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# REPORTING KALGOORLIE AND BROKEN HILL PROSTITUTION 1896–1903

**Belinda Beattie**

At the time of Federation (1901), Kalgoorlie, (Western Australia), and Broken Hill (New South Wales) promoted themselves as civilized and respectable living communities now that mining had become a series of long-term ventures. The local newspaper was a key player in the construction of this self-image. In order to appear respectable, the Kalgoorlie Miner and the Barrier Miner framed the prostitute as Other. This article contributes to the Federation sex trade and news reporting literature by exploring the gatekeeping of prostitution in two major mining communities between 1896 and 1903. It finds that the newspapers used four frames for presenting the prostitution issue: policing and court, moral judgement, creating the desired community, and the role of the local council.

**KEYWORDS** Kalgoorlie; Broken Hill; news framing; federation; mining communities; local newspapers; prostitution

## Background—Mining Camps to Towns

Characteristic of Federation mining communities were their shared economic, geographical, and social elements.<sup>1</sup> Prospector camps were at the forefront of settler frontiers occupying and excising Indigenous Country. Not every prospector camp turned into a settlement. One reason is that precious metals were hard to mine and found in small quantities. Long-term investors wanted sustained and sizeable loads. Kalgoorlie provided this in gold in Western Australia while Broken Hill brought to market silver, lead, and zinc in New South Wales. Small-scale miners were often part of these camps, looking for an opportunity to be part of the next mining boom—to make their fortune or, in reality, a living from the surface or alluvial gold or silver. Food and trade equipment merchants provided sustenance and tools to the mining camps. Amusement in gambling and travelling entertainers were common. An essential mainstay of the camps was prostitution.<sup>2</sup> Heather Branstetter posits that prostitutes provided the camps of predominantly single men with an outlet for sexual release.<sup>3</sup> These women were enterprising and, like the men, willing to endure harsh conditions to make a living. As these communities grew, prostitution and its attendant business operations were also further developed.



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## Background—Prostitution

'Soiled doves', 'scarlet,' 'unfortunate,' and 'fallen women'<sup>4</sup> are some of the synonyms used to describe prostitutes in Federation Australia. Sex workers operated as sole traders or syndicated<sup>5</sup> under a brothel manager's protection, typically a Madame. For the syndicated, sex work often resulted from being tricked into it on arrival in Australia or by arriving as part of an international Western European 'stable'<sup>6</sup> characterized in newspapers as the White Slave Trade.<sup>7</sup> For others, it was a short-term option to overcome dire financial circumstances. For the committed, it provided an independent living through a profitable business enterprise that brought accumulation and agency. Elaine McKeown<sup>8</sup> observes that a penchant of the time was for newspapers to run stories that pitied the prostitute as a victimized woman in a patriarchal society of male disreputability, exploitation, and sexual coercion. For example, sensationalist articles about Kalgoorlie's syndicated prostitutes and those needing 'protection and care' were published in local, metropolitan, and interstate newspapers.<sup>9</sup> These stories involved deception, threat, and deceit: reports involving sexual and labour exploitation, forced servitude and/or debt bondage, and the inability of newcomers to speak English made for tantalizing reading and assured sales. However, such interest did not necessarily extend to the subjects of prostitution by choice, brothel keepers and/or owners, and pimps.<sup>10</sup>

According to Raelene Frances, sex worker mobility to follow miners and their camps reflected a business acumen; they showed the capacity to seek out 'market advantage, packing up and following each discovery, no matter how remote from established settlements'.<sup>11</sup> For those Australian camps and early towns that experienced boom economies like Kalgoorlie in Western Australia and Broken Hill in New South Wales,<sup>12</sup> the sex trade became part of the social and economic life. In 1896, Norma King reported that 70 brothels existed in the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia,<sup>13</sup> excluding a number of back-of-business fronts for prostitution like sly grog shops, tobacconists, and cool drink stores.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, McKeown points out that brothel keepers were among the first owners of Kalgoorlie's property.<sup>15</sup>

In Australia's historical sex trade literature, Kalgoorlie has been a focus of study, and has especially been approached by historiography. Of note, Raelene Frances (formerly Davidson) and Elaine McKeown have explored the previously under addressed social history of prostitution from a feminist perspective.<sup>16</sup> The Eastern Goldfields Society has also published accounts of its long Victorian period sex trade; together the collection recalls a wide range of stories, experiences, and events.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, reference to Broken Hill's sex trade is limited to occasional references to matters of labour, gender, and class.<sup>18</sup> Australian authors interested in the broader historical Australian sex trade have, for example, included Leigh Straw, Laura McGrow, Roberta Perkins, Lisa Featherstone, David Sissons, Belinda Sweeney, Julia Ann Laite, Alana Piper, and Jo Doezema.<sup>19</sup> Internationally, Melissa Hope Ditmore, Sheila Jeffreys, and Phillipa Levine<sup>20</sup> have drawn attention to the global sex trade, including syndication out of Europe and Asia to Australian cities and mining communities; in North America, scholarly research concerning the historic mining sex trade has been carried out by, for instance, Lael Morgan, Heather Branstetter, Penny Peterson, and Deborah Cuyle.<sup>21</sup> Film, especially in fictional movies, has often conveyed stories about historic prostitution.<sup>22</sup> Regarding a focused study on newspaper

reporting of prostitution, little has been recorded<sup>23</sup> aside from the Australian Federation work of Belinda Beattie.<sup>24</sup>

This article adds to this later group by questioning the role of the newspaper in framing prostitution as a problem, and as antithetical to the developing communities of Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill.

Prostitution or the sex trade has been of interest to sociologists exploring the concept of deviance as reflected in 'time, place, situation and culture'.<sup>25</sup> Usually, deviance is juxtaposed with conformity to morals and values. Of interest, feminist sociologists like Marcia Millman, Sue Rodmell, Pamela Abbott, Claire Wallace, and Melissa Tyler<sup>26</sup> purport that predominantly male sociologists have defined the meanings of and distinction between conformity and deviance. Analogously, the Australian and Federation mining newspapers were dominated by men and male reporters. Hence, how much bias did media masculinity exert on matters of deviance and conformity during Federation? This interesting question is, however, ultimately outside the scope of the current study, which is focused on the community aspect of the newspaper and its pitch to the entire readership concerning its view of gender, the concept of the family, the Christian religion, and national views toward deviance and conformity.

Sociologist J.F. Staszak purports that those who do not reflect community values and morals are subject to Othering:

a discursive process by which a dominant in-group ('Us', the Self) constructs one or many dominated out-groups ('Them', Other) by stigmatizing a difference—real or imagined—presented as a negation of identity and thus a motive for potential discrimination'.<sup>27</sup> ... Only the dominant group can impose the value of its particularity (its identity) and devalue the particularity of others (their otherness).<sup>28</sup>

Us, being the dominant group, largely a product of and productive of hegemony determine what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in a community. Quoting George Mosse, Mary Fellows and Sherene Razack assert that respectability (a community value) 'provided society with an essential cohesion that was as important in the perceptions of men and women as any economic or political interest ... It marks the boundaries between those who are in the body politic and those who are not'.<sup>29</sup> Hence, discursive strategies that located, framed, and objectified the prostitute<sup>30</sup> draw from the body politic of negativity grounded in a hierarchy of female innocence, thus reflecting hegemonic<sup>31</sup> civilized-respectability community beliefs.<sup>32</sup> Fellows and Razack inform that:

The historical role of respectability as dominance invites us to trace the hierarchical arrangements embodied in prostitution through an interrogation of the sites where prostitution occurs and the women found in those sites ... [These] ... are places associated with crime, disease, poverty, and deviance. Women in prostitution, even when in respectable places (such as luxury hotels), carry these associations. Prostituted women, wherever found, become the place where men buying sex for money temporarily abandon their routines of duty, self-control, civility, and obligation. Their temporary abandonment, rather than weakening these men's claim of respectability, puts the mark of degeneracy on the women in prostitution, thus reaffirming the men's position within the dominant group. In this way, prostitution reaffirms not only the hierarchies of gender, but also of

class, race, and sexual orientation. By seeing respectability as embodying the structures of domination, prostitution becomes denaturalized. A benign construct ... [that] suggests prostitution's immutability and inevitability, prostitution is reconceptualized as a practice of domination through difference. If the very function of prostitution is to affirm the dominant group by marking the boundary between respectability and degeneracy, then prostitution cannot be ... respectable.<sup>33</sup>

Federation newspapers reflected this stance by Othering the prostitute like the 'social evil', 'scarlet' and 'fallen' from societal acceptability, unlike the chaste, God-fearing and pure, respectable women found in wives and the community-minded located at the top of the hierarchy. Such women advanced positivity, community values and a civic mind, for example, fundraising for the Kalgoorlie Fresh Air League<sup>34</sup> and supported fellowship organizations like Kalgoorlie's Women's Club and Broken Hill's Presbyterian Women's Missionary Association and Women's Christian Temperance Union.<sup>35</sup> It is not to say that an element of humanity has never been featured in newspaper reports of prostitution; for example, the pitiful White Slave Trade girl entrapped and syndicated into a form of social evil and who needed her morals and respectability rescued.<sup>36</sup> Instead, such stories reinforced the hierarchy of female innocence, including exploitation of gender, race, class, heterosexism and women subordinating other women, like the socially acceptable toward the prostitute.

At the time of Federation, prostitution was considered dirty work: 'disgusting or degrading employment'.<sup>37</sup> The acts involved were also black-collar, or 'deviant and stigmatized those who perform them'.<sup>38</sup> Prostitution was immoral since it violated established mores and morality of the Christian society.<sup>39</sup> The latter held prostitution to be (paid) fornication as it involved sex outside of marriage, and the churches therefore deemed it particularly sinful. This institutionalized condemnation was also gendered, as women were subjected to claims of being unchaste, fallen, soiled, and likely to harbour and spread disease to men and their wives.<sup>40</sup> Lisa Featherstone states that 'male sexuality was conceptualised as hydraulic, active and persuasive'<sup>41</sup> beyond the required, tamed, and regulated female body. Consequently, there was a gendered double standard toward fornication and prostitution.

Moreover, Federation White-centric politics and policy were popular in the nation as citizens sought to determine their demographic future. The reported connection between prostitution and immigrants, especially those whose first language was not English, but was French, Italian, or Japanese (Karayuki-san), were subjected to another layer of Othering, i.e. that of race and racism. White Australia deemed such people as existing outside of 'British Isle' hegemonic society<sup>42</sup> and therefore undesirable.

In the following part of the paper, the two predominant mining communities are described, as well as their newspapers.

## Locations

### *Kalgoorlie, Western Australia*

Kalgoorlie is 595 kilometres east of Perth. It is an isolated city on the western fringe of the Nullarbor Plain and the Great Victoria Desert. On May 5, 1895, Kalgoorlie

was gazetted as a municipality.<sup>43</sup> The town boundary borders the famous Golden Mile Reef and Super Pit,<sup>44</sup> one of the world's richest goldfields. In June 1893, with the first reward claim lodged,<sup>45</sup> Kalgoorlie became a mining prospector destination; in two weeks of striking gold, 1400 men had reportedly arrived.<sup>46</sup> By 1898, there were 1516 men and 502 women.<sup>47</sup> By 1901, population had increased to 4039 men and 2614 women.<sup>48</sup>

### *Broken Hill, New South Wales*

Broken Hill, also known as 'Silver City', is in the Far West of New South Wales. It is 1160 kilometres west of Sydney, 410 km northeast from Adelaide, and 25 km from Silverton. It is located on a desert edge—the Strzelecki and its townsite are in 'close conformity with the orientation of the [mine] reef and as near the working as practicable'.<sup>49</sup> Broken Hill is home to the world's richest deposits of silver, lead, and zinc ores (in quality and quantity).<sup>50</sup> On August 10, 1885, a mining leased area was proclaimed a township reserve and gazetted as a municipality on December 6, 1897. Like Kalgoorlie, it was mining that attracted people to the isolated location. Prospectors first travelled to the Barrier Ranges looking for gold, but instead found silver, lead, and zinc ore. The discovery led to a rush by miners to the first finds in settlements around Broken Hill, namely Thackaringa and Silverton. In 1883, there were about 250 people,<sup>51</sup> in 1885, 3000<sup>52</sup> and, in 1901, 27,500<sup>53</sup> (15,367 men and 12,133 women).

### **Mining Newspapers: Kalgoorlie Miner and the Barrier Miner**

Newspapers, whose staffs were comprised of journalists and editors, were capitalist business enterprises keen on making money and being a driving force in the community. They brought hegemonic ideas on morals and values and, accordingly, community and deviance. This article examines the coverage of prostitution in the leading local newspapers of Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and the *Barrier Miner*, at the time of Federation, or 1896–1903.

Kalgoorlie's longest-serving newspaper, the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, began operating in 1895 among a collection of hessian humpies, tents, huts, canvas-walled pubs, tent shops, and brothels.<sup>54</sup> These were later replaced with buildings constructed from timber, iron, brick, or stone, not only because of their unsightly appearance but also due to the fire risk they posed.<sup>55</sup> The situation at Broken Hill was similar: its longest-serving paper, the *Barrier Miner*, began in 1888 and operated from an iron shed before moving to a permanent stone building in 1908.

The two federation newspaper editors, Sir John Kirwan of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, and Samuel Prior of the *Barrier Miner*, have been described as men who valued progress, moral conservatism, Federation, miner rights, and Labor<sup>56</sup> politics.<sup>57</sup> Accordingly, each paper's success and longevity testified to the editors' knowledge of their readers and their communities; the ability to cater to and interest readers depended on their editorial oversight, business acumen,<sup>58</sup> and ability to read and influence hegemony.

## Newspapers and Framing

Local newspapers have historically played a vital role in telling news; they are a powerful political and social medium, shaping reader attitudes with their content.<sup>59</sup> Unlike their metropolitan counterparts who cater to large populations and pitch to varying interests, the country editor was primarily focused on the need to read and shape the limited readership's perspective and profitability.<sup>60</sup> Unlike city publications, they had limited or no departments to assist with accounts, payroll, news columns, printing, and advertising.<sup>61</sup> Remaining solvent meant editors needed to ensure the newspaper was always attractive to readers and advertisers.<sup>62</sup> Hence, a country editor's awareness of the community's worldview, demography, beliefs, and attitudes was crucial. If the paper misfired repeatedly in reading its readership, the chances were high that the newspaper business would fail.<sup>63</sup>

Kate Perry informs us that 'localness' is newspapers' direct relationship with their readers.<sup>64</sup> It is intrinsically linked to locality, and as Edward Royle asserts, editors need to know the community's self-conception and identity, including political and cultural traditions.<sup>65</sup> Jacqueline Ewart et al., Lisa Wade, Kathryn Bowd, Kristy Hess and Lisa Waller<sup>66</sup> further this point by arguing that a thriving local newspaper reflected the culture, communication, and life of the community, allowing individuals to conceive themselves as being one with the group. Hence, there was need of an acute awareness of what was moral or respectable versus a concept of deviance. Daniëlle Raeijmaekers and Pieter Maeseele posit that the key to achieving this was consensus journalism, which is determined by and reproduces hegemony.

For this reason, journalists and especially editors filtered the news through a gate-keeping process subject to the community's understanding of what was 'acceptable' and 'appropriate'.<sup>67</sup> In short, newspaper longevity and profitability depended on the gate-keeping process.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, David Coupland observes that conformist editors of such federation country newspapers became influential community leaders. For example, Sir John Kirwan became an inaugural Member of the Federal Parliament (Kalgoorlie) and was later the President of the Western Australian Legislative Council, serving a twenty-year term.<sup>69</sup> Those newspapers that didn't conform jeopardized support and profitability as they would be neglected or condemned by the mainstream.

What was news and how it was to be framed were important questions for the country editors, and have become the concern of later scholars. William Gamson and Andre Modigliani define news framing as 'a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue'.<sup>70</sup> For this reason, Sophie Lecheler and Claes de Vreese argue, 'a news frame can affect an individual by stressing certain aspects of reality and pushing others into the background: The news frame has a selective function. In this way, certain issue attributes, judgments, and decisions are suggested'.<sup>71</sup>

A sociological approach then unfolds or news priming, this involves 'calling attention to some matters while ignoring others'.<sup>72</sup> Robert Entman terms this 'selection and salience'.<sup>73</sup> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text'.<sup>74</sup> In 2004, Entman specified that this involved 'selecting

and highlighting some facets of events or issues and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation and/or solution.<sup>75</sup>

## Methods

The newspaper framing arguments are used to explore the revealing patterns, biases, understandings, and ideas by explicitly looking at the causes and impacts of prostitution through the lens of law and order, desired community, commerce, and moral judgement to understand how the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and *Barrier Miner* framed news on prostitution. Trove Digitised Newspapers held by the National Library of Australia contain all the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and *Barrier Miner* newspaper publications during the study period (January 1 1896—December 31 1903). This seven-year period spanned the pre-Federation and early Federation years, with Federation beginning on January 1, 1901. The newspapers were searched for their use of the broad terms ‘prostitute’, ‘brothel’, and ‘social evil’. Whilst the latter is a term reflective of judgement, its regular use in newspapers required inclusion. The primary corpus included 244 *Kalgoorlie Miner* and 33 *Barrier Miner* newspaper items, including news stories, police and court reports, letters to the editor, and editorials.<sup>76</sup> A qualitative data analysis was then undertaken where every article was read and then categorized according to the presentation of the search terms to generate a list of frames, causes, and impacts.

## Findings and Discussion

The *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported on prostitution considerably more than did the *Barrier Miner*. Drawing from the *New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818–1930*, and *The New South Wales Gaol Inmates / Prisoners Index 1870–1930*, Brian Kennedy found Broken Hill had an ‘unusually high proportion of prostitutes amongst female prisoners during the 1890s and 1900s’.<sup>77</sup> The lack of reporting despite the prevalence of prostitution (unlike in the case of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*) suggest that strict editorial gatekeeping and low community demand for such reporting was at play. Moreover, the data remains informative and provides valuable insight into Broken Hill prostitution news reporting. Four dominant frames were identified and categorized: Policing and court, moral judgement, creating the desired community, and local council.

### *Policing and Court*

The policing and court frame was the most popular for Broken Hill (78.3% of articles) and the second most popular for Kalgoorlie (31.96% of articles). For Kalgoorlie, frustration with the police inability to monitor, control, and prosecute prostitution (including brothel owners and pimps) with mixed court success dominated the news coverage. Tightening the WA *Police Act*<sup>78</sup> to address the ‘loopholes’ that magistrates and defence solicitors knew of was a repeated concern. In Broken Hill, it was the opposite. Police court articles repeatedly told of successful prosecutions against prostitution through the charging of participants for breaching the *Vagrancy Act*<sup>79</sup> (that is, behaving in a riotous or indecent manner)<sup>80</sup> despite not being able to arrest for loitering to solicit until 1908.<sup>81</sup>



Interestingly, WA Police were responsible for arresting and charging those involved in prostitution<sup>82</sup> nonetheless, the Law of Evidence required corroborating witnesses to have seen or heard the same thing the accused was said to have done for a police magistrate (P.M.) to issue a verdict or conviction. In Kalgoorlie, this was important in determining guilt. By contrast, in Broken Hill, the P.M.<sup>83</sup> accepted the single testimony of a police officer, implicitly valuing the police as highly credible. The legal situation in Broken Hill may explain the number of successful prosecutions here compared to Kalgoorlie, where the resident magistrate (R.M.) required at least two police officers to corroborate. Another possibility is that Kalgoorlie's R.M.s had a greater level of legal training or experience or were influenced by local solicitors' reference to the Law of Evidence and thereby upheld a higher standard of proof. The question concerning the discrepancy is furthered complicated by the fact Kalgoorlie's P.M.s were career public servants without police experience, aside from John Michael Finnelly, a police inspector. Comparatively, most of Broken Hill's P.M.s were legally trained,<sup>84</sup> raising the question as to whether Broken Hill's P.M.s were more sensitive to community respectability demands and thereby took a tougher stance toward prostitution. However, several questions remain: Would the legally trained respond more to hegemony or community pressure? Or might it be a case of newspaper framing to highlight localness? Nothing in the results provides insight into these questions. (See Kate Perry and Edward Royce's earlier argument on localness.)

### *Moral Judgement*

This frame was the second-most present in articles in Broken Hill (5.4%) and the least present in articles in Kalgoorlie (9%). It is an interesting outcome, as the respective proportions are comparable, but their place with respect to the other frames is not. In Kalgoorlie and Broken Hill, prostitution was to be Othered. It was not just for the sin it represented but also that it did not uphold the burgeoning community's respectability values. Broken Hill's Thomas Wellington appealed to readers' Christian morality in his letter to the editor: 'To roll back the flood of moral evil which is deluging our community is the Christian Church and her ministry'.<sup>85</sup> It would have resonated with the almost exclusively Christian community (in Broken Hill, 97% of the 1901 population).<sup>86</sup>

Similarly, the Women's Christian Temperance Union appealed to Kalgoorlie's Christians (93% of the community),<sup>87</sup> saying,

Would it not be far better to teach self-control, both within and without the marriage bond, and to raise that sacred institution to the Creator's ideal when He said, 'Thy Maker is thy husband.' When that ideal of husband is aspired to by our men, shame will cover us that ever at any time womanhood should be so vilely exploited as we see it now.<sup>88</sup>

For Christians, the binary counterpart of condemnation was redemption. In 1899, the Broken Hill Salvation Army established the Rescued Sisters' Home. It taught Christianity to the rescued 'fallen girls', including those in need of maternity care whose 'numbers warranted assistance'.<sup>89</sup> The same operated in Kalgoorlie from 1903.<sup>90</sup> Redemption was the only way out of prostitution, thereby joining the civilized society or moving from Other (them) to 'us', the body politic, the moral and respectable.

To champion this cause, the *Barrier Miner* and *Kalgoorlie Miner* ran stories of rescued, syndicated prostitutes and children of mothers lost to prostitution. Telling real-life stories provided a human face to prostitution, which would otherwise be viewed as an abstract vice. This appealed to redemptive Christian readers and sympathetic community members. For example, in 1899,

a little fellow six years of age ... led a fearful life. More than once, the police saw him going for beer at 2 o'clock in the morning [for his prostitute mother, May Johnson]. He was sadly neglected and roamed about dirty and ragged ... dangerously ill with whooping cough and measles. He was, however, removed [by police] to the hospital, and the care that was bestowed on him soon worked a marvellous change. From a ragged, pitiful-looking urchin he grew into as sturdy, fine-looking little fellow as could be found in all Broken Hill.<sup>91</sup>

For both newspapers, prostitution was an unfortunate carryover from their community's camp days. As their towns transitioned to civil, moral, and Christian family-dominated communities, the prostitute Other had to be constrained, if not closed out. Further, those whose first language was not English, like prostitutes from France, Italy and Japan (the *Karayuki-san*), were subject to their heritage mentioned in news stories,<sup>92</sup> including divergent approaches to business for example, French prostitutes solicited passer-by from windows and doorsteps.<sup>93</sup> In short, Othered on two levels: prostitute and race and racism.

Jacqueline Ewart et al., and others, highlight this as a business approach of local newspapers where success lay in reflecting the culture, communication and life of the community for example, White-centric politics and policy or, put another way, consensus journalism—a product of hegemony.

Accordingly, to the *Barrier Miner*, framing news toward the criminal justice system, police and policing, court findings and punishment of the deviant 'social evil' including its anti-social elements<sup>94</sup> was key. In Kalgoorlie, law enforcement was one of several elements identified to bring about change. A focus on bettering local council by-laws and state legislation, along with community, church, and business group pressure, was important—in sum, a whole-community approach.

### *Creating the Desired Community*

This frame reflected 15% of the Broken Hill articles and 53% of Kalgoorlie's—its most popular. It advanced the importance of forging a family-friendly community. In Kalgoorlie, community pressure was mounted on the local council to champion respectability values by containing, if not ridding, the town of the social evil, or Other. Furthermore, Kalgoorlie's desire to attract 'stable, middle-class, family-friendly'<sup>95</sup> newcomers meant that prostitution and brothels had to be removed or at least hidden from the streets that families and family homes occupied. Whereas in Broken Hill, where unionism and labourism had quickly established hegemony over the local social and political structure,<sup>96</sup> a focus on respectability and the patriarchal family home presided in Kalgoorlie. In an 1897 editorial, it was said,

the man who keeps a close watch upon the members of his family, and trains his own children so that they may become not only untroublesome but also useful citizens, is doing a far greater service to the State ... Every man holds sway as a sort of limited monarch in his own home; and if he is so neglectful of the subjects under his dominion or so otherwise imprudent in his rule over them that they become a curse to society instead of a blessing.<sup>97</sup>

The editorial reminded fathers that family 'is the first duty; it is bestowed upon one man exclusively'.<sup>98</sup> What is interesting is that the newspaper questioned the place of shift work because it made it difficult for a father to ensure his patriarchal responsibility for the civil, Christian, and moral life of the family.

When Ben Tillet, the British Labor Leader, visited Broken Hill in September 1897, he declared that 'prostitution and crime were the result of [the] environment. Each man was moulded and shaped by his fellows. [The] environment was the greatest factor of life.'<sup>99</sup> Tillet agitated for fathers and their families to be mindful of this. This was not the situation in Kalgoorlie, where miner unionism did not overtly dominate and shape the *Kalgoorlie Miner's* defining and reporting of civil respectability. The difference in reporting may also reflect an essential point of difference between the editors. Prior, the editor of the *Barrier Miner*, was sensitive to the union hegemony and Labor politics<sup>100</sup>, as was evident in the gatekeeping of news and opinion that appealed to the worldview of Broken Hill's reader, namely one shaped by and supporting patriarchy, Christianity, union attitudes and mores, and support for the criminal justice system in suppressing prostitution. Whilst Kirwan, editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, shared like views, gatekeeping prostitution in the news and editorials involved highlighting and accentuating the role of the community in dealing with the prostitute Other, or the 'social evil', because the criminal system was inefficacious. It also involved ascribing prominence to council and community group meetings and their reports, plans, and actions on the prostitute Other. Lecheler and de Vreese liken this to the selective function of news frames where 'certain issues, attributes, judgements, and decisions are suggested'<sup>101</sup>, which in turn reflects Entman's concept of news priming: selection and salience.

### *Local Council*

This frame represented 1.3% of the Broken Hill articles and 7% of Kalgoorlie's. For Broken Hill, it was about the passing of an 1896 council by-law:

Any person acting as the proprietor or occupier or having the chief control or management of any bawdy-house, brothel, or house of ill fame, or knowingly or wilfully continuing as a tenant any person who shall keep any brothel ... shall be liable to a £10 fine.<sup>102</sup>

Ironically, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* reported only one conviction in the twelve months—that of Ellen Webster.<sup>103</sup> In an editorial, the conviction was 'regarded as a highly satisfactory result, creditable alike to the people and the police'.<sup>104</sup> Broken Hill's brothels were put on notice that police were seeking more convictions. During the study period, no further convictions were reported. Could it then be that Ellen Webster was an unlucky or soft target, considering she was convicted 12 times?<sup>105</sup> With the frequent reference

to brothels in police court reports it is surprising that the *Barrier Miner* reported no other convictions. It could be that solid evidence was difficult to find, or the police found it easier to secure a conviction on lesser crimes like drunkenness, disorderly conduct, obscenity (including any profane or indecent word), and vagrancy. The same was the case in Kalgoorlie, where the RMs found it difficult to find guilt under the WA *Police Act* and local council by-laws. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* pressured the local council to address such legal shortcomings and respond to the ever-present community demand and aspiration for a prostitute-free Kalgoorlie.

Furthermore, letters to the editor highlighted the lived experience of families and respectable people, or 'us', residing in neighbourhoods where prostitution was widespread. It included a focus on the impact prostitution had on house prices and area desirability. For instance, one letter mentioned, 'the serious deterioration in [the] value of any properties, either house or land in the CBD and the letting of premises for prostitution, where such tenants receive twice or thrice the proper rental creates a fiscal injustice where respectable neighbours cannot either sell or let premises'.<sup>106</sup> During the study period, the problem remained unresolved. The inclusion of letters to the editor, be they select/subject to gatekeeping, was probably a factor in what was eventually published; as Entman argues, the process of constructing hegemony involves being selective and salient.

## Conclusion

Whereas previous research has documented Kalgoorlie's prostitution, including the history and lives of female prostitutes, little has been written about the situation in Broken Hill. This article contributes to scholarly knowledge by exploring the *Kalgoorlie Miner* and *Barrier Miner* news framing of prostitution between 1896 and 1903.

The analysis identified four key news frames: law and order, moral judgement, desired community, and local government. Whilst the narrative reflects an overlap between the two communities—for instance in their viewing the prostitute as Other—there were distinctions. Shifting the community from uncivilized to civilized and entrenching respectability was presented as the responsibility of the police and courts. Almost all the newspaper reporting was on police court news and, in particular, the successful prosecution of prostitution activity.

For the *Barrier Miner*, fathers, especially those absent due to shift work and union and Labor activities, created fragility in families that meant non-unionists and vice could influence children. Patriarchy and upholding Christian and union values were important factors in overcoming the influence of the Other and its presence in the community. Similarly, in Kalgoorlie, acknowledging and advancing 'stable, middle-class, family-friendly' values was essential if the community was to overcome prostitution. The *Kalgoorlie Miner* mounted a concerted gatekeeping effort in order to enable the greater community effort, necessary because the police, courts, and local council were found to be languid and unreliable.

Christianity and White civility were invaluable touchstones for community identification as the newspaper reflected the values and emotions of readers to rally support and action in moving the community away from its uncivilized manifestations of the self-resulting from contact with the Other of prostitution.<sup>107</sup> Stories of syndicated

prostitutes and vulnerable children living in brothels were common; there were also reports focusing on respectable families in neighbourhoods jeopardized by brothels who not only put up with the presence of vice but higher house prices. This all helped to give veracity to a 'them and us' narrative, where the prostitute or Other was deviant and antithesis to the Kalgoorlie hegemony. Hence, news is framed as a 'social evil'.

Comparing one similar mining community with another has provided valuable insight into the newspaper framing of the prostitute Other. Newspaper framing reflected commonalities and hegemony concerns. Nonetheless, by acknowledging the limitation of this study to a period and collection, the need exists to expand the scope of research by incorporating more Federation mining town newspapers reporting on prostitution, both local and international.

Lastly, a longitudinal study of Kalgoorlie's and Broken Hill's reporting of prostitution could be undertaken to delve further into the frames and potentially identify new ones.

## Notes

1. Eklund, "Mining in Australia," 177.
2. The term prostitute and prostitution are the terms preferred during the period covered by the research. It refers to female sex work. Male and LGBTQ2S+ is outside this study's focus including the Indigenous Australian experience. Also see MacKell, *Brothels*. Goldman, *Gold Diggers*. Frances, *Selling Sex*, 46–73.
3. Branstetter, "A Mining Town Needs Brothels," 382. Prostitution and prostitution were common phrases newspapers used at the time of the federation about sex work or the sex trade. This paper will use the terms interchangeably.
4. Synonyms for prostitution. See King, *Daughters of Midas*, 71–86 and Milentis and Bridge, *The Scarlet Stain*, Newspaper references include: 'Sly Grog Case', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 29 April 1899, 7; 'The Scarlet Stain', *The Sun* (Kalgoorlie), 6 May 1900; 5; 'A Detective Charged', *The Daily News*, (Perth), 6 December 1901, 3; 'Police Courts, To-day's Doings' *The Daily News* (Perth), 24 April 1902; 2.
5. Raelene Francis posits that the control, mobility, and importation of European women to the West Australian Goldfields makes for syndication. See Francis, *Selling Sex*, 145 and Job March in his 1897 Letter to The Editor, highlights the presence of a French syndicate in Kalgoorlie. Job March, Letter To Editor, 'The Social Evil', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 25 October 25 1897, 2.
6. 'A stable is what a pimp calls a group of women that prostitute for him.' Williamson and Cluse-Tolar, "Pimp-controlled prostitution," 1090.
7. Refers to White women, from the British Isles and Western Europe like Ireland, Brussels, and France, forced into prostitution by physical coercion, tricked, or abducted, Newspapers ran stories on the emotivity of the problem. Newspaper examples are: 'White Slave Trade', *The Sun* (Kalgoorlie), 15 February 1903; 3; 'White Slave Traffic', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 31 December 1901; 6; 'Slave Trade in White Women', *Westralian Worker* (Perth), 3 October 1902;1.
8. McKeown, *The Scarlet Mile*, 17.

9. 'The Scarlet Stain. In The Boulevard Brookman. How the Salacious Syndicate Works', *The Sun*, 15 April 1900, 5; 'A Bludger's Love-Letters', *West Australian Sunday Times*, 17 March 1901, 9; 'The Scarlet Stain, No.II. Westralia's Sorrow, Sin and Shame', *Truth*, 6 May 1900, 8.
10. See Marcus et al., "Pimps and Madams," 1–6; Frances, "White Slaves," 200; Francis, *Selling Sex*, 203–5.
11. Francis, *Selling Sex*, 67.
12. Both locations were populated and settled by Indigenous Australians well before Europeans arrived. This paper refers to the time of European settlement.
13. Davidson, *Prostitution in Perth*, 1. McKeown, *Scarlet Mile*, 18.
14. King, *Daughters of Midas*, 75.
15. McKeown, *Scarlet Mile*, 18.
16. For example, McKeown, *Scarlet Mile*. Davidson, *Prostitution in Perth*. Frances, "The History of Female Prostitution in Australia," 27–52. Frances, "Prostitution in Sydney and Perth Since 1788," 621–52. McKeown, "The Historical Geography," 297–310. Frances, *Selling Sex*, Frances, "Sex Workers or Citizens?" 101–22. Frances, "White Slaves," 185–200.
17. For example, King, *Daughters of Midas*. Milentis and King, *The Scarlet Stain*.
18. For example, Forsyth, "Class, Professional Work"; Kennedy, *Silver, Sin, Sixpenny Ale*; Solomon, "Broken Hill the growth".
19. Straw, *The Petticoat Parade*. McGrow, *Missionary Positions*. Perkins, *Working Girls*. Featherstone, *Let's Talk about Sex*. Beattie, "Kalgoorlie's Sex Trade and the Kalgoorlie Miner"; Sissons, "Karayuki-San"; Sweeney, "A woman overboard!"; Laite, "Historical Perspectives"; Piper, "Us Girls"; Doezema, "Loose Women or Lost Women?"; Finnane, "The Varieties of Policing," 33–51.
20. Ditmore, *The Encyclopedia*; Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina*; Levine, *Prostitution, Race & Politics*.
21. Morgan, *Good Time Girls*; Branstetter, *Selling Sex*; Branstetter, "A Mining Town"; Petersen, *The Lost History*; Cuyle, *Wicked Coeur d'Alene*.
22. For instance, Western movies like George Melford (director), *The Flame of the Yuko*, Film, U.S.A., 1926; John Francis Dillon (director), *The Girl of the Golden West* U.S.A., 1930; D.W. Griffith (director), *In Old California*, U.S.A., 1930; Norman Z McLeod (director), *The Paleface*, U.S.A., 1948.
23. Milentis and King, *Scarlet Stain Harlots*, is a compilation of newspaper clippings from Kalgoorlie's *Sun* newspaper between 1898–1909.
24. Beattie, "Kalgoorlie's Sex Trade".
25. Thompson and Gibbs, *Deviance and Deviants*, 78.
26. Millman, "She Did It All"; Rodmell, "Men, Women and Sexuality," 80–1; Abbott, Wallace and Tyler, *An Introduction to Sociology*, 1–56.
27. J. F. Staszak, "Other/Otherness," 43–7.
28. Ibid.
29. George Mosse. Fellows and Razack, "Race to Innocence," 349.
30. A female hierarchy with innocence; virtuous, respectable, and moral, being the socially acceptable ideal and prostitute, not.
31. Hegemonic refers to 'one group systematically overpowering and dominating another group, and it can occur economically, ideologically, culturally, and socially by privileging certain values, information, and social norms to the exclusion of others.' Provenzo and

Provenzo, "Hegemony". Urrieta informs that cultural hegemony is shaped 'by the world-views that members of that society share and the cultural artifacts that convey meaning ... Those furthest away from the cultural hegemony ... are the ones most alienated, disconnected, and least rewarded by the system.' Urrieta, "The Social Studies of Domination," 191. For example, those deemed disrespectable and uncivilized like prostitutes and mining communities.

32. See Mayer, *The Press in Australia*, 264–6.
33. Fellows and Razack, "Race to Innocence", 351.
34. 'Helping The Children. Kalgoorlie Fresh Air League', *Western Mail*, (Perth), 14 February 14 1903, 50.
35. 'Time Too Limited', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 12 February 1902, 4; 'Books And Other Things', *Barrier Miner*, 18 July 1902, 6; 'Women's Christian Temperance Union', *Barrier Miner*, 16 October 1901, 2.
36. Hintikka and Neval, "Representations of Prostitutes", 4,
37. *Ibid.*
38. Thompson and Gibbs, *Deviance and Deviants*, 78.
39. In 1901, Kalgoorlie's Christian population was 93% and likewise, in Broken Hill, 97%. See Smith et al., "Australian Bureau of Statistics".
40. Beattie, "Kalgoorlie's Sex Trade"; Featherstone, *Let's Talk about Sex*, 43–70; Thompson and Gibbs, *Deviance and Deviants*, 78.
41. Featherstone, *Let's Talk about Sex*, 45
42. Levine, *Prostitution, Race*, 151–4.
43. For an in-depth discussion see Cameron and Jaggard.
44. Fimiston Open Pit also known as 'Super Pit is a big open pit gold mine operated by Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines (KCGM).
45. Blainey, "Patrick Hannan".
46. Eastern Goldfields Historical Society, "Kalgoorlie"; Lougheed, "Europe and Western Australian," 200.
47. 'Population of Municipalities', *Western Mail*, 22 April 1898, 23.
48. Smith et al. "Australian Bureau of Statistics".
49. Zierer, "Broken Hill", 87.
50. Paul et al., "Metallophytes"; Kerr, "John Moffatt"; Branagan, "Seeking Hidden," 1; McQueen, "Tackaringa".
51. Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale*, 7.
52. Broken Hill Council. In 1887, 5,000 people. See Solomon, "Broken Hill", 181; In 1888, 12,000, see 'Broken Hill', *The Australian Star*, 15 February 1889, 8; In 1891, it was 19,787 (15,357 men and 12,133 females), Smith, *Historical and Colonial Census*.
53. Smith et al., "Australian Bureau of Statistics".
54. Kalgoorlie, Eastern Goldfields Historical Society.
55. King, *The Voice*, 181. Kearns, *Silverton*.
56. The spelling of Labor reflects the party's title and use of the term.
57. See Kennedy, *Sixpenny Ale*, 40–1. Kirkpatrick, "Samuel Henry Prior"; Kirwan, *My Life's Adventure*. Partlon, "Champion of the Goldfields," 111.
58. For a greater discussion see Reese and Shoemaker, "A Media Sociology."
59. Perry, "Dusting off", 76.

60. Aside from the owner(s). See Mayer, "Chapter 5: Press Economics," *The Press*: 55–71. Young, "Part 1, Sub-Section 3: The Age of Press Empire Building," *Paper Emperors*, 87–125. Bowman, *The Captive Press*.
61. Young, *Press Empire Building*, 93–4. Kirkpatrick, "Advocate, or Supplicant?" Chapin, *Shaping History*, 7.
62. Donohue et al., "Structure and Constraints," 808. Ewart and Massey: Local (People). Saunders, "A Country Newspaper"; Bowd, "Did You See That in the Paper?"
63. Jackson, "The Tit-Bits Phenomenon"; Young, *Paper Emperors*.
64. Perry, "Dusting off".
65. Royle, "Chapter 1: Introduction," 2.
66. Ewart et al., "Media matters"; Wade, "Journalism"; Bowd, "Considering the Consequences"; Hess and Waller, "The Snowtown".
67. Bowd, "Considering the Consequences."
68. Copeland, *The Media's Role*, 104.
69. Parliament of Australia, Members of the First Parliament.
70. Gamson and Modigliani, "The Changing Culture," 143.
71. Lecheler and de Vreese, *News Framing Effects*. 3.
72. Iyengar and Kinder, *News That Matters*, 63.
73. Entman, *Framing: Toward Clarification*, 52
74. Ibid.
75. Entman, *Projections of Power*, 5–6.
76. Conducted on September 17, 2022.
77. Kennedy, *Sixpenny Ale*, 79.
78. Western Australia Police Act, 1892.
79. New South Wales (NSW), Vagrancy Act, 1851.
80. 'Every common prostitute wandering in any street or public highway or being in any place of public resort who shall behave in a riotous or indecent manner'. Ibid. p. 2428.
81. NSW Police Offences (Amendment) Act, 1908.
82. See section 59 of the Western Australia Police Act, 1892.
83. Police Magistrates in NSW and Resident Police Magistrates in Western Australia performed like duties. Appointment was by the Governor and later the Public Service Minister. For a detailed discussion, see Nedim, Can Non-Lawyers Become Magistrates? Langbein, "Historical Foundations of the Law of Evidence," 1168. Pike, "History of the Magistracy in New South Wales".
84. The exception being Earnest Leslie Maitland (1899–1903) a career public servant and prior Warden in Milparinka.
85. Ibid.
86. Interestingly, most of the non-Judeo-Christians were made up of those who objected to providing a response. Smith, *Historical and Colonial Census*.
87. Ibid.
88. 'Letter to the Editor, Colonial Secretary, W.C.T.U of W.A, Perth', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 29 May 1900, 2.
89. Kerns, *Broken Hill*, 16. It was known as Rescued Sisters' Home. See Rescued Sisters' Home.
90. 'Kalgoorlie Maternity Home', *The Evening Star*, February 20, 1903, 3. It was known as 'Ellierslie'. See Boulder Rescue Home.



91. 'A Child's Life in a Brothel', *Barrier Miner*, 10 July 1899, 1.
92. 'Charges Of Assault. War of Nationalities' *Barrier Miner*, 4 January 1897, 4; 'Social Evil', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 5 May 1900, 2; 'French Women', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 24 April 1897,6; 'The Japanese in Kalgoorlie—Open Air Meeting in Hanan-Street', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, August 18, 1896,3.
93. 'Brookman-Street Prosecutions. Imprisonment Imposed. An appeal to be made,' *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 6 September 1902, 2; 'The French Section. A Successful Prosecution', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 4 June 1897, 2.
94. For example, drunkenness, vagrancy, disorderliness, noise, danger, and unrestrained behaviour.
95. McKeown, *The Scarlet Mile*, 34.
96. Ellem and Shields, *Making a 'Union Town'*, 116–7.
97. 'Editorial—Family Duties', *Barrier Miner*, 10 March 1897, 3.
98. *Ibid.*
99. 'Ben Tillet. Lecture on 'Social Problems', *Barrier Miner*, 6 September 1897, 2.
100. For example, The Barrier Industrial Council excluded women from paid employment after they married. Ellem and Shields, *Making a 'Union Town'*.
101. Lecheler and de Vreese, *News Framing Effects*, 3.
102. 'The New ByLaws', *Barrier Miner*, 19 November 1896, 2.
103. 'Quarter Sessions', *Barrier Miner*, 7 December 1897, 1.
104. 'Editorial—The Courts', *Barrier Miner*, 7 December 1897, 2.
105. Broken Hill Goal, Entrance and Description Book, 1818–1930
106. Hercules, An Old Problem', Letter to the Editor, *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 6 November 1900, 2.
107. See Linklater and Mennell, "Norbert Elias".

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