The Historical Journal, 52, 3 (2009), pp. 739–761 © Cambridge University Press 2009
doi:10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Printed in the United Kingdom

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, MINING, AND PROSTITUTION*

JULIA ANN LAITE
Memorial University of Newfoundland

ABSTRACT. *Prostitution has been linked by many historians and social commentators to the industrial development and capitalism of the modern age, and there is no better example of this than the prostitution that developed in mining regions from the mid-nineteenth century. Using research on mining-related prostitution, and other social histories of mining communities where prostitution inevitably forms a part, large or small, of the historian's analysis of the mining region, this article will review, contrast, and compare prostitution in various mining contexts, in different national and colonial settings. From the American and Canadian gold rushes in the mid- and late nineteenth century, to the more established mining frontiers of the later North American West, to the corporate mining towns of Chile in the interwar years, to the copper and gold mines of southern Africa and Kenya in the first half of the twentieth century, commercial sex was present and prominent as the mining industry and mining communities developed.*[1] *Challenging the simplistic images and*

Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St John's, Newfoundland, A1C 1S7 julia.laite@gmail.com

* The author would like to thank Drs John Sandlos and Arn Keeling of the Mining and Northern Development Research Group at Memorial University for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of this article.

[1] George Chauncey Jr, 'The locus of reproduction: women's labour in the Zambian Copperbelt, 1927–1953', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7 (1981), pp. 135–64; Janet L. Finn, *Tracing the veins: of copper, culture, and community from Butte to Chuquicamata* (Berkeley, CA, 1998); Patrick Harries, 'Symbols and sexuality: culture and identity on early Witwatersrand gold mines', *Gender and History*, 2 (1990), pp. 318–36; Patrick Harries, *Work, culture, and identity: migrant labourers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860–1910* (Johannesburg, 1994); Thomas Miller Klubock, 'Working-class masculinity, middle-class morality, and labour politics in the Chilean copper mines', *Journal of Social History*, 30 (1996), pp. 435–63; Thomas Miller Klubock, *Contested communities: class, gender, and politics in Chile's El Teniente copper mine, 1904–1951* (Durham, NC, and London, 1998); Gary Kynoch, '*Marashea* on the mines: economic, social and criminal networks on the South African gold mines, 1947–1999', *Journal of South African Studies*, 26 (2000), pp. 79–103; T. Dunbar Moodie, Vivienne Ndatshe, and British Sibuyi, 'Migrancy and male sexuality on the South African gold mines', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 14 (1988), pp. 228–56; Jane L. Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft: gender and class struggles on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1926–1964', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13 (1986), pp. 36–56; Jane L. Parpart, '"Where is your mother?": gender, urban marriage, and colonial discourse on the Zambian Copperbelt, 1924–1945', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 27 (1994), pp. 241–71; Rakhi Raychaudhury, 'Living conditions of the female workers in the eastern collieries (Bihar and Bengal) from 1901–1921', *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, 24 (1985), pp. 13–19; Priscilla M. Shilaro, *A failed Eldorado: colonial capitalism, rural industrialization, African land rights in Kenya, and the Kakamega gold rush, 1930–1952* (Boulder, CO, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

stereotypes of prostitution that are popularly associated with the American mining frontier, historians have shown that prostitution's place in mining communities, and its connection to industrial development, was as complex as it was pervasive and enduring.

I

In 1985, Anne Butler, one of the first historians seriously to examine prostitution in American western history (indeed, one of the first historians seriously to examine prostitution in any context), wrote that 'a lively corps of prostitutes is woven into the fabric of the frontier era in the American mind'.[2] Her observations about the connections between mining, the frontier, and prostitution bear weight: while frequently foolish, often cliché, and sometimes insulting, the array of cultural references to prostitutes in the boom towns and growing urban centres that characterized North American western expansion testify to their place of cultural and social importance on the frontiers of the past and the frontiers of the imagination.[3] Historians too weave prostitution into their accounts of mining. Since the 1980s, more serious studies have joined Butler's in considering the connections between prostitution, the mining frontier, and the American and Canadian West,[4] and prostitution also lurks at the edges of many broader accounts

[2] Anne M. Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery: prostitutes in the American West, 1865–1890* (Urbana, IL, 1985), p. ix.

[3] Some examples of the vast and colourful popular literature published since the 1950s on frontier prostitution are Caroline Bancroft, *Six racy madams of Colorado* (Boulder, CO, 1965); Ronald Dean Miller, *Shady ladies of the West* (Los Angeles, CA, 1964); Harry S. Drago, *Notorious ladies of the frontier*, 1: *The beautiful but shady ladies who kept pace with the advancing frontier, 1850–1929* (New York, NY, 1972); Richard F. Selcer, *Hell's half acre: the life and legend of a red light district* (Fort Worth, TX, 1991). Jay Moynahan has made an impressive contribution to the descriptive literature on frontier prostitution, compiling over two dozen books on everything from guides to brothels, bawdy photographs, and red light cookbooks. Some of his more recent publications include Jay Moynahan, *Forty fallen women: naughty French mademoiselles 1890 to 1920* (Spokane, WA, 2008); and Jay Moynahan, *The Klondike travels of Mattie Silks and her sportin' women* (Spokane, WA, 2008).

[4] Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*; see also Marion S. Goldman, *Gold diggers and silver miners: prostitution and social life on the Comstock Lode* (Ann Arbour, MI, 1981). Around the anniversary of the Klondike, several other works appeared that looked in whole or in part at mining frontier prostitution. See Lael Morgan, *Good time girls of the Alaska-Yukon gold rush* (Fairbanks, AL, and Seattle, WA, 1998); Charlene Porsild, *Gamblers and dreamers: women, men, and community in the Klondike* (Vancouver, BC, 1998); Bay Ryley, *Gold diggers of the Klondike: prostitution in Dawson City, Yukon, 1898-1908* (Winnipeg, MB, 1997). Jan MacKell, *Brothels, bordellos, and bad girls: prostitution in Colorado, 1860–1930* (Albuquerque, NM, 2004), represents one of the most recent academic examinations of mining and prostitution on the American frontier. There has also been some very interesting work done on prostitution and mining community development by historical archaeologists Alexy Simmons, *Red light ladies: settlement patterns and material culture on the mining frontier* (Corvallis, OR, 1989); Alexy Simmons, 'Bedroom politics: ladies of the night and men of the day', in A. Bernard Knapp, Vincent C. Pigott, and Eugenia W. Herbert, eds., *Social approaches to an industrial past: the archaeology and anthropology of mining* (London and New York, NY, 1998); Catherine Holder Spude, 'Brothels and saloons: an archaeology of gender in the American West', *Historical Archaeology*, 39 (2005), p. 89; Michael Given, 'Mining landscapes and colonial rule in early-twentieth-century Cyprus', *Historical Archaeology*, 39 (2005), pp. 49–60; Donald L. Hardesty, 'Power

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of the social history of mining.[5] Mining history in general has begun to take better account of non-white, non-middle-class women on the American frontier,[6] and has also begun to build a better picture of the global dimensions of mining with recent research on Australia, Africa, South America, and other areas in the developing world.[7]

Prostitution has been linked by many historians and social commentators to the industrial development and capitalism of the modern age, and there is no better example of this than the prostitution that developed in mining regions from the mid-nineteenth century.[8] Using research on mining-related prostitution, and

---

and the industrial mining community in the American West', in *Social approaches to the industrial past: the archaeology and anthropology of mining* (London, 1998), pp. 81–96.

[5] For social histories of western mining that heavily incorporate prostitution see Mary Murphy, *Mining cultures: men, women, and leisure in Butte, 1914–1941* (Urbana, IL, and Chicago, IL, 1997); Finn, *Tracing the veins*; Elizabeth Jameson, *All that glitters: class, conflict, and community in Cripple Creek* (Urbana, IL, and Chicago, IL, 1998); Klubock, *Contested communities*; Porsild, *Gamblers and dreamers*; Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Days of gold: the California gold rush and the American nation* (Berkeley, CA, Los Angeles, CA, and London, 1997). Lynn M. Hudson, '"Strong animal passions" in the gilded age: race, sex, and a senator on trial', in Mary Ann Irwin and James F. Brooks, eds., *Women and gender in the American West* (Albuquerque, NM, 2004), pp. 259–80; Albert L. Hurtado, 'When strangers met: sex and gender on three frontiers', in Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage, eds., *Writing the Range: race, class, and culture in the women's West* (Norma, OK, and London, 1997), pp. 123–42; Elizabeth Jameson, 'Connecting the women's Wests', in Elizabeth Jameson and Sheila McManus, eds., *One step over the line: toward a history of women in the North American Wests* (Edmonton, AB, and Athabaska, AB, 2008), pp. 5–28; Joan M. Jensen and Darlis A. Miller, 'The gentle tamers revisited: new approaches to the history of women in the American West', in Irwin and Brooks, eds., *Women and gender in the American West*, pp. 9–36; Susan L. Johnson, 'The last fandango: women, work, and the end of the California gold rush', in Kenneth N. Owens, ed., *Riches for all: the California gold rush and the world* (Lincoln, NB, and London, 2002), pp. 230–63; Sheila McManus, 'Unsettled pasts, unsettled borders: women, wests, nations', in Jameson and McManus, eds., *One step over the line*, pp. 29–47; Brian Roberts, '"The greatest and most perverted paradise": the forty-niners in Latin America', in Owens, ed., *Riches for all*, pp. 71–89.

[6] For some of the newest debates on the subject of women in the West see Jameson, 'Connecting the women's wests'; and McManus, 'Unsettled pasts, unsetlled borders', and the other essays in this collected volume. See also Susan Lee Johnson's excellent reimagining of the social history of the California gold rush, Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring camp: the social world of the California gold rush* (New York, NY, 2001). The social history of mining is being challenged in a similar fashion in the Australian historiography, see for instance Iain McCalman, Alexander Cook and Andrew Reeves, *Gold: forgotten histories and lost objects of Australia* (Cambridge, 2001).

[7] Laurie Mercier and Jaclyn Gier, 'Reconsidering women and gender in mining', *History Compass*, 5 (2007), pp. 997–1001.

[8] This point is amply illustrated in Timothy Gilfoyle's historiographical review of prostitutes as 'metaphors of modernity', where he shows how what we call prostitution today developed in the context of industrialization and mobilization in the modern period and how historians use prostitution to explore the idea of modernity, Timothy J. Gilfoyle, 'Prostitutes in history: from parables of pornography to metaphors of modernity', *American Historical Journal*, 104 (1999), pp. 117–41. Almost a century earlier, Havelock Ellis, writing in the 1910s, linked the causes of prostitution to capitalist civilization, Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the psychology of sex*, VI: *Sex in relation to society* (Philadelphia, PA, 1920), pp. 288, 299, 302. While some sources trace modern prostitution back to the ancient world, most seem to agree that there was a sharp increase in prostitution after industrial development: Vern Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, *Women and prostitution: a social history* (Buffalo, NY, 1987); Nils Johan Ringdal, *Love for sale: a global history of prostitution* (London, 2004); William Sanger, *A history of prostitution: its extent, causes, and effects throughout the world* (New York, NY, 1869).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

other social histories of mining communities where prostitution inevitably forms a part, large or small, of the historian's analysis of the mining region, this article will review, contrast, and compare prostitution in various mining contexts, in different national and colonial settings. From the American and Canadian gold rushes in the mid-nineteenth and late nineteenth century, to the more established mining frontiers of the later North American West, to the corporate mining towns of Chile in the interwar years, to the copper and gold mines of southern Africa and Kenya in the first half of the twentieth century, commercial sex was present and prominent as the mining industry and mining communities developed.[9] Challenging the simplistic images and stereotypes of prostitution that are popularly associated with the American mining frontier, historians have shown that prostitution's place in mining communities was as complex as it was pervasive and enduring.

Comparing and contrasting prostitution in areas with such different economic, social, and cultural contexts is difficult. For instance, the question of race and ethnicity – and the way these intersected with gender – was more important in some contexts than in others. Some places experienced direct colonial rule and others a more subtle kind of economic imperialism, while still others were in transition from being territories and outposts of North American expansion to becoming integrated parts of the larger nation. The differences, needless to say, are many. Yet in examining these rather disparate historical case studies, linked by their experiences of mining development and by, among other things, the prevalence of prostitution, I have been able to identify three perspectives through which historians characterize and explain the relationship between commercial sex and industrial mining development, the role that it played in mining communities, and the way it has been dealt with by them.

In some cases, historians have characterized commercial sex in mining regions as a kind of 'strategy of resistance', in the main for the women who used prostitution to make money and gain access to mining regions, but also for men whose patronage of prostitutes helped to construct spaces that existed outside of the ordered world of corporate mining development. In quite the opposite way, however, some historians of mining-related prostitution describe it as playing a subtle or explicit role in the 'reproduction of male labour' that was so central to the mining enterprise. In this sense, prostitution was tolerated as part of, rather than outside of, the mechanisms of industrial and community development. Finally, histories that examine commercial sex on the frontier and in other mining areas suggest that, as industrial capitalism matured, mining communities as well as mining companies reconceptualized prostitution as neither a strategy of

[9] Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction'; Finn, *Tracing the veins*; Harries, 'Symbols and sexuality'; Harries, *Work, culture, and identity*; Klubock, 'Working-class masculinity'; Klubock, *Contested communities*; Kynoch, '*Marashea* on the mines'; Moodie, Ndatshe, and Sibuyi, 'Migrancy and male sexuality'; Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft'; Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"'; Raychaudhury, 'Living conditions of the female workers in the eastern collieries'; Shilaro, *A failed Eldorado*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

resistance nor as a leisure activity that facilitated the reproduction of male labour. Rather, from the community's point of view, prostitution became an unfortunate by-product both of economic boom and of economic decline and, from the company's point of view, it became a threat to production and the discipline of its workers.

What can we learn from a transnational comparison of prostitution in mining regions? Prostitution is coming to be recognized by some historians not only as a side note to the historical mining region but, in certain contexts at least, as one of its defining features. Susan Lee Johnson argues that prostitution – which was part of a more general struggle over leisure and its control – was so intimately tied to the social landscape of the Californian gold rush era that the fading out of commercial sex in the region was one of the most important markers of the end of the gold rush era itself.[10] In Butte, Montana, the community's reputation as a 'wide open town' for drinking, gambling, and prostitution is cited by Mary Murphy as equal to its status as 'the richest hill on earth'.[11] Jane Parpart, Patrick Harries, George Chauncey Jr, and Priscilla Shilaro all demonstrate that fears of prostitution, single women, and male sexuality were a major concern for communities and companies in many of Africa's prominent mining regions, while Thomas Klubock shows how these issues played a major role in shaping the 'contested community' that was the El Teniente mining region in Chile.

Historical archaeologist Alexy Simmons argues that one can look at prostitution as a kind of litmus test for understanding the structures and nature of a mining town. She writes that '[Prostitutes'] settlement patterns, economic status, and community social attitudes toward prostitutes can be used to interpret and characterize a frontier mining community and to ultimately interpret changes therein.'[12] Just as prostitution has been used by historians in other regions as a lens through which to investigate, for example, gender politics and feminism, colonial health administration, and urban development, studying prostitution in mining contexts provides us with some important ways to learn about the social history and the gender history of mining more generally, and historians certainly use accounts of prostitution in their case studies to this end.

The study of commercial sex in mining communities not only tells us something about the social history of mining; it can also make a significant contribution to the broader history of prostitution and its control, which has, over the past three decades, come to be recognized as an important area of historical inquiry.[13] Mary Murphy shows how the town of Butte, which established itself

[10] Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 275–313; Johnson, 'The last fandango'.

[11] Murphy, *Mining cultures*, p. xv.

[12] Simmons, *Red light ladies*, p. 8.

[13] For some of the most important and seminal work in the historiography of prostitution, see Alain Corbin, *Women for hire: prostitution and sexuality in France after 1850* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1990); Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, prostitution, and the commercialization of sex, 1790–1920* (New York, NY, and London, 1992); Gail Hershatter, *Dangerous pleasures: prostitution and modernity in twentieth-century Shanghai* (Berkeley, 1997); Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics: policing venereal disease in the British Empire* (London, 2003); Maria Luddy, *Prostitution and Irish society, 1800–1940* (Cambridge, 2007);

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

almost overnight and quickly transitioned through periods of economic boom, corporate control, and economic downturn, can be a useful 'laboratory for examining several phenomena of urban development'. She argues that Butte, and other such 'instant cit[ies]', can be used as 'exemplar[s] of the rush into an urban, industrial age'.[14] Learning about prostitution and its control in these contexts is, therefore, a way to study prostitution's place in the urban and industrial world through the microcosm of the mining community. Examining the different reasons why commercial sex was tolerated, controlled, and repressed can provide us with models of how and why societies in general intervene in prostitution. All of the studies examined here suggest that prostitution played a significant role in mining regions: as a way for women to make money, as a way to encourage male labour, as a social problem, and as a corporate concern. The study of the global connections between prostitution and mining highlights the ubiquity of prostitution in the modern world, and challenges assumptions about its being one of recent historiography's marginal subjects.

II

Many historians argue that female prostitution all over the world can be seen as a form of resistance or negotiation on the part of the women involved, as they sought alternatives to the poor working conditions, low pay, and unemployment to which women have been disproportionately subject throughout the modern period. While some historians see women's prostitution as an outright resistance strategy, and others see it more as a survival strategy, these perspectives emphasize some degree of choice for the women concerned and recognize prostitution as an alternative to poverty and other forms of women's labour.

Nowhere is the idea of prostitution as a resistance strategy more discussed than in accounts of women selling sex in mining regions, because prostitution seemed to be directly connected to the exclusion of women from the licit profits of the mining enterprise.[15] Women, for the most part, were unable to stake their own claims in the gold rushes (although there are several very notable exceptions to this rule),[16] and were frequently barred from employment in the mines when companies took over the fields.[17] In some extreme contexts, such as the late

David J. Pivar, *Purity and hygiene: women, prostitution, and the 'American Plan,' 1900–1930* (Westport, CT, and London, 2002); Ruth Rosen, *The lost sisterhood: prostitution in America, 1900–1919* (Baltimore, MD, and London, 1982); Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian society: women, class and the state* (Cambridge, 1980).

[14] Murphy, *Mining cultures*, p. xiv.

[15] Mercier and Gier, 'Reconsidering women and gender', pp. 996–7; Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*, pp. 1–5.

[16] See for instance, Jennifer Duncan, *Frontier spirit: the brave women of the Klondike* (Ottowa, ON, 2003); Melanie J. Mayer, *Klondike women: true tales of the 1897–1898 gold rush* (Athens, OH, 1990); Melanie J. Mayer and Robert N. DeArmond, *Staking her claim: the life of Belinda Mulrooney, Klondike and Alaska entrepreneur* (Athens, OH, 2000).

[17] See for instance Laurie Mercier and Jaclyn J. Gier, *Mining women: gender in the development of a global industry, 1670–2005* (New York, NY, 2006).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mining compounds of South Africa, women were even sometimes barred from performing traditionally female jobs such as cleaning and cooking on the mine sites in no small part because of fears about the sexual and social consequences of having women around.[18] Selling sexual labour often proved the most lucrative, if not the only, means by which a woman could profit from mining, working the mines in her own way, or as the common phrase goes, 'mining the miners'.[19]

Mining-related prostitution was not just linked to women's direct exclusion from mining employment but also to their exclusion and displacement elsewhere, which, of course, is one of the best explanations for why women engage in prostitution in all contexts. Women who sold sex in or near mine sites came from all over the region and the world. Anne Butler and Susan Lee Johnson link women's participation in mining-related prostitution in the American West to the larger phenomenon of women's labour migration that helped to characterize the modern period.[20] Of Chile's El Teniente mine in the early twentieth century, Klubock writes that 'the ebb and flow of male workers to the mine was accompanied by a parallel movement of women who migrated to the camps … Miners drank at women's bars, ate their food, and engaged in illicit, and often commercial, sexual relationships with them.'[21] It was a similar story on the Zambian Copperbelt where, despite heavy restrictions in the 1920s, women migrated to the mining areas for personal and economic reasons, sometimes to engage in some kind of sexual commerce.[22]

We should not discount the displacement of women already working as prostitutes in other regions as a factor in creating a prostitution supply in mining areas.[23] From the 1860s onward, many European nations and colonies began to control prostitution more strictly, either by instituting harsh systems of regulation or by stepping up criminal measures against brothels and solicitation. By the 1880s and 1890s, these measures had grown stricter still and women who were labelled as prostitutes were more subject to forcible medical inspection and treatment, jail terms, fines, and police harassment.[24] Patrick Harries notes in his

[18] Harries, 'Symbols and sexuality', pp. 322–3.

[19] For other work that women could perform, see Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 75–6.

[20] Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*, pp. 3–6; Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 77–8.

[21] Klubock, *Contested communities*, p. 41.

[22] Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', passim.

[23] Susan L. Johnson sees this displacement as the leading reason why so many French women came to work as prostitutes in the California gold rush. Her theory is that the economic collapse after the 1848 revolutions coupled with harsher restrictions on prostitution motivated many women who had worked as prostitutes in Paris and other French cities to migrate to California. Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 77–8.

[24] See for instance Paula Bartley, *Prostitution: prevention and reform in England, 1860–1914* (London, 2000); Corbin, *Women for hire*; Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*; Jill Harsin, *Policing prostitution in nineteenth-century Paris* (Princeton, NJ, 1985); Elizabeth B. van Heyningen, 'The social evil in the Cape Colony 1868–1902: prostitution and the contagious diseases acts', *Journal of South African Studies*, 10 (1984), pp. 170–97; Levine, *Prostitution, race and politics*; Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian society*; Julia Ann Laite, Prostitution in London, 1885–1930 (unpublished PhD dissertation, Cambridge, 2008).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

research on sexuality and gender in the South African gold mining regions that, in the late 1890s, 'an army of white and black prostitutes, pushed out of the Cape and, drawn from as far afield as the ghettos of Europe, flocked to the Witwatersrand where they found a ready market for their services'.[25]

Arguments that characterize mining-related prostitution as a strategy of resistance vary in subtlety. Some researchers, such as Lael Morgan, argue that women who migrated to the north-western mining regions of the Yukon and Alaska around the turn of the century to work as prostitutes were pioneers in their own right, travelling long distances to remote environments, 'prospecting for gold in a less direct manner'.[26] Other popular histories characterize many prostitutes on the western frontier of America as entrepreneurs, who climbed economic and social hierarchies within the sex industry until they owned several brothels, were politically connected, and were investing in business and mining enterprises in the community.[27]

It seems that the reality of women's engagement with prostitution in mining regions was by no means black and white, and the line between resistance and survival often became blurred. These complexities are particularly well illustrated in studies that examine mining regions outside of North America. As Jane Parpart and Patrick Harries demonstrate in their accounts of women's early twentieth-century migration to the Zambian Copperbelt, commercial sex was one activity among many through which women earned money. Women found unofficial and semi-licit ways of making money from men on the mining compounds, most prominently by offering domestic services, brewing beer, and running informal canteens and dance halls. Moreover, the commercial sex in which women engaged took a myriad of complex forms. Most significantly, it seems as if women's sexual labour was frequently blended with domestic labour. In Zambia, 'Ishwewe', or mistresses, would sell both their domestic and sexual labour to men and act as temporary wives, while the 'ngongo' were known as prostitutes in the more recognized sense. An even greyer area was occupied by the 'intombi', the 'girlfriend who receives gifts'.[28]

The fluid labour and social identities that were held by women selling sex in southern Africa could also be found in other mining regions. Some of the women who worked in the *calampas* on the outskirts of the mining barracks of El Teniente, Chile, in the 1920s ran canteens, sold alcohol, cleaned dormitories, and also sold sex. Others worked more officially in the brothels in the *calampas* or further afield in the town of Rancagua. The sexual relationships these women had with the miners, like the women in Zambia, ranged from the blatantly commercial to the domestic and romantic. These sorts of relationships between women who sold sexual labour and the men who bought it are echoed in popular and academic accounts from the early North American mining frontier as well, where women could work in brothels, sell sex from their 'cribs', and could also occupy less clear

[25] Harries, 'Symbols and sexuality', p. 323.
[26] Morgan, *Good time girls*, pp. 35–46, 56.
[27] See n. 1.
[28] Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', p. 260.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

terrains, such as that of mistress/housekeeper and dance hall girl. It seems that women working in fandangos, dance halls, hurdy-gurdys, and saloons often engaged in commercial sex, but in other cases they merely capitalized upon what Peter Bailey has described as the 'parasexuality' of these and similar female occupations.[29] In any case, historical research in many different mining regions demonstrates how the sale of sexual labour formed an important facet of women's strategies to resist the exclusion imposed on them by the mining industry.

It is not just women's involvement with commercial sex in mining regions that has been presented as a kind of resistance strategy. Historians point to men's involvement as customers of 'vice', as well as the place that such activities had within mining communities, as evidence of a more general resistance to gender, racial, social, and corporate norms. While controversial, this perspective does help us critically to examine men's involvement in commercial sex, to problematize and denaturalize the male purchase of sex, and to view it not just as a biological imperative but also as a historically and culturally situated activity.

Susan Johnson argues that prostitution and other such forms of leisure became one of the ways in which Anglo-American ideology was resisted during the California gold rush. Linking (perhaps a little uncritically) the repression of prostitution to 'Anglo-American men and institutions', she writes that 'the gold rush … marked a time of tremendous contest about maleness and femaleness, about colour and culture, and about wealth and power … the dominance of Anglo-American men and institutions was often … difficult to enforce'.[30] Three quarters of a century later, at the El Teniente mine, in Thomas Klubock's view, 'male workers demonstrated their resistance to the demands of the modern copper industry in social practises that, in the company's eyes, impeded productivity, including absenteeism, drinking, gambling, and frequenting brothels'.[31] In this sense, prostitution acted as a way to disregard conventional morality, and as a way to refuse or even to defy the ordered and controlled world of modern capitalism.

This kind of resistance to moral and legal convention could extend to the community as a whole. In the North American West, for instance, prostitution was tolerated by communities far longer and far more openly than in established urban centres of eastern North America, where assaults on regulated prostitution had succeeded in preventing or in shutting down red light districts and implementing systems of repression by the 1870s.[32] Perhaps the single best explanation for the tolerance of prostitution in early mining towns and regions was the lack of a developed criminal justice apparatus, bureaucracy, and civil society. In this context, the need to suppress prostitution – an action that may well

[29] Peter Bailey, 'Parasexuality and glamour: the Victorian barmaid as cultural prototype', *Gender and History*, 2 (1990), pp. 148–73.

[30] Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 51, 121.

[31] Klubock, *Contested communities*, p. 48.

[32] See for instance Joel Best, *Controlling vice: regulating brothel prostitution in St. Paul, 1865–1883* (Columbus, OH, 1998); Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*; Barbara Meil Hobson, *Uneasy virtue: the politics of prostitution and the American reform tradition: with a new preface* (Chicago, IL, 1990).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

have angered many of the community's inhabitants – was not so pressing a concern.[33]

Bay Ryley and Charlene Porsild demonstrate how the situation in Dawson, Yukon, during and after the Klondike gold rush is an excellent example of this dynamic of community resistance. Dawson was also clearly not without law and order, in fact, the success of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP) in curbing the worst kinds of violence and crime during the Klondike gold rush is a feature for which the Canadian 'mild West' is known. Yet even in London and Paris, police officers were explicit about their preference for regulated, rather than criminalized, prostitution; it is no surprise then that a police force like the NWMP in Dawson, so far removed from the authorities to whom they had to answer and in such a prominent position within the community, would favour a regulated tolerance of prostitution over any attempt to suppress the phenomenon. Similarly, in Alaskan mining towns, Lael Morgan has argued that the toleration and repression of prostitution is related to a story of competing bureaucracies – the local resisting the federal – that never really came to a consensus. For instance, when a federal immigration officer was sent to Fairbanks to investigate and deport foreign prostitutes in 1908, he received no co-operation either from the town's officials or from the townspeople, who would not give him any information.[34]

Strategies of resistance in mining regions were often spatial. Almost every mining region had the equivalent of the classic western 'saloon', a site where miners could drink, dance, gamble, and interact with women, frequently in order to engage in paid sex. In the southern mines of California, these were known as fandangos, in Dawson, Yukon, they were dance halls and bars, in Chile's El Teniente and Chuquicamata, they were canteens, often located in the barrios and 'calampas' outside the mine site. Such establishments also played an important role in the lives of miners and women who had migrated to the mines in southern Africa and in the towns known as 'majengos' in western Kenya. These areas were often celebrated by miners as being outside of, and in contrast to, their working spaces, and engagement in the activities that occurred in such spaces was a way to escape from the control of the mine. These were spaces and places where their bosses were not, and where they were not surveilled as workers. This escape was both figurative and literal; early mining companies often found that men would spend days at a time in these establishments and absenteeism was frequently a problem.[35]

Mining communities that were undergoing the transition from unrestrained boom towns to managed and monitored company towns or commercial centres often developed what historical archaeologist Donald Hardesty calls 'satellite towns', 'with alternative lifestyles and subcultures that reflect[ed] resistance

[33] Martin Ridge, 'Disorder, crime and punishment in the Californian gold rush', in Owens, ed., *Riches for all*, pp. 176–201, 178–82.
[34] Morgan, *Good time girls*, p. 195.
[35] For the fandango as a site of resistance, see Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 278–80.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

strategies'.[36] He presents the interesting case study of Reipetown in Nevada, which by the 1910s was infamous for being a haven for drinking, gambling, and prostitution. What is perhaps even more interesting is that this town was also considered 'a hotbed of union radicalism'.[37] Reipetown was quite literally a site of resistance to corporate control, and the connections here, and elsewhere, between prostitution, vice, and labour radicalism beg to be more thoroughly explored.

There are similar cases of 'satellite towns' elsewhere. When pressure was put on police to crack down on tolerated prostitution in Dawson City, they turned a blind eye to the development of Lousetown, across the river, as a site of commercial sex.[38] The town of Ramona, outside of Colorado City, is another example of a satellite town. Because of efforts by some Colorado City residents to prevent the sale of alcohol and sex, brothel and saloon keepers and employees moved their businesses outside of the city, and by 1911 Ramona was its own incorporated town. This strategy of resistance only lasted so long, however, and after the state of Colorado was voted dry in 1915 Ramona disappeared virtually overnight.[39]

While Hardesty's conceptualization of the 'resistance' that operated on the literal and figurative margins of the power networks of the mining region is simplistic, his work does point to a rich area for both archaeological and historical research that takes into account the physical and social geography of the areas peripheral to almost all early mining regions. Colorado City's Ramona, Dawson's Lousetown, El Teniente's *calampas*, Chuquicamata's *barrios*, and western Kenya's *majengos*, to name a few, can tell us a great deal both about the marginal and the mainstream in mining history.[40]

III

Some historians who study prostitution in mining communities see it from a different perspective, and point out how both mining companies and mining communities frequently recognized that prostitution was a 'necessary evil', in one way or another, in mining regions. This more cynical approach to understanding prostitution's place in mining communities demonstrates the ways that prostitution, far from existing in resistance to corporate community development, actually helped to facilitate it. This perspective is particularly prevalent in histories that examine mining regions in colonial contexts, such as Jane Parpart's and Priscilla Shilaro's research on Zambia and Kenya, respectively; and in histories that investigate the influence of specific mining companies in corporate towns, such as Mary Murphy's study of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company in Butte, Montana, Thomas Klubock's study of the Baden Copper Company in

[36] Hardesty, 'Power and the industrial mining community', p. 89.
[37] Ibid., p. 90.
[38] Porsild, *Gamblers and dreamers*; Ryley, *Gold diggers of the Klondike*.
[39] MacKell, *Brothels, bordellos, and bad girls*, pp. 223–8.
[40] Shilaro, *A failed Eldorado*, p. 214.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

El Teniente, and Janet Finn's examination of the Anaconda Company in both Butte and Chuquicamata, Chile.

Many of these historians demonstrate how most mining companies did very little to deal with the problem of prostitution, at least early on, and that this was largely because it was not in their interest to do so. In early twentieth-century Butte, Mary Murphy argues that while the Anaconda copper company was 'a major constraint on worker's choices', the company 'did little to alter' the wide open nature of the town's leisure pursuits, and the company proved very ambivalent when it came to promoting alternative recreation and opposing vice. 'Considering the political clout the company wielded and its close ties to the Butte police force', Murphy has found, 'people generally believed that that ACM [Anaconda Copper Mining Company] would have suppressed gambling, drinking, and prostitution had those activities not been in the company's best interest … It was the policy of the ACM to "keep the miners happy, keep 'em broke, keep 'em working".'[41] This quote amply illustrates the way that mining companies either explicitly or subtly recognized that prostitution could 'facilitate the reproduction of male labour' by ensuring that men would spend their money freely, relieve the stress and discontentment that so often accompanied mine work, and return to work without any permanent social or financial responsibilities.[42]

Klubock argues that the Baden Copper Company also turned a blind eye to social vices at the El Teniente mine because 'the miners' masculine work culture served the company's interests in increasing production'.[43] Janet Finn has found that it was a similar story in Chuquicamata, Chile, where the Anaconda Company had also set up shop. Here, she argues, the company wanted to 'promote the values of domesticity and sexual morality' because it kept men 'more committed to their job and conservative in their union activism' but they also knew, as in the Butte case, that 'hardworking miners needed their release'.[44] The Anaconda Company did little to stop the prostitution that was rampant in the areas outside the Chuquicamata mining camp, even when local governments and townspeople complained. Finn quotes one municipal inspector in the 1920s as saying that mining company 'official visitors don't see the deplorable housing, stench, hunger, syphilis, and prostitution'.[45] In this case, it appears as if the company's wilful ignorance of prostitution was also a way to avoid taking responsibility for other social problems. Indeed, in the end, Anaconda combined their social and literal pollutants, by covering the barrios, with their slums and their brothels, with the tailings from the copper mine.[46]

On the Zambian Copperbelt, mining companies like Anglo American Mines and Rhodesian Trust Mines were forced in the early years to be tolerant toward women working as potential prostitutes or 'temporary wives' around the mines,

[41] Murphy, *Mining cultures*, pp. xvi, 123, citing prize fighter and club owner Sonny O'Dea.
[42] Shilaro, *A failed Eldorado*, pp. 211–14. [43] Klubock, *contested communities*.
[44] Finn, *Tracing the veins*, p. 97. [45] Ibid., p. 93. [46] Ibid., p. 98.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

because, unlike in South Africa's Witwatersrand, mining companies on the Copperbelt had more difficulty attracting and keeping workers.[47] While ostensibly encouraging miners to bring their 'wives', the actual monitoring of legal marriages proved very lax and created a situation where many single women could migrate to the mining area.[48]

As in Chuquicamata, the mining companies in southern Africa could afford to ignore local pressure to curb prostitution. When tribal leaders and concerned members of the urban elite complained about prostitution around mining areas in Zambia, according to George Chauncy Jr, 'they received no co-operation from the companies and met with resistance from the women'. Despite local moral pressure, therefore, the mining companies understood that repressing prostitution 'could be patently opposed to their own interests'.[49] It was a similar story in western Kenya, where, despite significant pressure from the Luyia council, the colonial government, tied to the mining companies, did not intervene to stop prostitution because, argues Priscilla Shilaro, it was a way to keep miners from saving money and to keep them from bringing their families to the mines.[50] Many mining companies around the world in the early twentieth century therefore seemed to engage in what Janet Finn describes as 'the careful balancing of virtue and vice'.[51]

Mining towns also sometimes recognized that respecting this balance was integral to community as well as industrial development in mining regions. The lack of 'other' women or 'good' women meant in some instances that townspeople and representatives saw prostitution as a necessary evil, based upon their (and indeed the almost universal) understanding that men had certain inevitable biological needs for regular sex.[52] Moreover, when a mining town did contain a handful of 'respectable' women, prostitution was seen as an important service that could satisfy natural male lust and therefore protect 'good' women from sexual attack.[53]

The toleration of prostitution could also be linked to racial politics. For instance, in both southern Africa and Kenya, while local authorities and ethnic groups feared sexual activity around mining regions as heralding a potential loss of ethnic identity, the state and the mining company tolerated or even encouraged prostitution for the same reason, hoping that miners' sexual relationships with single women around the mine through casual and/or commercial sex would

[47] Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft', p. 38.
[48] Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', p. 252.
[49] Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction', p. 159.
[50] Shilaro, *A failed Eldorado*, p. 213.
[51] Finn, *Tracing the veins*, p. 97.
[52] Raelene Davidson, 'Dealing with the social evil: prostitution and the police in Perth and on the eastern goldfields, 1895–1924', in Kay Daniels, ed., *So much hard work: women and prostitution in Australian history* (Sydney, 1984), pp. 162–91, 162–3.
[53] Morgan, *Good time girls*, 15. One of Mary Murphy's Butte interviewees, Hellen Raymond, 'expressed the common opinion that Butte streets were safe for women despite the presence of so many rough men. With the red light district flourishing, men "knew where to get their pleasures".' Murphy, *Mining cultures*, p. 78.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

help to 'detribalize' the region.[54] It has also been recognized that early mining communities and territorial governments in North America welcomed the migration of white women to the West as wives and mothers because of pronounced fears of miscegenation between miners and aboriginal women, which could create an inevitably troublesome Mètis population.[55] Could white prostitutes, or even other non-aboriginal prostitutes, have been tolerated for similar reasons, because it was seen as an effective way to prevent mining men from mingling with native populations and therefore a way to promote community and racial stability?[56]

In other instances, because of the lack of 'better' women, some historians argue that prostitutes came to be seen as a civilizing influence on male mining society and were tolerated and respected for these reasons. In Dee Brown's classic hypothesis of women as the 'gentle tamers' of the American West, prostitutes had an important role to play: 'when one considers the crudity of what was predominantly a male society, it must be admitted that the scarlet representative of the gentler sex played an important role in taming the West'.[57] While the idea of women as 'civilizers' of the West has met with serious challenges in more recent historiography, there is evidence to suggest that in some mining regions prostitute women did take on a variety of roles associated with more 'respectable' women in more populated centres and that they helped ensure the stability of the domestic economy.[58] Alexy Simmons has found that prostitutes were often active in charitable work in various sites in the West,[59] studies of southern African mining show that women sold both sexual and domestic labour to men,[60] and in Chile's El Teniente, women working as prostitutes also provided a number of other necessary domestic services to the miners.[61]

Prostitution was not only connected to domestic service in early mining areas, but with other important aspects of social and economic life as well. The most obvious and prominent of these connections was with the entertainment and leisure industries. Prostitutes were also closely associated with the making,

[54] Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction', p. 159.

[55] Jean Barman, 'Taming aboriginal sexuality: gender, power, and race in British Columbia, 1850–1900', in Irwin and Brooks, eds., *Women and gender in the American West*, pp. 210–35; McManus, 'Unsettled pasts, unsettled borders', p. 37; Adele Perry, *On the edge of empire: gender, race, and the making of British Columbia, 1849–1871* (Toronto, ON, 2001).

[56] For histories that explore the roles played by Latin American and African American prostitutes in different mining regions see Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*, pp. 4–5; Hurtado, 'When strangers met'; Jameson, *All that glitters*, p. 127; Jameson, 'Connecting the women's wests'; Jensen and Miller, 'The gentle tamers revisited'; Johnson, 'The last fandango'; McManus, 'Unsettled pasts, unsettled borders'.

[57] Dee Brown, *The gentle tamers: women of the Old Wild West* (Lincoln, NB, and London, 1981), p. 93.

[58] Glenda Riley, *The female frontier: a comparative view of women on the prairie and the plains* (Lawrence, KA, 1988), p. 116.

[59] Simmons, *Red light ladies*, p. 8. Anne Butler, however, is more circumspect, arguing that the image of the prostitute with the 'heart of gold' is merely based upon a sentimental constructed memory, part and parcel of the Western myth. Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*, pp. 74–5.

[60] Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft', p. 41; Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', passim; Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction', p. 148.

[61] Klubock, *Contested communities*, p. 41.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

distribution, and sale of alcohol in many different settings. In the American West and Canadian Northwest, many women sold sex alongside more licit entertainments in the saloons, dance halls, and fandangos, where men went primarily to seek gambling and alcohol.[62] Alcohol was brewed and sold almost exclusively by women in the mining regions of South Africa and in the Zambian Copperbelt, and in El Teniente, where they also ran establishments where miners could go to dance, drink, and purchase sex.[63] Prostitution was in this way entwined with other entertainments that were sacred to miners, which meant that any potential attack on prostitution could be construed as an attack on these other entertainments as well.

The connections between the community and commercial sex went beyond domestic service and the entertainment industry; prostitutes were central figures in the economic life of many early mining towns. In many places in the early American mining frontier, brothels and saloon prostitution mixed openly with other businesses, and prostitutes owned or rented no small part of the local real estate. Moreover, they often used the profits from prostitution to invest in the endeavours of local businessmen, and in mining operations themselves. Even prostitutes who worked in smaller or less successful brothels contributed to the local economy through their above-average consumption of luxury items like clothing, jewellery, expensive foodstuffs, and liquour.[64] 'The women are notoriously good buyers, and spend their money freely', wrote an outraged US forest service representative to explain Anchorage's tolerance of prostitutes in the camps outside the town.[65]

Many of these points are amply illustrated in Elizabeth Jameson's case study of labour politics in the gold mining town of Cripple Creek at the turn of the century, where prostitution became one of the major issues in the 1899 election. Assuming that a campaign against prostitution and gambling would win over newly enfranchised Cripple Creek women, the mining union's party made this one of the central features of their election campaign.[66] But Jameson argues that the union actually misjudged the willingness of the population to crusade against prostitution. 'The 1899 election strategy could not bridge the gap between daily experience and the idealized gender roles union leaders espoused.' Prostitution and morality 'were not the most compelling daily concerns of miners or of working class wives. And they threatened dance hall musicians, bartenders and women sex workers whose jobs they targeted.'[67]

Anne Butler sees a kind of codified and widespread official corruption as the single most important factor in explaining why prostitution was tolerated and regulated in the American West. According to her 1985 study, police officers were

[62] Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 275–313; Ryley, *Gold diggers of the Klondike*, pp. 19–33; MacKell, *Brothels, bordellos, and bad girls*, pp. 13–40.
[63] Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction', p. 250; Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft', p. 39; Klubock, *Contested communities*, 41.
[64] Simmons, *Red light ladies*, p. 38.
[65] Morgan, *Good time girls*, p. 292.
[66] Jameson, *All that glitters*, pp. 129–39.
[67] Ibid., p. 139.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

given exceptional autonomy and community standing, town councils were corrupt and welcomed bribes, the judiciary were ill-trained and apathetic, and many officials often used the sexual services of prostitutes.[68] 'The judicial structure [of the early American West] perpetuated and regulated institutionalized vice', Butler writes. 'Punishment and accommodation, censure and camaraderie, dispensed at the fancy of officials, kept prostitutes aware that the law decided the conditions of their residence and their freedom.'[69] Official and unofficial systems of regulated prostitution soon took hold in many of the mining towns of the North American West.

Official corruption, far from being a way to resist illiberal policies, could actually be a tool used by a ruling elite to subjugate prostitutes and control a community's development. This kind of regulation also prevented women from occupying the same fluid identities that they had sometimes done in earlier stages of mining development. In this case, prostitution was only tolerated so long as prostitutes were recognizable and separate from the rest of the population. From this perspective, then, satellite towns were not spaces or strategies of resistance, but a product of concerted corporate and community interest in preventing the worst public offences of prostitution while also recognizing its importance as a leisure pursuit that ensured men would keep working.

Interestingly, it appears that this kind of spatial regulation could also serve as a way to dispossess prostitutes of prime real estate in a growing town, when more respected businessmen wanted the properties that had been occupied by prostitutes.[70] In the American West, Alexy Simmons has also found that shopkeepers were key players in forcing the relocation of prostitutes from town centres.[71] In Dawson, meanwhile, the 'consolidation of commercial interests' caused other businesses to protest against commercial sex presence.[72] Economic interest supported regulation in another way as well: by tolerating prostitution, officials were free to tax prostitutes on their earnings.[73]

Far from being a strategy of resistance, some historians consider prostitution to be the most disturbing symptom of a system of industrial development that excluded women and exploited them. Anne Butler, while seeing prostitution as a form of women's work, views it largely as a form of subjugation, another way in which women in the West suffered because of economic and social inequality.[74] Rakhi Raychaudhury sees the prostitution that grew up around Eastern collieries in India in the early twentieth century as a product of a loss of traditional social structures, poor living conditions, and poor pay for women; as a negative product of mining development rather than a successful negotiation of the mining economy by women.[75] From these perspectives on mining-related prostitution, women

[68] Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*, pp. 75–7, 97–103.
[69] Ibid., p. 103.
[70] Morgan, *Good time girls*, p. 104.
[71] Simmons, 'Bedroom politics', p. 53.
[72] Ryley, *Gold diggers of the Klondike*, p. 60.
[73] Butler, *Daughters of joy, sisters of misery*, p. 106.
[74] Ibid., pp. 3–24.
[75] Raychaudhury, 'Living conditions of the female workers in the eastern collieries'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

working in commercial sex appear less like entrepreneurial pioneers and more like victims of blackmail, medical regulation, and displacement. But the perspective that considers prostitution as a strategy of resistance and the one that sees it as integral to mining development were in no way mutually exclusive. Prostitution could represent a strategy of resistance while also being tied in complicated ways to the licit mechanisms of mining labour and to the economic and social development of the mining town.

IV

A third perspective on the historical connections between mining and prostitution comes largely from examinations of the later stages of mining development, in both the corporate and the community sense. In these cases, prostitution is viewed neither as a strategy of resistance nor a facilitator of production and community development, but rather as a threat to production and to the physical and social health of the community. These kinds of attitudes inevitably took hold in mining regions, and led to calls to repress prostitution that were acted upon by community organizations and local governments as well as mining companies and mining unions.

The arrival of larger numbers of white 'respectable' women is the most common explanation offered for why mining communities in the North American West transitioned from seeing prostitution as a resistance strategy or as a necessary evil, to viewing it as a grave social problem. This rise in 'good' women and the rise in marriage, it has been argued, made prostitution as well as the other services of racially 'other' women less necessary and less tolerated, and also precipitated the need to label and repress prostitute women in order to firm up the line between 'good' women and 'bad' women in mining towns.[76]

As Elizabeth Jameson's example of the election in Cripple Creek demonstrates, the fact that there were simply more women in a community does not satisfactorily explain the often rapid calls to suppress prostitution in the early twentieth century, but the existence of women's clubs and societies and the influence of religious organizations perhaps does. Following trends that had been set all over the western world, these women's and church organizations had, by the late nineteenth century, begun to link themselves to the international social purity movement after 1885. With roots in British and American evangelicalism, social purity groups launched a concerted campaign against prostitution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[77] Because so many of these campaigns

[76] Davidson, 'Dealing with the social evil', p. 170; Finn, *Tracing the veins*, p. 79; Johnson, *Roaring camp*, pp. 277–8; Simmons, *Red light ladies*, p. 8; Murphy, *Mining cultures*, pp. 71–105.

[77] For the growth of the social purity movement, see for instance Bartley, *Prostitution*; Lucy Bland, *Banishing the beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1885–1914* (London, 1995); Mark Thomas Connelly, *The response to prostitution in the progressive era* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1980); Brian Donovan, *White slave crusades: race, gender, and anti-vice activism, 1887–1917* (Urbana, IL, and Chicago, IL, 2006); Pivar, *Purity and hygiene*; Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian society*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

were tied to temperance, prostitution's connection to alcohol, which had in some instances promoted the toleration of commercial sex, also proved in the end to be a liability. In this way, middle-class women's organizations in mining communities helped import new national and international political and moral standpoints against prostitution to remote mining regions.

It was not just middle-class women who contributed to the repression of prostitution. New and more accountable local government usually began to develop as the mining community grew in population and in regional and national importance and, as technologies of transportation and communication improved, it became more connected to the politics of the larger region, nation, or empire.[78] The tendency to see prostitution as a threat to community development was also directly related to the development of a middle class and a working class more generally, and to the emergence of an urban elite. The repression of prostitution in Dawson, argues Bay Ryley, 'symbolized Dawson's shift from a mining camp to a town with a stable middle class intent on proving that Dawson was as refined as any southern city'.[79] Meanwhile, in El Teniente, the crusade to repress prostitution went hand in hand with campaigns to ameliorate the living conditions of miners and their families that was so central to working-class politics.[80] In Zambia, women who were educated in missionary schools and who had married more skilled miners were some of the most vocal critics of prostitution and temporary marriages on the Copperbelt.[81] Female migration was opposed by rural leaders in Zambia from early on, who saw it as threatening traditionally patriarchal structures, but by the early twentieth century, the emerging elite, who believed in 'respectability' and were 'white aspiring', began to oppose women's migration to the mines as well. Religion and missionary activity had a large role to play here, and calls for change were made through church groups and welfare societies.[82] For these urban elites, who were 'determined to construct a respectable urban family-based culture', prostitution became an important enemy.[83]

The desire to control independent, young, and single women led to demands to repress prostitution and women's migration in southern Africa in the interwar years. In the Witwatersrand after 1927 the state, under pressure both from tribal leaders and the emerging urban elite, took measures to remove women 'of known loose character' from the nearby townships.[84] Missionary attacks on prostitution and disease in mining centres in Zambia expressed fears about the dangerous mobility and social disconnection of young women who migrated to mining areas, far away from patriarchal control, and by the late 1930s, road blocks were set up to prevent women from working in mining areas.[85]

[78] MacKell, *Brothels, bordellos, and bad girls*, pp. 196–230.
[79] Ryley, *Gold diggers of the Klondike*, p. 63.
[80] Klubock, *Contested communities*, p. 44.
[81] Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', p. 251.
[82] Ibid., pp. 254–5.
[83] Ibid., p. 267.
[84] Keith Breckenridge, 'The allure of violence: men, race and masculinity on the South African goldmines, 1900–1950', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24 (1998), pp. 669–93, 676.
[85] Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', pp. 246–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Women in these mining regions became the keepers of racial integrity, and prostitution became a threat to this identity and in many ways a symbol of the dangers of colonial rule. In his study of migration in the Zambian Copperbelt, George Chauncey notes how chiefs from certain ethnic groups went to the mines to find women and force them to go home because they were seen as disgracing their people.[86] In western Kenya in the 1930s, argues Priscilla Shilaro, 'the gold mining industry posed the immediate danger of undermining Luyia cultural norms by creating conditions prone to corrupt Luyia women'.[87] Local Luyia councils launched campaigns against prostitution, often taking the form of attempts to ban the movement of women, or forcible repatriation. The problem of prostitution in this district was two-pronged. Not only did mining development encourage the prostitution of Luyia women, but it also brought with it an influx of women of different ethnicities, who 'corrupted' youths and spread VD among the Luyia, and 'debauched' local girls.[88] Prostitution, understood by the Luyia as a problem created by European prospectors, mining companies, and industrial development, was also increasingly tied to demands for ethnic rights and even for independence.

In the North American context, tolerance for prostitution may have also waned in part because the kind of commercial sex that existed in the West's economic heyday was also waning. Mary Murphy sees a rise in heterosociability and the emergence of young, independent, and single women in the public sphere after the First World War as the single most important factor in challenging Butte's reputation as a 'wide open town' geared toward male leisure.[89] Prostitution had begun to lose its cultural and economic capital in mining towns in other ways as well. As the booms subsided, legendary madams and prostitutes were dying off or moving on to marriage or to larger cities, and the third-party organization of prostitution was on the rise. Substance abuse was becoming a problem in commercial sex, particularly in the United States, where cocaine use had skyrocketed in the early twentieth century and had grown still more popular during the First World War.[90] Women working in prostitution were no longer migrants who had travelled long distances and had exciting and sordid pasts, but women who had grown up in the mining towns and were perhaps a disturbing reminder of impending or extending economic collapse. The local community which had once celebrated its bawdy and wide-open character was perhaps coming to see prostitution as a symbol of economic decline, urban illness, and social backwardness rather than as a symbol of the prosperity and raucousness of boom-times.

This is certainly the perspective on prostitution that is associated with mining development in the present day. Far from being considered a 'strategy

[86] Chauncey, 'The locus of reproduction', p. 158. See also Parpart, '"Where is your mother?"', p. 254. [87] Shilaro, *A failed Eldorado*, p. 211. [88] Ibid., p. 213.

[89] Murphy, *Mining cultures*, p. xvii.

[90] Joseph Spillane, *Cocaine: from medical marvel to modern menace in the United States, 1884–1920* (Baltimore, MD, 2000), pp. 90–104.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of resistance' through which women and the mining community diluted their dependence on the company and defied its control, prostitution is cited by organizations who critique mining development today, particularly in developing countries, as a dark by-product of rapid economic development, or as part of the social and environmental pollutions that remain after the mining company has moved on.[91] Accounts from women in mining regions present prostitution as an imported social problem, and depict prostitutes as outside the community and the family. Prostitutes are not imagined as women who resist, but instead prostitution is depicted as the worst possible fate for women excluded from the licit profits of mining development. As two women from South Africa articulated, 'We would rather have women go underground, be exposed to heat, be victims of rockfall – like men are exposed to – be victims of TB and silicosis, than take the dignity of women away with prostitution.'[92] Few consider prostitution to be a 'strategy of resistance' today. Instead, prostitution is conceptualized as a pollutant, a symbol of the mining corporations' social irresponsibility and governments' short-sighted community planning.

Like mining communities, mining companies were also beginning to consider prostitution more of a menace than a necessary evil, and in most cases, the measured toleration of prostitution by mining companies in the early stages of mining development did not last. By the interwar years, most companies were taking, or were forced to take, some measures to intervene in the sexual practices of their workers and to curb commercial sex.[93] The majority of this intervention was purposeful but indirect. In Butte, Mary Murphy has found that attempts to control vice in the town were not only related to post-war corporate welfarism, but also directly linked to economic decline in the 1930s (which, in Chile as well as in the US, saw a remarkable decline in the price of copper). The Anaconda Company grew wary of anything that would contribute to an unstable workforce and were suspicious of the unbridled leisure pursuits that were the hallmark of the radical working miner. Thus began an era of increased social intervention on the part of the company, which they hoped would clear out the radical element and transient workforce in Butte, 'giving way to the married or those with dependents, thus leaving the more conservative of the miners'.[94]

In El Teniente, Chile, Klubock argues that the Baden Copper Company, by the 1920s, came to realize that 'miners' intensely masculinized forms of self assertion also produced an unruly and rebellious work culture' and resulted in

[91] See for instance the comments on prostitution as a social disease caused either by mining development, or the withdrawal of a mining company in Alcaino Bianca, 'Chile (personal testimonial)', *International Women and Mining Conference* (Visakhapatnam, India, 2004), pp. 79–80; Yukon Status of Women Council, 'Draft gaining ground statement', *Gaining ground: mining, women, and the environment* (Lake Laberge, Yukon Territory, 2000); Matilda Koma, 'Issues concerning indigenous communities in mining', in Bhanumathi, Kalpa, Ravi Shankar, Vanka and Gunavathi, eds., *International women and mining conference* (Visakhapatnam, India, 2004), pp. 21–3; Faith Lethala and Josephine Gumbi, *South Africa* (Visakhapatnam, India, 2004).

[92] Lethala and Gumbi, *South Africa*, p. 82.

[93] Finn, *Tracing the veins*, p. 98.

[94] Murphy, *Mining cultures*, p. 33.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

frequent absenteeism, workers' inefficiency, and radical politics.[95] In light of these realizations, Klubock argues that the company undertook explicit and directed social control through the provision of 'corporate welfare' that tied workers to their jobs and to their families. Company 'social clubs' were also established, as alternatives to the union and to the bar.[96] But the 'linchpin' of their system was the regulation of sexuality, as the company sought to make marriage the dominant form of sexual relationship.[97] The company's focus was therefore on controlling the dangerous single women who migrated to the mining area, who brewed and sold alcohol, and who frequently engaged in commercial sex with miners.[98] Klubock argues that these interventions were explicit directives from the Baden Copper Company to reform a 'working class culture ridden with vices like drinking, gambling, and frequenting brothels' with the explicit purpose of improving production and stability at the mine.

What Klubock has found of the El Teniente mine, Patrick Harries has found of mines in South Africa, where the mining companies in the Witwatersrand pressured the government into passing laws that bound black miners to their employers, prohibited the sale of liquor, and closed the canteens. Additionally, 'in order to suppress beer brewing and the spread of VD with which it was associated, as well to enforce racial segregation, prostitution was outlawed and the married quarters were subjected to stricter controls'.[99] Mining companies were so eager to prevent prostitution outside the compounds in the Witwatersrand that they blatantly tolerated the homosexual 'mine marriages' between miners in the compounds as a safer alternative.[100]

On the Zambian Copperbelt in the 1930s and 1940s, the need to control prostitution and promote a kind of family wage went hand in hand with company attempts to prevent unionism and strikes. In both 1935 and in 1940, workers went on strike on the Copperbelt to protest wage-related issues, which, the company felt, had been exacerbated by competition for 'temporary wives' and prostitutes in the area. While slow to respond, the company and colonial government gradually gave more power to the urban courts to impose marriage registration and develop a plan for a family wage.[101]

The mining union's perspectives on prostitution in different contexts were as varied as that of the company or the community. Sometimes, as in the case of Cripple Creek at the turn of the century, the union's attempts at social control failed (and took the union down with it), while other times, as in Nevada's Riepetown in 1910, the seediest areas of the mining region were the literal and figurative homes of union radicalism. In contrast to the Cripple Creek example, in Chile's El Teniente, Klubock has found that, despite the fact that early attempts at social control and moral reform by the company were resisted by

[95] Klubock, *Contested communities*, pp. 2, 445. [96] Ibid., pp. 49–80. [97] Ibid., pp. 59–60.
[98] Ibid., p. 63. [99] Harries, *Work, culture, and identity*, p. 168.
[100] Harries, 'Symbols and sexuality', passim.
[101] Parpart, 'The household and the mine shaft', pp. 41–2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

workers and others around the mine, by the 1930s the miner's union, growing in power and influence, had in many ways aligned its goals for social reform with those of the company. 'The mining union was also concerned with the 'unhealthy' lifestyles and disruptive forms of sexuality', writes Klubock 'like the state's new social service agencies, the miners' union was concerned with prostitution and the spread of VD among workers'. [102] The repression of commercial sex by both company and union was in this way intimately tied to 'the transformation of [Chile's] itinerant male mine labourers into a permanent industrial workforce'.[103] In very sharp contrast to these examples, however, is an oral history account from 1960s Chuquicamata, which traces the beginning of a major strike back to the mining company's attempts to prevent prostitutes from gaining access to men's dormitories.[104] Some overt connections between prostitution and mining culture seem to have weathered both community and corporate reforms.

V

Some historians of mining suggest that the repression of prostitution in mining regions can be seen as an important facet of what Hardesty describes as a 'culture of dominance that emerged in … industrial mining communities', as mining companies, allied with local and state governments, sought to control their workers and their communities in order to increase production and manage any political or social threats from the working class. Others see prostitution itself as part and parcel of this culture of dominance, a facilitator of industrial production.[105] As the twentieth century progressed, and the politics of mining communities, companies, and unions merged with the socio-political aims of advanced welfare capitalism and mega development, there is no doubt, as we have seen through the prism of the repression of prostitution, that the 'strategies of resistance' employed by women and men in mining communities have eroded a great deal. At the same time, prostitution has lost its place, from both the community and company's perspective, as an accepted or useful phenomenon. People's activities have come to be more thoroughly directed and monitored, leisure has been more carefully regulated, and women's (and to a lesser extent male miners') identities within mining regions have become decidedly more fixed. Prostitution is now conceived as, and usually conducted as, a more marginal, underground activity that is associated with criminality and victimization.

But if comparatively studying mining and the control of prostitution tells us something about power and dominance, then it must also tell us something about how complicated power relationships can be. None of the ways of explaining prostitution's place in mining communities and in mining development is mutually exclusive. Strategies of resistance and survival related to prostitution existed long after corporations and communities made moves to repress it. Corporations

[102] Klubock, *Contested communities*, p. 122. [103] Ibid., p. 283. [104] Finn, *Tracing the veins*, p. 98.
[105] Hardesty, 'Power and the industrial mining community', p. 88.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and communities could ostensibly oppose prostitution for all sorts of economic and socio-political reasons, but still turn a blind eye to some forms of it, understanding it as an inevitable and even necessary facet of mining development well into the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. These profound and global connections between prostitution and mining help to demonstrate the ways that commercial sex – and the debate over how to address it – was not only 'woven into the fabric' of popular and historical imagination but was also intertwined with the story of industrial capitalist development in the modern world.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X09990100 Published online by Cambridge University Press