful Prosecution,” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 4 June 1897, 2. For an extended discussion on this, see Catherine Ann Martin, “The Chinese Invasion: Settler Colonialism and the Metaphoric Construction of Race,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 45, no. 4 (2021): 543–59.

⁷⁷Catherine Dewhurst, “Collaborating on Whiteness: Representing Italians in Early White Australia,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 32, no. 1 (2008): 33–35.

⁷⁸Jean E. Farrant, “A Social History of Music in Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie and Boulder 1892 to 1908” (BA Hons thesis, University of Western Australia, 1991), 33–63, https://api.research-repository.uwa.edu.au/ws/portalfiles/portal/39810807/Farrant_Jean_1992_compressed.pdf.

⁷⁹Job March, “Letter to the Editor ‘The Social Evil,’” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 28 October 1897, 2.

without having to hear disgusting talk. There are many children who must hear it continually.⁸⁰ With the rise of civil community thinking, mounting pressure was placed on the local council's management of prostitution and brothels. The importance of respectability within the community cannot be overstated. As Janet McCalman has observed, "the most important cultural baggage brought to Australia by 19th century British immigrants ... was the culture of respectability",⁸¹ which demanded "cleanliness, sobriety, extra-marital chastity, thrift, time-consciousness, self-reliance, manly independence and self-responsibility".⁸² Kalgoorlie's residents were keen to refute any claims that it was or remained a morally corrupt outback community where tainted women, gambling, alcohol and violence reigned.⁸³

A civilised metropolitan Kalgoorlie with electric lights, transport, shops and cultural activities such as cinema, concerts and other musical entertainments was also evident, as well as recreation activities including sport, horse racing and swimming.⁸⁴ However, despite these efforts, the uncivilised past bore through. An article published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* told of James Kelly, a visitor from Bunbury, observing: "The social evil is a blot in most of the centres of population, but in no place in Australia is it so barefaced as in Kalgoorlie ... women have been imported for immoral purposes, and it would be quite safe to say that there is not another town in Australia that contains such a large percentage of these women as Kalgoorlie, and the women seem to pride themselves on their shame ... Can nothing be done to put this state of things down?"⁸⁵ People obsessed over maintaining their reputation along with enforcing respectable community boundaries. Moral fears expressed as sin and sinful activity acted as a remonstrance on respectability.⁸⁶ For example, Tom Bibby was accused in the newspaper of being the landlord of Kalgoorlie tenements, let to prostitutes—a "pillar of the Church, landlord of tenement occupied by prostitutes, and top-notch Pharisee of the community".⁸⁷ In his defence, Bibby took out a public notice in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* demanding the local *Sun* newspaper prove "that there is the smallest substratum of truth" to the claim or vindicate him.⁸⁸

Respectability in Kalgoorlie also found a biblical and sympathetic expression. This frame emphasised a Christian consciousness and/or social awareness for the fallen women. The root of the evil was squarely placed on men who purchased sex; the prostitute was the victim of their disrespectability, and, accordingly, those women needed protection and care. Prostitutes who chose the lifestyle, however, were overlooked. To the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, it was the responsibility of the community to redeem and assist such women in reforming their health and morals and to thereby live a respectable

⁸⁰Disgusted, "Social Evil," 3.

⁸¹Janet McCalman, "Class and Respectability in a Working-class Suburb: Richmond, Victoria, before the Great War," *Historical Studies* 20, no. 78 (1982): 90–103.

⁸²McCalman, "Class and Respectability".

⁸³"Old Resident, Letter to the Editor," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 29 July 1896, 2.

⁸⁴"Old Resident, Letter to the Editor".

⁸⁵"Impressions of Kalgoorlie. By a Bunbury Resident," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 6 September 1898, 4. (Bunbury is 461 miles southwest of Kalgoorlie.)

⁸⁶For instance, the "social evil," "evil", "nuisance" and "stain".

⁸⁷"A Judas Job," *Sun* (Kalgoorlie), 2 June 1901, 1. Also see "Municipal Elections," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 17 November 1902, 4–5. Bibby's ruined reputation cost him, in 1906, a Mount Monger hotel licence ("Goldfields Gossip: The Terror of Crooks," *Truth*, 22 September 1906, 6); he was also accused of being a gold thief in the 1906 Royal Commission on Gold-Stealing ("Royal Commission on Gold-Stealing, Specialittings," *Kalgoorlie Western Argus*, 4 December 1906, 7).

⁸⁸Thos. Bibby, Public Notices, Advertising, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 4 June 1901, 7.

life: “Those who having placed the women in the unfortunate position in which they find themselves add to their lack of chivalry by pouring out their vials of contempt upon them need hardly look to women for support. Christ came to save sinners [and to] follow the Master in going down to their submerged sisters and bring to them a shelter, while those who prey upon the derelicts still receive the smile of society. We need to raise the standard high for both sexes, remembering that the supply is created by the demand.”⁸⁹

In contrast, a vein to this frame identifies the social evil as a necessary one citing its age-old existence and the sexual needs of single and married men without wives: “Not one man in a thousand who patronises the ‘haunts of vice’ would ever set foot in these places or seek the loveless embrace of the ‘painted syren,’ if his real natural condition with a happy home, with peace and plenty, was easily within his reach.”⁹⁰ At the time of writing this letter, the ratio of men to women in Kalgoorlie was ninety-four to six.⁹¹ From a Kalgoorlie Police Court magistrate’s perspective, the frequency and type of charge brought against women were enough for Mr Augustus Sanford Roe to exclaim that it is “being recognised that prostitution was a necessary evil”.⁹² That in itself amounted to a shot across the bow to respectable aspirations for Kalgoorlie: a necessitated acknowledgement of the demand and supply of the local sex trade.

Policing and Court

This frame, second most present in 35 per cent of articles, suggests that while policing prostitution was an ever-present activity of local law enforcement, it was not enough to abate, control or lead to successful court convictions. The act of prostitution as such was not illegal, but the proposition of it was: “Any common prostitute; who shall solicit, importune or accost any person or persons for the purpose of prostitution, or loiter about for the purposes of prostitution in any street, or place, or within the view or hearing of any person.”⁹³ Public nuisance charges would also be added or made instead to achieve a conviction: disorderly conduct, drunkard, obscenity (including any profane or indecent word) and idleness.⁹⁴ According to Western Australian laws, prostitution amounted to deviance, which defined the criminal class.⁹⁵

A main gist of this frame was to identify and reinforce that Kalgoorlie had a problem with prostitution and brothels—and, consequently, with criminals. Prostitution had to be controlled through policing and courts (and community pressure on the council). The effectiveness of the *Police Act* in achieving this, along with the actions of the local police, came under question, especially as prostitution court cases were often dismissed.

⁸⁹C. E. Clark, Colonial Sec., W.C.T.U., “Letter to the Editor, ‘Social Evil,’” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 June 1900, 7.

⁹⁰A. Sinnick, “Letter to the Editor, ‘Social Evil,’” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 8 June 1900, 7.

⁹¹In 1901, 4,039 men and 261 women resided in Kalgoorlie (“The 1901 Census,” *Western Mail*, 21 December 1901, 74).

⁹²“State Regulated Prostitution,” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 16 November 1897, 5. Roe went on to become a judge in the WA Supreme Court. See “The Late Mr. Augustus S. Roe,” *West Australian*, 17 March 1921, 7.

⁹³Street solicitation is what defined a common prostitute, typically “proven” by the testimony of one or two policemen who told the magistrate that they had seen a woman “frequenting a certain area and soliciting men”: Julia A. Laite and Mary Gordon, “Taking Nellie Johnson’s Fingerprints: Prostitutes and Legal Identity in Early Twentieth-Century London,” *History Workshop Journal* 65 (2008): 99. See *Police Act 1892* (WA), s59. Also see, s65 (8).

⁹⁴See *Police Act 1892*, s65 (7).

⁹⁵Kai Erikson defines deviant behaviour “as an alien element in society. Deviance is considered a vagrant form of human activity moving outside the more orderly currents of social life”. See “Notes on the Sociology of Deviance,” *Social Problems* 9, no. 4 (1962): 307.

The strength and weight of police evidence was not always enough to convince a magistrate that the adducing evidence was sufficient to reach a guilty verdict.⁹⁶ The defence was typically represented by a local solicitor, who would cite police entrapment, a lack of corroborating witness(es) and conflicting evidence. Kalgoorlie's criminal solicitors were highly skilled and successful, often going on to become leaders of their field.⁹⁷ The newspaper editorials, letters to the editor and reporting reveal the frustration of a low conviction rate.⁹⁸

Commerce

This last frame represented 8.6 per cent of articles that challenged the presence of brothels and prostitution within the established residential areas of Hannan, Brookman and Egan Streets. Considering brothel proximity to family neighbourhoods, residents complained of declining house values and neighbourhood desirability. Letters to the editor, police court reporting, and items of news express a lack of prostitute restraint, care and awareness towards property saleability and the respectability of residents and their families. For instance, "one little girl at school had told her that they fight, scream, and swear, and run out half-dressed and say such wicked things".⁹⁹ Police and council were to blame: council, aware of community concerns, blamed their solicitors.

Another concern was the shopfront subterfuge aiding prostitution: legitimate front-of-house businesses such as laundry, tobacco and cold drinks obscuring an outback brothel. Even more, it provided another means for criminality and social evil to operate. As the *Kalgoorlie Miner* made clear, there was "conclusive proof that the cool drink business which the Japanese women pretended to carry on was only a blind for an immoral trade".¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

Previous sociohistorical research has documented Kalgoorlie's prostitution, particularly the presence and lives of women prostitutes. This article has contributed to this body of work by exploring the news framing of prostitution in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* between 1896–1903. Analysing the newspaper's reporting on prostitution identifies four key news frames: law and order, desired community, commerce and moral judgement. Together, they helped create a narrative that a community, despite its Christian hegemony, remained challenged by the presence of prostitution. Significantly, this article has identified the *Kalgoorlie Miner's* interest—and its editor's role—in identifying, presenting and addressing a so-called social evil. Its constant voice resulted in the matter attracting regular reporting in the news. Gatekeeping and a sustained focus on the evil influence that prostitution had on Kalgoorlie's respectable and civil community was an

⁹⁶"Adducing evidence" is the legal term for presenting or producing evidence in court for the purpose of establishing proof.

⁹⁷As a matter of interest, Kalgoorlie and surrounding areas maintained a healthy number of highly successful criminal defence solicitors. For example, Norbert Michael Keenan was mayor of Kalgoorlie between 1901 and 1905, vice-president of the Chamber of Mines, and Western Australia Senator for Kalgoorlie 1904–1911.

⁹⁸As evident in the number reported on in Police Court News.

⁹⁹A Mother, "The Social Evil," letter to the editor, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1 October 1897, 2.

¹⁰⁰"The Japanese in Kalgoorlie—Open Air Meeting in Hanan-Street," *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 18 August 1896, 3.

invaluable editorial approach. It not only maintained pressure on the local council and police and courts to act but also reminded the community that prostitution would not rid itself without any particular action on their part.

The frames also reflect Kalgoorlie's community responses, experiences and values in upholding religion. Christian hegemony demanded that Kalgoorlie shed itself of its past reputation as an uncivilised "Wild West" and unrestrained self. Associating prostitution with vice and criminality, negative commerce provided a means to inform and, if necessary, mobilise reader awareness and emotion. The power of the newspaper to excite the community is evident in reports of crowds congregating to hear prostitution court cases and to protest prostitution and its association with the foreign presences in the town.

Kalgoorlie's British church affiliations also played a fundamental role in the formation and direction of the community. Notably, the church's presence in community activities and support structures reflected its influence and its laity in all facets of life, including the local newspaper. As I have demonstrated, as long as a newspaper reflects its community's values and morals, and understands its physical and political demands, religion can maintain a hegemonic presence. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* played a crucial role in reinforcing this kind of local culture by foregrounding the Kalgoorlie Christian community. In this way, emphasising the manner in which the perceived social evil of prostitution undermined Federation Kalgoorlie's hegemony—as a white, God-fearing, law-abiding, moral, commerce-friendly and civil community—was an effective gatekeeping approach that Kirwan upheld. Nevertheless, the continued ownership or leasing of brothels, and the overt presence of prostitution in the streets of Kalgoorlie, was an ongoing source of angst for the newspaper, which actively sidelined the "necessary evil" of prostitution and silenced the voices of non-white brothel owners and pimps. While it was not uncommon for newspapers at the time to adopt this strategy, it suggests that the perspectives of the Other—those engaged in the sex industry, especially those from immigrant backgrounds—were not valued.

Acknowledging the limitation of this study to a period and collection, I suggest that significant scope exists to expand the research by conducting a longitudinal newspaper framing study of Western Australian, national and international reporting of prostitution during the period of Australia's Federation. This research could also compare indentured and non-indentured prostitution agency, especially by considering those choosing sex work, other periods in Kalgoorlie's history, and the presence of British Christianity in Federation Australasian mining communities.

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