SEX ON THE FRONTIER: JAPAN'S LABOUR MIGRATIONS AND

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SEX IN QUEENSLAND 1890-1910.

By

Marita Arnold

Budapest, Hungary – Tokyo, Japan
2022

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ABSTRACT OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the last decade, the twin global crises of climate change and racism have generated an awareness about the need to rethink the legacies of colonial systems in Australia, and historians of migration have brought new energy to the question of how settler-colonial systems have engaged and governed marginalised non-white migrant labour.

This thesis examines the governance of Japanese migrants in Queensland in the last decade of the nineteenth century and gives special attention to the 'unruliest' of them: the men and women who worked in Japanese commercial sex.

Drawing on the private correspondence of colonial officials and the public debates in the radical-nationalist and the labour press, this thesis calls attention to the workings of different forms of biopolitical governance and sovereignty as well as 'de-facto' power of employment and labour in the colonial and national borders and spaces which migrants moved across.

Bringing biopolitics and sovereignty into the same frame, this thesis argues that the colonial state of Queensland was one actor in an 'assemblage of power' which formed a regime of transnational governance administering the lives and labour power of Japanese migrants in commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier.'

Looking at the debates about Japanese migration in the late nineteenth century public sphere, this thesis argues that the framing of Japanese commercial sex and gender relations through racialized representations of Japanese migrants as sexual despots and slaves helped produce a counter example for democratic settler-citizenship. Furthermore, it points to the role that the racialization of Japanese gender relations played in creating exclusions at the birth of Australian social democracy.

Finally, this shows how Japanese immigration, and especially the border-crossing of sexually transgressive women, became a key site for imagining and strengthening popular settler sovereignty through a cultural imaginary which highlighted penetrable and insecure borders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS OR DEDICATIONS

I would like to thank José Mapril. He has been encouraging and helpful supervisor, gently guiding my attention back to ideas I had missed or ignored and introducing me to ideas and authors which will remain with me for years to come.

Thank you also Rin Odawara and Yuriko Yamanouchi who gave some useful early suggestions for this thesis.

The staff at the National Library of Australia went out of their way to accommodate a visit by proxy when border closures and lockdowns made travel in person impossible.

And to my sister, Stephanie Arnold, who spent hours in the archives photographing documents and more hours supporting, inspiring, and giving perspective. Thank you.

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INTRODUCTION

On the 18th of July 1898, Thursday Island's Governor and Magistrate, John Douglas telegraphed the under-secretary of the Home Office, the department in charge of the colony's internal affairs, in Brisbane.[1] More than a decade had passed since the Japanese consul for the Australian colonies, Alexander Marks had made his first unsuccessful attempt to persuade four Japanese sex workers to leave the island. Leaders in the local Japanese community had launched petitions against them. Border regulations at departure, transit and arrival points had been tightened, but still women continued to arrive. Douglas' telegraph message concerned a proposal to grant land near Thursday Island's cemetery as a specially designated zone for Japanese commercial sex. Douglas objected to it because he believed 'it would create a disorderly zone with drinking and 'possibly criminal violence,' requiring additional 'police protection.' He argued instead for strengthening prevention measures at the Japanese border.

Douglas' refusal to bring Japanese commercial sex under greater state surveillance through 'zoning' and his reliance on Japanese border restrictions to stem the flow of poor, rural women into the expansive Japanese prostitution networks which crossed the Asia-Pacific raises a series of questions about the role of the settler-colonial state in governing 'unruly and 'undesirable' migrants. As a colonial official, Douglas administered a territory on which ideologies of settler self-government and white nation-building grated uncomfortably against structures of imperial capitalism, dependent on Asian indentured labour and, in some areas, supported by significant Asian capital. This brought the settler-colonial state under pressure from a whole range of interests.

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[1] John Douglas, "Telegraph to Under Secretary Home Office - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (Telegraph, Thursday Island, July 18, 1898), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia.

The first set of questions Douglas' telegraph message raises regards the reasons for Douglas' resistance when he rejected the 'zoning' proposal. Was the proposal he refused initiated by social activists concerned about immorality, miscegenation, the spread of venereal disease, and the isolation of 'foreign bodies' from the greater population? Or was it the press on a moral drive to clean up the streets, as the Bundaberg Mail urged two years later, calling on police to move displays of migrant immorality 'off the main thoroughfare'? Alternatively, was the proposal made by businessmen in the pearling industry? Japanese commercial sex protected their interests because it serviced a large single male indentured population without 'endangering' white working-class women or antagonizing white working-class men. Government oversight through 'zoning' Japanese commercial sex would have conferred legitimacy on that system. If not, did the proposal come from the men and women who directly profited from Japanese commercial sex? For those with a stake in the industry, 'zoning' their activities was a way of preserving commercial interests in an environment that was broadly hostile.

Another set of questions concerns those whose interests were served by Douglas' rejection of the proposed 'zone' to confine Japanese commercial sex at Thursday Island — middle-class Japanese migrants and members of the white working-class. Both groups felt the threat of being associated with the 'coolie' lifestyles of lower-class Japanese and Chinese migrants. Both groups were invested in maintaining the 'disorderliness' of commercial sex if only because it supported their calls for the most aggressive form of governance—total exclusion.[2] However, while middle-class Japanese migrants at Thursday Island hoped only to excise Japanese commercial sex from their community, white labour activists described Japanese commercial

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[2] On the exclusion as a violent form of governmentality see Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013). Chapter 6

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sex as a slave relation and inherently anti-democratic, and they used this as a pretext to advocate for the elimination of all Japanese labour.

A third set of questions concerns Douglas' reference to tightening regulations at the Japanese border. Between 1894-1896, the Japanese government had rolled out a collection of policies designed to support its growing maritime trade. This included passing the Emigrant Protection Law (*Imin hogohō*), a measure to tighten screening processes to prevent the departures of the 'wrong kind of emigrant' and especially to ensure those women at risk of becoming part of Japan's expansive overseas sex industry would not get a passport.[3] Japan had also entered its 'first equal treaty': the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Britain.[4] To appease settler sensitivities about Asian immigration and to avoid conflict with the Colonial Office in London, self-governing dominion colonies were allowed to negotiate their own terms or remain outside the treaty altogether. Queensland's decision to sign on to the treaty despite fierce opposition of its labour movement brought the issue of Japanese immigration to Queensland sharply into focus, highlighting the colony's imperfect self-governance and ongoing subservience to empire in the realm of international relations. The fragility and uncertainty of settler sovereignty was, therefore, central to the politics of migration control. What was the relationship between forms of sovereign and biopolitical power across states and within empire? How did this shape the politics of Japanese migration at the Queensland border?

Bringing biopolitics and sovereignty into the same frame, this thesis makes three claims. The first claim concerns the role of the settler-colonial governance of Queensland's non-white, non-

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[3] Mitziko Sawada, "Culprits and Gentlemen: Meiji Japan's Restrictions of Emigrants to the United States, 1891-1909," *Pacific Historical Review* 60, no. 3 (August 1, 1991): 339–59, https://doi.org/10.2307/3640452.Bill Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930: Prostitutes, Emigration and Nation-Building*, 2014, http://universitypublishingonline.org/pickeringchatto/ebook.jsf?bid=CBO9781848932029.
[4] Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930*.

citizen margins. I argue that the colonial state of Queensland was one actor in an 'assemblage of power,' and it governed in conjunction and in tension with other state and non-state actors forming a regime of transnational biopolitical governance. Moreover, it governed reactively in response to a transnational politics of labour, a politics of diaspora and the politics of international nation-building. The second and third claims focus on debates about Japanese migration in the late nineteenth century public sphere. The second claim is that the framing of Japanese commercial sex and gender relations through racialized representations of Japanese migrants as sexual despots and slaves helped produce the counter example for democratic settler-citizenship. Combining a 'colonizing gaze, the moral framework of British antislavery, and an emerging critique of imperial capitalism, I suggest that the racialization of Japanese gender relations highlights exclusions at the birth of Australian social democracy. The third claim is that reporting on Japanese migration using the language of 'invasion' and 'colonization' and of migrant (il)legality contributed to a cultural imaginary which highlighted penetrable and insecure borders. As a result, Japanese immigration, and especially the border-crossing of sexually transgressive women, became a key site for imagining and strengthening popular settler sovereignty.

Divided State Layered Sovereignties

A final set of questions goes to the heart of this thesis and asks: what or where was the state in the settler-colonial governance of Japanese migrants? Where was sovereignty? Migration historian, Donna Gabaccia, drawing on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, acknowledges that history writing, often happens from a 'sedentary point of view' which assumes a 'unitary state

apparatus.'[5] So too, the dominant eighteenth-century conceptual understanding of sovereignty as 'a final, absolute, and centralized form of political power vested in the territorial state' naturalises a connection between the state and sovereign power.[6] As legal historian, Lauren Benton has observed, the terms '*state-sovereignty*' and '*national-sovereignty*' have become so familiar that they seem to 'have no logical substitute'.[7] Empire complicates the view of sovereignty as a form of power concentrated in the state because in empire sovereignty is 'de-centralized.' As Benton goes on to observe, sovereignty in empire forms in 'layered' and 'divided' ways among the various 'agents' who 'position themselves to act as subjects and proxies' for empire and among 'polities' who attempt to carve out their own autonomous spaces.[8]

Anthropologist, Talal Asad offers an alternative view to monolithic ideas about state and sovereign forms of power. Asad suggests that the state can be conceived of as 'something distinct from the governed and the governing' and invested 'with a life of its own' that 'can claim allegiance from both sides.'[9] He goes on to argue that when a state is invested with sovereignty it 'maintains its margins' but when the subjects rather than the state have power 'the state can be imagined as a margin of the citizen body'.[10] Assad's observation seems to capture quite well the notion of settler sovereignty in empire, but settler self-government (sovereignty) was challenged by its subservience to empire, and I would argue this created instability within the state.

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[5] Donna R. Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 3 (December 1999): 1115, https://doi.org/10.2307/2568608. 1117

[6] Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. 188

[7] Lauren A. Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400--1900* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). 279

[8] Benton. 280

[9] Talal Asad, "Where Are the Margins of the State," in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das, 1. publ. in India (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004). 281 and Asad in Veena Das and Deborah Poole, "State and Its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies," in *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, ed. Veena Das, 1. publ. in India (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 2004).29

[10] Asad, "Where Are the Margins of the State." 281

The following study of the politics of Japanese migration in Queensland shows a state divided and conflicted between its margins and its centre, evident, for example, when local agencies of the state at Thursday Island and Bundaberg resisted directives from Brisbane in response to pressures from the local and global politics of labour and diaspora. It also shows the tensions between the metropolitan and colonial sides of the state, a problem officials and politicians in Brisbane had to confront as they tried to balance the labour market demands of industries structured by imperial capitalism against an increasingly vocal labour movement campaigning for favoured treatment in the imperial labour market. Finally, it shows how various agencies of the state in London, Brisbane and Thursday Island came under the pressure of the politics of the border and of Asian migration.

Settler-colonialism adds a further layer of complexity to sovereignty in imperial formations. In a recent article, Ben Silverstein uses the example of 1911 legislative restrictions on Chinese-Aboriginal employment and social relations in the Northern Territory to argue that settler sovereignty was reactive in character and was made as a counterclaim to indigenous sovereignty.[11] Silverstein's call for a re-theorization of sovereignty as a practice or process which people 'enact' rather than something possessed by settlers and denied to others opens up a new way of thinking about the sovereign claims of settlers and empires in relation to indigenous sovereignty.[12] It also calls attention to the need to understand the exploitation of subjugated migrant labour in a settler-colonial state as contingent on the expropriation of indigenous land. [13] A thorough exploration of the relationship between indigenous, settler and imperial sovereignty claims is beyond the scope of this thesis, but the idea of sovereignty as a

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[11] Ben Silverstein, "Reading Sovereignties in the Shadow of Settler Colonialism: Chinese Employment of Aboriginal Labour in the Northern Territory of Australia," *Postcolonial Studies* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 43–57, https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2020.1719579.

[12] Silverstein. 45

[13] Scott Lauria Morgensen, "The Biopolitics of Settler Colonialism: Right Here, Right Now," *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (January 2011): 52–76, https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648801.

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counterclaim has remained in the background of writing it. As Benton points out, sovereignty can be elusive.[14] It's a story we tell ourselves: a claim or a counterclaim. In this thesis I show how undesirable migrants were governed across the 'layered' and 'divided' sovereignties of a settler-colonial state. [15]

Writing Japanese Commercial Sex into Australian Historiography

The histories of Japanese migrants in the Australian sex industry are found at the margins of Australian historiographies of labour, colonialism, and migration, but they form intersections which have the potential to connect these major threads of Australian history in interesting ways. This section briefly surveys writing about Japanese commercial sex in Australian historiography.

Since the early 1980s Australian social historians have been exploring the histories of Japanese commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier' for what they say about race, gender, class, nation, and colonialism. One notable contirbution is Raymond Evans' chapter on Queensland in the first major academic study of prostitution in Australia, *So Much Hard Work,* published in 1984.[16] Evans addressed the role of racism and colonialism in colonial Queensland's sexual economy by highlighting the different positionalities of men and women in indigenous, white-settler and non-white migrant communities, and it built on Evans' earlier study of structural and ideological racism to show how sexual transactions were organized within a hierarchically relational space of colonial governance.[17]

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[14] Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*.
[15] Benton. 280
[16] Kay Daniels, ed., *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History* (Sydney: Fontana : Collins, 1984).
[17] Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, and Kathryn Cronin, *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland: A History of Exclusion, Exploitation, and Extermination* (St. Lucia, Qld., Australia; Portland, Or.: University of Queensland Press; Distributed in the USA and Canada by International Specialized Book Services, 1993).

In a similar vein, Raelene Frances' 1999 article, "Sex Workers or Citizens? Prostitution and the Shaping of 'Settler' Society in Australia" pointed to the ways in which ethnic stratification of the sexual labour market upheld settler gender hierarchies and racial boundaries. [18]   In addition to this, Frances explored the implications of racial and ethnic stratification of commercial sex for settler class ideologies, highlighting the role governments have played in promoting the sexual availability of certain classes of women, and it looked at how these choices were linked to dominant ideologies.

In the mid-2000s, histories of Japanese commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier' began to address the sometimes-reductive ways in which sex workers have been represented. In the edited collection, *Navigating Boundaries: The Asian Diaspora in the Torres Strait*, published in 2004, Yuriko Nagata explores the lives and afterlives of the Japanese women who remained at Thursday Island after1901. Her attention to the range of roles these women performed—running boarding houses, washing, and repairing clothes for Japanese labourers and selling sex—offers a fuller and more nuanced view of their lives. Along similar lines, Frances' *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution*, published in 2007, highlights diversity in the organisation of commercial sex and in the sexual labour market in Australian history, and it stresses the multi-dimensionality of sex workers, who were 'mothers, daughters, sisters, friends, lovers, wives, and often engaged in other work besides the sale of sex.'[19]

Following Frances' 2007 publication, Australian historians appear to have begun to move away from the topic of sex work on the Australian 'frontier'. One possible reason for this is that looking cross-culturally and between categories of coloniser and colonised encouraged a rethinking of the category of sexual labour. Ann McGrath's work on the complex role of sex in

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[18] Raelene Frances, "Sex Workers or Citizens? Prostitution and the Shaping of 'Settler' Society in Australia," *International Review of Social History* 44, no. S7 (1999): 101–22, https://doi.org/doi:10.1017/S0020859000115214.
[19] Raelene Frances, *Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution* (Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2007). 4.

the colonization of indigenous lands and peoples by settlers opens the field to another set of questions: where is the sexuality of non-indigenous, non-settler migrant 'others' situated in the settler project? How can we think about the role of marginalized migrants whose participation in colonial labour regimes was bound up in a set of coercive power relations, but at the same time was predicated on the dispossession of indigenous lands? [20]

Scholars of migration, such as Joseph Pugliese, Suvendrini Perera and Ann Curthoys had already begun raising questions about the role of marginalized migrants in histories of colonization during the late 1990s and early 2000s in the context of the rise of Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, which saw the threads of previously disjointed discourses of multicultural and indigenous Australia converge uncomfortably in expressions of populist racism.[21] In the last decade, the twin global crises of climate change and racism have raised awareness of the need to rethink legacies of colonial systems, and historians of migration, who have now 'properly claimed' the field of migration history as their own, have brought new energy to the question of how colonial systems have engaged migrants in creating a settler state.[22] Ruth Blaint and Zora Simic have pointed out that settler colonial studies offers one of the clearest frameworks for thinking through the role of migration in colonialism. [23]

A useful starting point for this is Patrick Wolfe's observation that the production of 'regimes of difference' in settler-colonial spaces is due to the twin logics of settler claims to indigenous

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[20] Ann McGrath, "Consent, Marriage and Colonialism: Indigenous Australian Women and Colonizer Marriages," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 6, no. 3 (2005), https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2006.0016.Ann McGrath, "'Modern Stone-Age Slavery': Images of Aboriginal Labour and Sexuality," *Labour History*, no. 69 (1995): 30, https://doi.org/10.2307/27516389.

[21] Suvendrini Perera and Joseph Pugliese, "Detoxifying Australia?," *Migration Action* 20, no. 2 (1998): 4–18.Ann Curthoys, "An Uneasy Conversation: The Multicultural and the Indigenous," in *Race, Colour and Identity in Australia and New Zealand* (Sydney, Australia: UNSW Press, 2000), 21–36.

[22] Ruth Balint and Zora Simic, "Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia," *Australian Historical Studies* 49, no. 3 (July 3, 2018): 378–409, https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2018.1479438.Andonis Piperoglou and Alexandra Dellios, "AMHN's Response to History Australia's Special Issue 'Doing History in Urgent Times,'" Wordpress.com, *Australian Migration History Network Blog* (blog), June 18, 2020, https://amigrationhn.wordpress.com/2020/06/18/amhns-response-to-history-australias-special-issue-doing-history-in-urgent-times/#more-296.

[23] Balint and Simic, "Histories of Migrants and Refugees in Australia."

land and settler mobilization of imported and/or indentured labour.[24] Still, there has been relatively less attention from scholars of settler colonialism to the racialized political economies of slavery, indenture, and other forms of subjugated migrant labour within settler colonial states. A notable exception are Wolfe's comparative studies of land, labour, and the formation of race.[25] His 2001 essay, "Land, Labour, and Difference" shows how discourses of miscegenation produce "regimes of difference" in the governance of indigenous and 'black' populations. These studies, however, tend to take the 'internally colonised' slave rather than the border-crossing migrant as their model for marginalised labour.

In this thesis I address this gap in the scholarship by looking at the intersection of biopolitical governance and sovereignty in the politics of the border, migration, and labour regimes. I do this by drawing on the work of political scientists, Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, who critique the overreliance in scholarship on monolithic explanations of border governance either through the sovereign spaces of 'exception' or through biopolitics. Instead, they argue that different forms of biopolitical and sovereign power are intertwined and juxtaposed in an 'assemblage of power', and to this they add Foucault's engagement with Marx's 'de-facto power' of employment and labour regimes.[26] What results is a more dynamic conception of the governance of marginalized migrant populations, which makes space for political possibilities and subjectivities in the 'everyday practices by which migrants continually come to terms with' the border.'[27] By attending to the politics of the border and to the 'assemblages of power', where the state is not the only actor, my aim is to better reflect the complexity of migrant governance in a settler state.[28]

[24] Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *The American Historical Review*, June 2001, https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/106.3.866. and Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London ; New York: Verso, 2016).
[25] Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference."
[26] Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*.
[27] Mezzadra and Neilson.13
[28] Mezzadra and Neilson. 194

A final important historiographical development for thinking about what marginalized migrant sex workers can tell us about states and global economic systems are the approaches of transnational and global labour history. Two Australian scholars who have written about Japanese sex workers within a framework of global labour mobility are Bill Mihalopoulos and Vera Mackie. Mihalopoulos' monograph, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930: Prostitutes, Emigration and Nation-Building* traces the gendered and class impacts of lower-class women who left rural southwest Japan to work in commercial sex overseas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Operating at once from a scale below and beyond the level of the nation-state, Mihalopolous examines the ways in which migrant sex work was embedded in local value systems and cultural practices that became transnational when sex workers moved overseas. Vera Mackie's 'Japan, Migration and the Global Order of Difference,' looks comparatively at the mobility of marginalized bodies across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and reflects on what this means for the operations of transnational capitalism.[29] She brings to this analysis a revised version of Foucault's concept of biopower, which stresses the need to consider the way biopower crosses borders at a regional and global scale, and she builds on Raewyn Connell's concept the 'global gender order' to recognise that gendered structures in both sending and receiving countries interact with 'other dimensions of difference,' such as class, caste, ethnicity, and 'racialized positioning'. [30] My interest in this text lies precisely in this attention to the transnational production of stratified and segmented labour markets and in the tensions formed as labour markets produced by colonial capitalism came up against settler-colonial nation-building and the agency and mobilities of migrant workers.

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[29] Vera Mackie, "Japan, Migration and the Global Order of Difference," in *Proletarian and Gendered Mass Migrations: A Global Perspective*, ed. Dirk Hoerder and Amarjit Kaur (Leiden: Brill, 2013).
[30] Mackie. 295, 315.

The Public Sphere(s) and The Historian's Archive

The opinions, assumptions, decisions, imaginings, and anxieties which comprise the evidence for my arguments in this thesis come from two very different kinds of sources. On one hand, I analyse the private correspondence and public statements of colonial officials for what they say about how and why migrants were made 'visible' to the state. To show how the various political contexts of diaspora, labour, and international nation-building informed calculations of bureaucratic knowledge-making, I supplement these sources with public debates in the colonial press and secondary literature. On the other hand, I draw extensively from two sets of public conversations which played out in the radical-nationalist Sydney weekly, the *Bulletin* and the Brisbane-based labour-oriented paper, the *Worker*. These publications spoke to distinct but overlapping publics.

The *Bulletin,* as David Carter points out, came at a historic moment when the market created a public sphere and a newly literate community of popular readers and writers, beneficiaries of compulsory education in the 1870s.[31] It was founded in 1880 and by the early 1890s, it had become one of the most influential sources of public opinion across the Australasian colonies. Its platform was anti-imperial and anti-English, against the Sydney elite, the banks, and the Chinese, among other targets. At the beginning of the 1890s it was labour-oriented but then turned to embrace its republican, democratic, and radical-nationalist agenda, and it was a nationalizing force. According to the journalist and writer Francis Adams, the *Bulletin's* arrival in the coast towns from Port Darwin to Perth and New Zealand was 'an event'.[32]

The *Bulletin* identified the 'bush values' of the masculinist, itinerant worker on the 'frontier' as the essence of national character. Graeme Davison has pointed out that this was not a simple

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[31] David Carter, "Magazine Culture: Notes Towards a History of Australian Periodical Publication 1920-1970," *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 0, no. 0 (2013): 69–79.
[32] Ailsa G. Thomson, "The Early History of the *Bulletin*," *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand* 6, no. 22 (May 1954): 121–34, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314615408594984.130

transmission from the rural heartlands to the coastal cities but a 'projection onto the outback' of the values of an urban intellectual class, who were alienated by 1890s social conditions of economic depression and labour conflicts in Australia's colonial cities.[33] It was also the cultural and political response by petit-bourgeoise journalists and editors in alliance with sections of the established bourgeoisie and an emerging working class against the landowners and squatters of a more traditionally constituted elite.[34] These journalists were a group of young, mobile men, equipped with a double set of reference points: the colonial cities of Sydney and Melbourne but also of the metropole, London;[35] Looking to the corruption and degradation of colonial and metropolitan urban centers, these men imagined 'the frontier' as repository of disappearing rural values, but it was also constructed as a utopian space onto which new kinds of social and political relationships could be mapped.[36]

Another utopian with a liking for 'frontiers' was William Lane, who became the first editor of the Brisbane *Worker* in 1890. A follower of the socialist and utopian thought of Edward Bellamy, Lane is most well-known for founding the ill-fated 'New Australia' socialist cooperative settler-colony in Paraguay in 1893.[37] Fiercely anti-Chinese, Lane also published the first invasion or 'scare' novel *White or Yellow ? A story of the Race War of A.D 1908* in 1887. The *Worker* was established at the height of what Ben Maddison argues was the emergence of an alternative 'labour public sphere,' coming after a decade of consolidation of organised labour.[38] At the end of the 1880s, an intensified class conflict emerged as better

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[33] Graeme Davison, "Sydney and the Bush: An Urban Context for the Australian Legend.," *Historical Studies* 18, no. 71 (October 1978): 191–209, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314617808595587.200

[34] Carter, "Magazine Culture: Notes Towards a History of Australian Periodical Publication 1920-1970."

[35] Davision, "Sydney and the Bush."

[36] Graeme Davison, "Rethinking the Australian Legend," *Australian Historical Studies* 43, no. 3 (September 2012): 429–51, https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2012.706625. 436

[37] Gavin Souter, "'Lane, William (1861–1917),'" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed July 5, 2022, https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lane-william-7024/text12217.

[38] Ben Maddison, "'The Day of the Just Reasoner': T.A. Coghlan and the Labour Public Sphere in Late Nineteenth Century Australia," *Labour History*, no. 77 (1999): 11, https://doi.org/10.2307/27516667.

organised employer groups clashed with more self-confident and militant unions, and, in turn, this generated a more distinctively class-conscious language, with struggles increasingly being depicted in terms of 'capital versus labour.'[39] The critique of capital-labour relations in a language of class distinguishes the 'discourse community' of the *Worker* from that of the *Bulletin,* as does its more progressive position on the 'rights' of women.

However, in other aspects the two publications overlapped. One unifying position was the British moral framework of anti-slavery. Jane Lydon, building on the work of David Brion Davis, draws attention to the way anti-slavery forms a connection point between the end of slavery and the rise of industrial capitalism, the ideology of anti-slavery being a way to 'redefine the social relations of labour' in transition from physical discipline to an internalised system of restraint.[40] Liberals, radicals and labour supporters and all drew from a British moral framework of antislavery and its industrial counterpart, the 'anti-sweating' movement, which opposed the payment of exploitation wages to women and children in factories. Race was another unifying position across the political spectrum, although there was some notable criticism of the 'White Australia' movement. While the *Bulletin* and the *Worker* placed a slightly different emphasis on what it was that 'black labour' threatened —the *Worker* on industries and jobs, the *Bulletin* on territory and nation – the two publications were on common ground on the need to secure Australia for 'the white man.'

For this research I accessed both these publications through the National Library of Australia's online digital database TROVE.

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[39] Ray Markey, "New Unionism in Australia, 1880-1900," *Labour History*, no. 48 (1985): 15, https://doi.org/10.2307/27508717.
[40] Jane Lydon, *Anti-Slavery and Australia: No Slavery in a Free Land?*, Empires and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-2000 (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021).4

The other set of sources I used for this thesis is the personal research archive of David Sissons (1925-2006), an Australian historian and political scientist of Australia-Japan relations. This archive is kept at the National Library of Australia and contains Sissons' completed research, research notes and primary source material. By bringing together scattered references and fragments of biographies produced for various purposes by individuals and institutions, including three state (former colonial) archives, this collection of papers has provided me with a kind of short cut through the terrain of archival scavenging. At the same time, the hidden archival processes that make this shortcut possible - Sissons' acts of selecting, discarding, and arranging, his annotations and cross-references - also discreetly complicates my task since they add layers of meaning and context to the records.

Approaching the Sissons' collection, I'm aware that the records have acquired new layers of meaning through Sissons' selections and annotations, which left physical traces of his reading. The pen markings, which include marginal notes, cross-references to other sources, translations of Japanese names and places, underlinings and crossings out, altered the materiality of the record. I'm also aware of the need to foreground Sissons' social world: his life experience, his research context, his politics, and in particular his approach to history. Sissons' deep empiricism and unwillingness to engage in abstract theory are evident in his published historical analysis, most notably in its silences about power relations. In this research I read "against the grain" interrogating the social world of the records' authors - colonial officials, public opinion-makers and travel writers - in a way that exposes racial and gendered structures of governance, visions of ideal citizenship, and anxieties about the future of an emergent nation.

Chapter Summary

The thesis is divided into two parts. Chapter one focuses on the role of the colonial state of Queensland in the governance of a Japanese migrant populations on its margins, while chapters

two and three look at debates about Japanese migration in the public sphere to see what they reveal about processes of sovereignty-making and nation-building in a settler-colonial state. In each chapter I give special attention to the role played by the 'unruliest' of these migrants: the men and women who worked in Japanese commercial sex. However, I do not focus exclusively on Japanese commercial sex. Rather, I analyse the debates, deliberations, and decisions about this group of migrants as and when they came up in correspondence between colonial officials and in debates in the public sphere, which is to say, unevenly. At the same time, I situate Japanese commercial sex within a larger politics of Japan's participation in global circuits of labour, drawing attention to the way a transnational politics of labour, a politics of diaspora and the international politics of nation-building contributed to the construction of exclusionary forms of citizenship and gendered, classed, and racialized forms of government.

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CHAPTER ONE:

GOVERNANCE

"THEIR OFFICIAL OPTIC"

> *It would not be a bad thing if the proper authorities set about opening their official optic and when that feat has been accomplished, casting it over certain discreditable goings-on in our main thoroughfare.*
>
> —The *Bundaberg Mail*, 1st February 1899

'Box 13' is a single cardboard storage file in the National Library of Australia, containing the Australian historian and political scientist, David Sissons' completed research, research notes and primary source material on the Japanese women who worked in northern Australia's 'frontier' sex industry at the turn of the twentieth century. Spanning the years between 1889 and 1922, the changing thickness of the documents in this file gives a sense of the contours of state knowledge-making over that period: a slow growth in the late 1880s, increasing substantially to peak in the mid-to-late 1890s, and a tapering-off in the first decade of the twentieth century. Tracing these contours of state knowledge-making invites questions as to how and why Japanese migrants in 'frontier' Australia's commercial sex industry become 'legible' to colonial bureaucracies in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and about how their 'legibility' informed their governance. The goal of this chapter is to re-think the biopolitics of a settler colonial state at its margins by looking at the ways in which state power was called on to administer and regulate Japanese migrant lives and labour power. The political scientist,

Peter Andreas, writing about the United States-Mexico border, points out that the visibility of border-crossing migrants depends, crucially, on the state's '*want* or *need* to know.'[41] I argue in this chapter that cross-border political contexts, including a transnational politics of labour, a politics of diaspora and the politics of international nation-building brought pressures to bear on the colonial state of Queensland, which made it *want* to know.

I begin this chapter in the familiar Foucauldian terrain of statistics. I show that while this nineteenth century population science bolstered state power, it was also used by the press and in public debate to protest the state's 'failure' to get a handle on the numbers of non-white immigrants living within its borders. This brought pressure on the state to govern its social margins more aggressively. Following this, I argue that the governance of migrants in commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier' developed transnationally. My focus in this chapter is on how the transnational politics of settler and diaspora communities shaped the responses of the colonial state of Queensland to commercial sex within its borders, but I also acknowledge that these responses were part of a broader ransnational governance regime involving the Japanese state, diasporic communities, regional smuggling and prostitution networks, regional diplomatic networks, colonial settler polities, and British colonial officials across the region. In accounting for the ways the sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting interests of these actors mobilized or bypassed the state of Queensland, I use the idea of 'assemblages of power.' This is a concept with origins in the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, but here I am drawing on a more concrete reading by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson of the 'unique and conflictual ways' the border brings together a range of governmental and sovereign forms of power. In the final section of this chapter, I look at the intersections between the spatial, racial, and medial governance of Japanese commercial sex in Queensland. I argue that local politics

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[41] Andreas in Rebecca B. Galemba, "Illegality and Invisibility at Margins and Borders," *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 36, no. 2 (November 2013): 274–85, https://doi.org/10.1111/plar.12027. 278

and larger public debates about immigration, sex, labour, race, and nation-building created pressures on the colonial state of Queensland to organise, confine or isolate Japanese commercial sex, and I show how these attempts brought agencies of the state into conflict. I consider the role of race in organising spaces for migrant commercial sex and the 'bordering' practices of public health regimes, resulting in differentiated and racialized forms of medical governance. Finally, I acknowledge the role of self-regulatory 'employer regimes' as a key component in the transnational governance of Japanese women in overseas commercial sex, and I show that while these were often in tension with the colonial state of Queensland, they also created a certain kind of order which eased the burden of governance on the colonial state.

Taking Stock: Statistics, Migrant Governance, and The Press

For the Australian colonies which had achieved self-government in the 1850s, statistics gathering projects bolstered state-building efforts through the accumulation of bureaucratic power. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, the census in colonial Queensland turned its population into 'governable objects', fostering citizens by gathering social data on occupations, electoral status, literacy levels and marital status. [42] At the same time census-makers developed increasingly elaborate measurements of ethnicity, reflecting not just the diversification of the migrant labour force in the colony but also the bureaucratic impulse to divide and recombine groups and to compare them against the greater population. For example, in Queensland the 1876 census counted Japanese migrants for the first time together with Chinese migrants. The 1886 census

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[42] Paul Rutherford and Stephanie Rutherford, "The Confusions and Exuberances of Biopolitics: Confusions and Exuberances," *Geography Compass* 7, no. 6 (June 2013): 412–22, https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12046. 415

counted the number of Chinese, Polynesian, and other 'alien races' in each district, and by 1891, the census documented the marital status for these groups separately from the greater population. [43] The production of ethnic and racial statistics not only allowed the colonial state to 'know' and 'name' migrant populations and, in this way, obtain control of its politically dangerous social margins, but it also defined 'alien' non-citizens as the opposite of public citizenry, establishing the norm by identifying its deviation. [44]

Still, statistics on race and ethnicity were a double-edged sword for a colonial state balancing its economic interests in industries like sugar and pearling, dependent on indentured labour, with white labour activists' demands for government accountability regarding Queensland's changing demographic profile. Statistics were not the exclusive domain of state governance in the nineteenth century but were also mobilized by journalists and politicians as a potent instrument of persuasion and protest and to apply pressure on the state to monitor or regulate targeted populations more aggressively. In the more mass-oriented print media culture of the 1880s, later dubbed 'New Journalism' by Mathew Arnold, a new generation of lower middle-class, working-class, and female readers and reader-contributors also engaged with statistically based analysis as a way of thinking through social questions in the public sphere.[45]

Publications, like the radical-nationalist *Bulletin* and the labour-oriented *Worker* became unofficial statistics trackers, drawing attention to government neglect of the coming social crisis, or in a more cynical reading, filling the gap which opinion-makers thought the self-interested colonial administration had deliberately left open so that it could fudge figures

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[43] "Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive," Research Guide State Library of Victoria, Early Australian Census Records Queensland, accessed July 1, 2022, https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/earlycensus.
[44] Rutherford and Rutherford, "The Confusions and Exuberances of Biopolitics."
[45] The introduction of compulsory education in the Australian colonies in the 1870s had produced its first generation of readers by the late 1880s Thomson, "The Early History of the *Bulletin*." See also Maddison, "'The Day of the Just Reasoner.'"

and hide facts. The *Worker* addressed Queensland's 'Black Labour Question' by assiduously recording news of new boatloads of migrant arrivals and tracking migrants' movements at the end of their labour contracts.[46] The *Bulletin* documented increases in non-white populations on colonial fringes and speculated about how these numbers would impact the rate of leprosy, a disease which was widely believed to be transmitted to the white population through interracial sex. In doing this, it spoke to the miscegenation anxieties of 'White Australia'.[47]

A cartoon published in the 8th of October 1898 edition of the *Worker* illustrates the way

Figure 1"Here And There" Worker (Brisbane, Qld, October 8, 1898

the press used statistics to establish and diffuse social categories of non-citizen 'aliens' and at the same time set an agenda for public debate around the threat that non-white migrants posed to the white worker.[48] This cartoon features a 'swagman,' an itinerant worker, who, with his 'swag', or sleeping mat, strung across his back and his 'billycan' for tea, was the embodiment of nineteenth century 'bush' masculinity. The 'swagman' looks up at the sign, taking stock of the changing demographic profile of the colony, and he is shaken from his complacency by a smug Japanese figure in an effeminate

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[46] The World of Labour," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., March 4, 1893), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70861411. "The World of Labour," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., September 8, 1894)." "Advance White Queensland," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 18, 1896).

[47] "Sporting Notions," *The Bulletin*, January 11, 1896, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-678508413."Political Points," *The Bulletin*, April 2, 1898, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-681357970. On the imperial and racial management of leprosy see Alison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism and Public Health* (Houndsmills [England] ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

[48] "Here and There," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., October 8, 1898), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70925506. The sign reads: "At the close of '97, Queensland's alien population (totaled?) thusly—Polynesians 8344, Japs 2675, Chinese 7795, Javanese 476, other Asians 913. Total alien population 20,203. Those are the official figures but the data are very imperfect. The Jap is increasing by leaps and bounds."

stance who signals the changing face of labour in Queensland. The sign is an example of the way statistics were used editorially not just as a social commentary but as a specific critique of state administration. It denounced the state for providing 'imperfect' data on the number of non-white labourers arriving in Queensland and made a veiled reference to the absence of an official census between 1891 and 1898.[49] The census was especially targeted for criticism in the *Worker* in 1897 and 1898. Since 1861 it had taken place on average once every five years, and by 1898, it was already two years overdue. Articles in the *Worker* associated the lack of a 'proper census' with the colonial government's facilitation of 'cheap labour,' 'leprosy' and skewed sex ratios and accused the government of trying 'hoodwink and mislead the people,' 'to fool the public into the belief that Queensland has never been threatened'. [50] This editorial line is interesting since it shows us how settler polities put pressure on the state administration to govern its social margins more proactively.

Governing Commercial Sex: Between States, Diplomats, Diasporic Communities

Studying the governance of migrant lives invites a more complex and transnational view of state power than a classic Foucauldian analysis might assume. If we trace the process by which Japanese women who sold sex in Queensland became visible to the state, we inevitably come up against the problem of the multiple, overlapping, and transnational forms of biopower which structure global labour regimes.[51] Migrant governance involved

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[49] After 1891 the next official census took place in 1901
[50] "Socialist League Notes.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., September 11, 1897)."Stray Notes.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., May 15, 1897). "Editorial Mill: Piebald Queensland," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 9, 1898).
[51] On transnational biopolitics see Mackie, "Japan, Migration and the Global Order of Difference."

various states at different points on migrant journeys. What's more, empires, diasporas, and transnationally oriented discursive communities also contributed to the bureaucratic knowledge-production which underlay migrant governance. Bill Mihalopoulous gives an insightful account of the building of a transnational infrastructure for knowledge-accumulation about the Japanese women who worked in commercial sex overseas. He describes how a network of overseas consular officials, established by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 1870s to promote trade and protect Japanese emigrant-workers, acquired an additional function at the end of the 1880s as an 'ocular regime,' monitoring and policing the movements of women engaged in sex work overseas.[52] Part of the value of Mihalopoulous' analysis is that it explores the governance of migrants in their place of origin rather than at their destination as is the tendency in many 'ethnic studies' approaches to migration scholarship. It does this by showing how perceptions about the overseas sex workers' womanhood ricocheted back through the anti-prostitution campaigns of Japanese feminists to help establish the ideal of the middle-class woman. However, Mihalopoulous' central focus is on Japanese biopolitics, meaning that there is still much to explore in terms of the role consular networks played in the development of transnational regimes of governance. Consular networks didn't only link Japan's foreign ministry with its consular representatives but also created an interconnected web spanning agencies of the Japanese government at home and abroad; communities of overseas Japanese merchants and labourers; and colonial government officials, who were themselves embedded in various kinds of cross-border political contexts.

In the colony of Queensland, a racialized and gendered politics of labour and citizenship, interlinked with a politics of diaspora, brought pressure on consular and colonial officials to begin monitoring Japanese migrant sex workers more closely, and this, in turn,

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[52] Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930*.41

influenced their governance across the region. The role of settler politics in making Japanese migrants in Queensland's commercial sex industry visible to colonial and Japanese bureaucrats via the network of Japanese consuls can be seen in a letter the merchant-trader and honorary Japanese consul for Australia, Alexander Marks wrote to the Vice-Foreign Minister, Aoki Shūzō on the 13th of December 1887. The letter warned Aoki that if 'unscrupulous men' were not prevented from bringing women of 'bad character' into the Australian colonies, 'considerable trouble would result,' with potential to damage Japan's trading relationship and disrupt its labour emigration programs. [53] These anxieties were echoed by consuls in Hawaii, San Francisco, and British Columbia in the second half of the 1880s. The most immediate reference point for Marks' prediction of 'trouble' were his own attempts in 1887 to persuade six Japanese women -- two in Melbourne and four at Thursday Island - to return home. More broadly, Marks' reference to 'trouble' concerned the mobilization of immigrant sex as a weapon in the white working-class' struggle with employers of Asian indentured migrants over access to labour markets.

During the 1870s and 1880s, labour movements in the Australian colonies had made Chinese 'vice' a centrepiece of campaigns for Chinese exclusion. Press publications, such as the *Bulletin,* amplified the labour movement's anti-Chinese message with scaremongering reports about predatory Chinese men who lured unsuspecting white women into opium dens, then drugged, seduced and 'enslaved' them.[54] The focus of these articles was the sexual victimhood of white working-class women, something I discuss in more detail in the chapter two. More relevant here is a secondary thread of the discourse

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[53] Mihalopoulos.43

[54] Kate Bagnall, "Golden Shadows on a White Land: An Exploration of the Lives of White Women Who Partnered Chinese Men and Their Children in Southern Australia, 1855-1915" (Doctor of Philosophy, Sydney, University of Sydney. Arts. Department of History, 2006), http://hdl.handle.net/2123/1412. 56

on Chinese 'vice' which portrayed Chinese migrants as slave-driving sex and labour traffickers, a likely reference point for the consul, Alexander Marks' own concern about the arrival of Japanese sex workers. It seems that there were already Chinese and Japanese women working in brothels on the Australian 'frontier' in the late 1880s, [55] but the image of Chinese migrants running slave rings of prostitutes was more familiar from the Californian context, where in 1875 the federal government passed the 'Page laws', banning Chinese women from entering the United States on the grounds that their sexuality threatened the white American family and their enslavement threatened American democracy.[56] The significant cross-penetration of Australian and Californian experiences in the public sphere during these years would have raised the spectre of Chinese prostitution in the Australian colonies too. In addition to this, an article accompanying the famous *Bulletin* cartoon, 'Mongolian Octopus' in 1886 claimed, the 'readiness to import labourers and women and to enslave them 'on British soil' implied a rejection of British principles of antislavery, an almost extra-territorial attitude, as if they were 'completely independent of Australian authority.'[57] Therefore, the 'trouble' Marks referred to in his letter needs to be understood in the context of converging British and American forms of anti-slavery.[58]

At least one Japanese migrant to Thursday Island would also have been familiar with the American racialisations of indentured labour and its demonization of lower-class Asian women as sexually dangerous prostitutes. Satō Torajirō (né Motogori Torajirō and commonly known

[55] A police inspector's report estimated that there were thirty-five Chinese women and twenty-four Japanese women in the port of Darwin in 1888 see Julia Martinez, "Chinese Women in Prostitution in the Coutts of 1880s Darwin," *Northern Territory Historical Studies* 30 (2019): 28–42.

[56] Eithne Luibhéid, *Entry Denied: Controlling Sexuality at the Border* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

[57] I was first alerted to this passage in Mei Ngai's "The Chinese in Australia: Their Vices and Their Victims," *Bulletin*, August 21, 1886, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-733827714.

[58] Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality.* (Leiden: Cambridge University Press, 2008), https://public.ebookcentral.proquest.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=328951. Chapter 2

in the Australian colonial press as Torajiro Satow) was a prominent if somewhat controversial leader of the Japanese community at Thursday Island, where he worked as a pearling agent, kept a general store and ran a business building pearling boats.[59] A law graduate from the university of Michigan who had been active in Japanese liberal politics, Satō was part of the Japanese emerging middle class, educated and aspirational, whose mobility spanned the Japanese metropole, its diasporic communities, and its colonial projects.[60] He didn't just share class interests with other pearling operators and colonial officials on Thursday Island but also a common political and economic liberalism. Like California's middle-class *Issei*, who Eiichiro Azuma points out repeatedly re-emphasized their distinctiveness when American newspapers derogatively compared them to the excluded Chinese, Satō was active in the press, reassuring readers that Japanese migrants were not 'coolies' but respectable workers with clean habits and a cheerful attitude to labour.[61] When community leaders, like Satō or the Californian *Issei* affirmed their commitment to the white middle-class morality by condemning the 'dirty' and 'degenerate' habits of labourers and women in their communities, they were enacting what Azuma describes as a 'class-based racial formation process' which measured the relative value of an individual within the national community and more broadly in the modern world.[62] They were also, I argue, undertaking a kind of self-disciplinary governance of their communities. By identifying their own social margins for exclusion or reform, these leaders engaged in a self-interested shoring up of their own place within the dominant social order of the host nation.

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[59] D. C. S. (David Carlisle Stanley) Sissons, "'Satō, Torajiro (1864–1928),'" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography,* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University), accessed June 17, 2022, https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sato-torajiro-8343/text14641.

[60] Martin Dusinberre, "Overseas Migration 1868-1945," in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese History*, ed. Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman (London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018).

[61] "Our Industries: Agriculture on the Mary River," *The Brisbane Courier* (Qld., January 16, 1896), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3616882. Martin Dusinberre attributes this commentary to Torajiro Sato see Martin Dusinberre, "Japan, Global History, and the Great Silence," *History Workshop Journal* 83, no. 1 (2017): 130–50, https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbx012.

[62] Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 38

The politics of diaspora played a significant role in determining the visibility of Japanese migrant women to the colonial state, and it had knock-on effects for their governance across the region. Colonial bureaucrats like the Governor and Magistrate at Thursday Island, John Douglas and leaders of diasporic communities, like Torajirō Satō worked together to respond to issues affecting the Japanese community resident there, for example, interrogating, processing, and arranging the deportation of intercepted women.[63] Internal politics of Japanese communities overseas affected governance in another way too since state agencies, including bureaucrats and police, were most interventionist when community conflict threatened 'public order'. The deportation of two Japanese women Otashi and Otoyo, to Hong Kong, on the 27th of November 1891 seems to have been directly linked to a shooting incident at a meeting of Japanese residents opposing Thursday Island's brothels.[64] This group had met to draft a petition to John Douglas to remove the women from the community. A March 1892 story in national daily *Mainichi* reported that during the meeting, a woman from one of the brothels, Harada Kiyo had turned up with a gun and shot the participant, Hirano Chisuke, 'one of the pillars of respectability' of the community.[65] In response, Douglas deported the new arrivals, Otashi and Otoyo, and put the remaining of Harada's employees on notice with an order to leave within twenty-one days; however, it seems that this order was later quietly put aside. *Wakayama Iminshi* (A History of Emigration from Wakayama), published by the Wakayama Prefectural Government noted that the decision to allow the remaining women to stay 'was the cause of sinister rumours.' Whatever made Douglas change his mind, the

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[63] For the Usa Hashimoto case see John Douglas, "Correspondence Re Alleged Abduction of a Japanese Woman. Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (Thursday Island, December 13, 1897), box 13 folder 5 Col A/822, National Library of Australia.

[64] "Has Sent Two Japanese Women Back as Instructed - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (November 27, 1891), box 13 folder 5 Col, National Library of Australia.

[65] "The History of Emigration from Wakayama (Extract)Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (1957), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia.

story points to a complex community conflict with high stakes, in which different groups brought pressure to bear on the colonial administration, causing it to tighten and then slacken its grip on the governance of lower-class Japanese migrants in commercial sex.

Spatial, Racial and Medical Governance

In February and March 1899, the Crown Prosecutor for the District Court of Queensland clashed with the Commissioner of Police, W.E. Parry-Oakden over allegations of overpolicing migrants involved in commercial sex in Bundaberg, a town 385 kilometres north of Brisbane. An extract from an article published in the Bundaberg Mail on the 1st of February 1899 reported on the 'recent arrival of several batches of Japanese visitors' whose small businesses were a front for brothels targeting South Sea Islander men. The article urged 'the proper authorities' to open 'an official optic' and then to move the migrants off the main thoroughfares and away from the railway 'in the interests of the moral tone of the town.' [66] Ten days later, according to a report by the Home Office, police arrested two Japanese men, Minamigi and Tani with their 'so-called wives', charged them with keeping a brothel, and committed the men, but not the women, to trial .[67] The Crown Prosecutor for the District Court of Queensland, H. E. King, wrote a detailed response to this arrest, condemning 'the extraordinary and illegal action of the police' who had failed 'to administer the law impartially without reference to colour' and

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[66] "Extract from the Bundaberg Mail of the 1st of February 1899 - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (Bundaberg, February 1, 1899), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia.

[67] Also called Tarri in other documents "Report from the Home Office on the Arrest of Minamigi and Tani- - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (March 2, 1899), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia. As the Crown Prosecutor's response makes clear, selling sex in Queensland was not a crime and keeping a brothel was a crime only when it could be proved that it caused a public 'nuisance'.

recommended the case be dismissed. Queensland's Police Commissioner, Parry-Oakden replied, justifying this instance of police overreach on the basis that the press' demands for police action demonstrated that this display of police aggression was in the public interest. [68] The case is noteworthy for two reasons. First, it shows how public pressure brought state agencies into conflict. Here the racialized politics of settler communities challenged the principles of equality inscribed in British law. Second, it underlines how racialized politics informed state action by the police at the local level via an agenda set by the press in the public sphere. The article in the Bundaberg Mail seems to have spurred the police to act, and it was directly referenced by Parry-Oaken as the expression of 'community will' or 'public interest'. Parry-Oakden's reply shows the degree to which police as local agents of the state responded to pressure from opinion-makers in the press to 'secure' the community's social margins, even going so far as to create 'exceptions' to the law. Parry-Oakden justified the illegal arrest in these terms:

'As I said before it's not always expedient, nor is it wise, to act up to the very letter of the law; but inaction of this nature frequently renders it necessary that salutary or object lessons should be given so that those who, by reason of permitted immunity, grow bold and lawless'.[69]

The passage points to interesting ambivalences, tensions, and intersections between the role of the press (popular opinion), the police, the law, and forms of spatial governance. It shows the bottom-up, knee-jerk response of a security-infrastructure (police) embedded in and responsive to racial politics. This, in turn, was in conflict with a top-down form of migrant governance, which reasserted the law's impartiality. In addition to this, it recalls, albeit in a very mild form, the mobilization of sovereign power through Agamben's 'state of exception,' involving the

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[68] W.E. Parry-Oakden, "Memorandum - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (March 23, 1999), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia.
[69] Parry-Oakden.

suspension of the law within the law, or the ability to govern people 'without rights' through policing.

Policing was the most visible form of spatial governance of migrants, but the confinement of commercial sex also happened in less direct ways. Agencies of the state did not always aim to abolish commercial sex. In fact, they were often concerned with finding a socially acceptable way to make this mobilization of migrant sex workers sustainable. In a now much quoted passage on the racial stratification of commercial sex, Parry-Oakden argued:

There should be accessible, in Districts where large numbers of coloured aliens are located, suceptible (sic.) outlets for their sexual passions. The supply by Japanese women for the Kanaka demand is less revolting and degrading than would be the case were it met by the white women.[70]

Spatial governance was, therefore, centrally concerned with maintaining a certain kind of cultural, racial, and moral public space. In the words of Parry-Oakden the goal was to stop migrant commercial sex from becoming 'openly, flagrantly offensive and demoralizing,'.[71] While brothels were not racially segregated in a formal way, the comments made by Parry-Oakden above show how race was used discursively to organise the spaces in which migrants moved, worked, and had sex in.

The link between the spatial governance of migrant commercial sex and the production of race is perhaps clearest in the realm of what Alison Bashford calls 'imperial hygiene': a collection of policies, institutions, and expertise to regulate the 'circulation' of unknown entities, like sexually transgressive women and venereal diseases, and to isolate these from its citizens. [72] Bashford argues that nineteenth century public health was ultimately

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[70] Parry-Oakden.
[71] Parry-Oakden.
[72] Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene*. 2

a spatial form of governance, which used a range of bordering practices—immigration restriction, quarantine, lock hospitals, leprosy colonies—to segregate people whose mobility constituted them as dangerous. These *cordons sanitaires* produced differentiated regimes of medical governance for white, indigenous, and migrant populations. Queensland initially applied the Contagious Diseases Act in 1868 only to white urban sex workers in Brisbane.[73] Aboriginal women were governed under separate 'protective' systems of control and containment, and their venereal disease was treated fatalistically as part of the 'dying race' theory.[74] Japanese women did not become targets of the Contagious Diseases Act until 1900, where it seems the effects of venereal disease on the migrant workforce capacity and fears about falling white birth rates drove demand for regulation.[75]

Highly interventionist and carceral forms of medical governance, like the Contagious Diseases Act, were hard to implement in practice because local hospitals resisted. An enquiry into the potential application of the 'Act' in hospitals in six northern towns reported significant pushback from hospital committees: Maryborough and Cooktown claimed that they did not have the numbers to warrant intervention; Mackay and Townsville argued that they were unable to staff and resource the Act; Bundaberg pointed out that its by-laws 'prohibited such a class of patient'.[76] Of the six, only Thursday Island supported the proposal on the condition of support from the Government Medical Officer.

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[73] The Contagious Diseases Act was passed in Britain in 1864 and laws were subsequently applied in British colonies: India (1868) Queensland (1869) Victoria(1878) Tasmania (1879) In Queensland it was also applied in Rockhampton and Maryborough in 1869 and at Cooktown in 1876 between Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003). 72

[74] Levine. Chapter 3 and 7

[75] J.M.C, "Re: Proposed Extension of the Contagious Diseases Act of 1868 to Certain Towns in Queensland Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (n.d.), box 13 folder 5 , National Library of Australia. Joseph Leathom Wassell, "Letter from Dr Joseph Leathom Wassell, Health Officer, Port Kennedy to the Under Secretary of the Home Department Brisbane - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (April 14, 2002), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia. "Letter from Dr Baxter Tyrie to Home Secretary Brisbane - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (n.d.), box 13 folder 5 , National Library of Australia.

[76] J.M.C, "Re: Proposed Extension of the Contagious Diseases Act of 1868 to Certain Towns in Queensland Papers of D.C.S. Sissons."

However, two years later the Government Health Officer at Port Kennedy, Joseph Wassell advised a different course of action for Thursday Island. In a letter to the Home Secretary, he proposed, instead, that the women's employers would obtain regular medical supervision for them.[77] An analogous self-regulatory system of 'Venereal Disease Clubs' had been standard practice in the Straits Settlements during the 1890s, and something similar seems to have been in place when John Douglas made his inspection of brothels at Thursday Island in 1893.[78] Wassell argued that 'the people themselves would desire' a more self-regulatory regime.[79] It is critical to acknowledge that the self-regulatory regimes of employers and traffickers of sex workers were a fundamental component in the 'assemblages of power' which underlay the transnational governance of Japanese sex workers overseas. While often at odds with the goals of governments and state agencies, they also found ways to negotiate and compromise, as Wassell's note shows. These employer regimes imposed on migrant women selling sex some of the most violent and restrictive forms of governance, designed deliberately to disempower the women who laboured under them, but the ability of those regimes to adjust to the spatial, racial, and medical demands of states and polities where they operated made their commercial structures more sustainable and, at times, enabled states agencies to take a more 'hands off' approach to the governance of migrants in commercial sex.

The colonial state of Queensland governed Japanese migrants in commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier' reactively. It became more surveillant and interventionist in response to public pressure from white labour activists and from the class-based racial sensitivities

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[77] Wassell, "Letter from Dr Joseph Leathom Wassell, Health Officer, Port Kennedy to the Under Secretary of the Home Department Brisbane - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons."

[78] John Douglas, "Report of an Inspection of Japanese Brothels in Thursday - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons" (September 30, 1893), box 13 folder 5, National Library of Australia.On Venereal Disease Clubs see Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics*. Chapter 5

[79] Wassell, "Letter from Dr Joseph Leathom Wassell, Health Officer, Port Kennedy to the Under Secretary of the Home Department Brisbane - Papers of D.C.S. Sissons."

of middle-class Japanese emigrants. Both groups compelled the state to *'want* to know' more. Queensland's governance of Japanese migrants in commercial sex also tracked the local politics of diasporic communities, sometimes leading it to intensify and sometimes to lessen its attempts to control the movement of women across its borders. Governing the spaces where these migrants moved and who they came into physical and sexual contact with was complex because the agendas of local agencies of the state, such as the police and hospital committees, conflicted with those giving them directives. What's more, the colonial state of Queensland governed in conjunction with and adjusting to initiatives from a range of transnational actors, including the Japanese state and the employer regimes. The colonial state of Queensland was therefore just one of an 'assemblage of powers' involved in the governance of Japanese commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier.'

SOVEREIGNTY

DEBATES IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

OVERVIEW

In the following two chapters, I investigate how the issue of Japanese migrants in commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier' was framed in labour and nation-building discourses, focusing on two sets of debates which played out in the radical-nationalist Sydney weekly, the *Bulletin* and the Brisbane-based labour-oriented paper, the *Worker*. The first set of debates dealt with the argument that non-white migration was incompatible with settler-defined 'standards of civilization' because it would lower wages and undermine social-democratic values. This debate built on discourses of British anti-slavery and the anti-sweating movement to make racialized arguments against non-white, and especially Japanese, migrants as both slave-driving despots and members of a servile race. The second set of debates grew up in the context of late nineteenth century East Asian modernization and a heightened sense of settler vulnerability in the face of Japan's increasing assertiveness in international trade and politics. This debate featured speculation on a Japanese migrant 'invasion' or 'colonization' of the Australian continent. The issue of Japanese commercial sex existed only at the margins of the labour migration debate, but this section of the thesis (chapters two and three) will argue that the framing of non-white migrant sex in public debates can tell us something about white nation-building, settler sovereignty, and the development of the social-democratic welfare state.

CHAPTER TWO

DESPOTS OR SLAVES?

THE STANDARDS OF CIVILIZATION DEBATE

> *The Worker despises no people for the mere colour of their skin. It is the standard of civilisation—the mode of living, the racial character, to which we look…The Jap is a born sweater. In the profitable art of grinding the faces of the poor, Western civilisation can teach him nothing.*

The *Worker*: 21st March 1903

The sexual and domestic arrangements of Japanese migrants were marginal to the debates about labour and immigration in the Australian colonial public sphere in the last decade of the nineteenth century, but the way the issue was framed when it did come up tells us much about racialized nation-building and the exclusions of Australian social democracy. This chapter explores the racialization of Japanese migrants as slave drivers and slaves. Beginning with a discussion of the settler adaptation of the Enlightenment idea of 'standards of civilization,' it traces the development of racial categories of despotic and servile labour through the colonizing "gaze" of orientalist stereotypes, the moral framework of British antislavery, the impulse to white masculinist nation-building, and an emerging critique of imperial capitalist systems of indentured labour. In the first section, I show how the nationalist and labour press represented the relations of Japanese men and women in commercial and non-commercial sex as slave-like. Both publications demonised Japanese men as sexual despots in a way that bolstered the writers' white racial status as 'protectors' of women, while the *Worker* used Japanese sexual and domestic slavery to create a point of contrast with

the union movement's advocacy for women's social progress and equal rights. In the next section, I look at press representations of Japanese migrants as servile labour. The notion of servility rested on the racialization of labour according to a white/non-white binary which construed non-white migrants 'cheapness' as a threat to white workers living standards, their ability to have a family and live in a 'civilized' community. I pay particular attention to the way the press took 'lessons' from the American experiments in multiracial democracy in the aftermath of slavery and to how they used these lessons to argue for the exclusion of Japanese migrants. Following this, I consider the gendered aspect of indentured labour migration: how the system's 'single' male demographic played into working-class men's anxieties about their social and racial status. Finally, I look at how the establishment of the Australian welfare state and especially the development of a minimum 'family' wage addressed some of these anxieties by putting monogamous marriages and nuclear families at the centre of economic citizenship and tacitly rejecting the alternative arrangements of sexual and social life on the Australian 'frontier'.

The developing system of international relations between European empires and the non-European world in the nineteenth century gave political significance to Enlightenment efforts to scientifically plot the relative positions of 'civilized' and 'backwards' populations on a scale of human progress. The British, as 'self-appointed educators of mankind,' sought an international legal framework by which to prescribe universal norms for international relations: a guarantee of rights; a commitment to international law and orderly relations between states; opposition to polygamy, suttee, and slavery. [80] However, settlers in self-appointed 'white men's countries' made sense of 'standards of civilization' within their own distinct set of social and political circumstances. Settlers saw themselves as the natural descendants of Europe's 'leading

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[80] Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).and Jürgen Osterhammel, "Europe, the 'West' and the Civilizing Mission" (Annual Lecture, German Historical Institute, London, 2005). 19

nations' but also as builders of new societies that were more equal, more democratic, better versions of Europe, where all members had access to fair working conditions and earned enough to maintain a decent quality of life. 'Standards of civilization' in settler societies, therefore, became more closely associated with material conditions, part of a social contract promising a civilized 'standard of living': high wages, good working conditions, social protections, and services.[81] In defending 'standards of civilization' in the Australian colonies, nationalists and labour activists mobilized arguments from nineteenth century British antislavery and 'anti-sweating' discourses and from related international norm-making, but they adapted these to fit local concerns about labour rights and participatory democracy. Activists and opinion-makers directed their strongest criticisms at systems of indenture which they characterised as slave-like because those systems undercut settlers' working conditions and lifestyles with cheaper migrant labour. Projecting these criticisms onto the bodies of the migrants themselves, settlers defined non-white migrants as servile and naturally inclined to exploiting others: born slavedrivers (as in 'the born sweater') and natural slaves. Failing to imagine the possibility that non-white migrants could value fairness in labour relations or equal citizenship, they argued that non-white migration was civilizationally incompatible with visions for settler democracy.

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[81] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*.

The Oriental Despot

> *About the Earth with slave-held girls he tramps*
>
> *From Asia's colored hells to Austral camps.*
>
> — Our Japanese Ally the *Bulletin*, 22 February 1902

A key aspect of the 'standards of civilization' debate centred on the idea that Japanese migrants, alongside Chinese and to a lesser extent Indian and Syrian migrants, were inherently culturally anti-egalitarian and anti-democratic. As evidence of this, special attention was paid to their domestic and sexual relationships with women. The image of the 'oriental despot' and his harem of slaves is, of course, an older stereotype with a history of being projected onto colonised peoples. In the late nineteenth century, as racial taxonomies hardened into binary distinctions between white and non-white people, relationships between white women and non-white men also became framed in this way.[82] An article appearing in the *Bulletin,* on the 18th of August 1900 took a comparative view of South African and Australian laws to argue that white women 'foolish enough' to get involved with non-white men should have an escape clause in marriage contracts to avoid being enslaved by them. [83] Explicitly trans-colonial, articles like this fearmongered with images of non-white men as sexually menacing bogeymen, but the press also used the 'oriental despot' stereotype to argue in more reasoned ways about why non-white men should be excluded from settler citizenship.

Labour discourses, developed from within a mobile and networked imperial working class, gave new meaning to the stereotype of the 'oriental despot,' applying it to Japanese, Chinese (and to some degree Indian and Syrian) migrants. [84] Labour activists actively drew on and re-

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[82] On the development of race as a binary. See Lake and Reynolds.

[83] "Aboriginalities," *Bulletin*, August 18, 1900, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-676226430.

[84] On the imperial working class See Jonathan Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White': White Labourism in Britain, Australia, and South Africa Before the First World War," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 12, no. 4 (December 1999): 398–421, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6443.00098.

appropriated British anti-slavery discourses to criticise the 'slavery' of an imperial and world capitalist system. In the Australian colonies, union movements defined their struggle for fair labour relations against the threat of enslavement by capitalist profiteers and from the slave-like systems of those populations who were thought to lack a democratic impulse and the ability organize a fair society. The labour-oriented newspaper, the *Worker,* was a particularly harsh critic of the systems of indentured labour in Queensland's north, where it accused British syndicates and 'fat man' capitalists of rebuilding systems of slavery.   Intense public debates during the1870s and 1880s focused on abuses and enslavement of South Sea Islanders recruited by British merchants for Queensland's (and Fiji's) sugar industry, and this resulted in several attempts to end the Pacific labour trade. While South Sea Islanders and Southeast Asian men were considered, like indigenous men, to be innately authoritarian within their own cultures and societies and in relations with women, the press wrote about them sympathetically as the victims of capitalism. On the other hand, Chinese and Japanese migrants were seen as natural allies of the capitalist system. The Japanese were said to be particularly good at mimicking 'the European dash and go', while maintaining their 'cunning' and 'duplicity,' characteristics which were thought to put them at an advantage over their competitors. [85]

Women workers were identified as a vulnerable target for non-white capitalists in industrial settings. Racializing the inclination towards capitalist exploitation, the *Worker* represented non-white industrialists of as the worst kinds of exploiters. Japanese migrants were accused of taking advantage of female and child workers by running 'sweating factories' in Brisbane, while in Victoria's manufacturing sector, Syrians and Indians, were said to 'pay' only half the rate of the 'white sweater.'[86] Another site for narratives about exploitationwas commercial sex, but in nineteenth century Queensland, the pervasiveness of tropes like 'the fallen woman' and the

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[85] "A Japanese Possession in Queensland.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., May 22, 1897).
[86] "Stray Notes: Your Personal Interest," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., March 16, 1901).

'parasitical pimp' meant that the press did not generally consider relations between employer and worker in commercial sex through the prism of labour relations.[87] However, the *Worker* was more interested than most publications in framing social problems, like prostitution, through the lens of capital and labour. In July 1899, the *Worker* published a long opinion piece arguing against non-white immigration by Member of Parliament for the Labor Party, Joe Lessina, in which he drew an interesting parallel between different forms of bonded labour. Describing Japanese migrants as 'owners of brothels and indenters of Japanese prostitutes for the use of their fellow countrymen and the degraded whites who follow in their wake,' Lessina combined images of non-white migrants as capitalist exploiters and as sexual predators. [88]

The nationalist *Bulletin,* generally more interested in defending the sexual and racial purity of 'White Australia' than in women's labour rights, took a different approach to representing Asian men as slavedrivers. An article appearing in May 1908 entitled 'The Jap Slave Trade' tapped into a growing public perception in the early twentieth century of the movement of sex workers across international borders as a forced, violent, and deceptive form of trafficking, dubbed 'white slavery.' [89] The article reported on three cases of Japanese sex workers in China and Southeast Asia, describing the horrific conditions of captivity they faced enroute to their destinations. Turning to some allegedly pro-Japanese comments made by the well-known, Sydney-based women's rights activist, Rose Scott, the *Bulletin* article took aim at a favourite target, the Sydney elite.[90] It projected the fate of those Japanese 'slave' women onto their 'handsome white daughters,' imagining these girls 'sent away in the hold of a ship as saleable goods' and trapped 'in a sort of marine bear pit, their food being let down to them at the end of

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[87] For the 'fallen women' discourse see Raymond Evans, "Soiled Doves," in *So Much Hard Work: Women and Prostitution in Australian History*, ed. Kay Daniels (Sydney: Fontana : Collins, 1984). For an analysis of the pimp in nineteenth century Australia see Kate Gleeson, "Bludging Sex - What's Wrong with the Pimp?," in *Australasian Political Studies Association Conference* (Australasian Political Studies Association, 2004).

[88] Joe Lessina M.L.A, "The Coloured Alien Curse.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 29, 1899).

[89] "The Jap Slave Trade," *Bulletin*, May 21, 1908, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-698250329.

[90] For the Bulletin's ideological position see Carter, "Magazine Culture: Notes Towards a History of Australian Periodical Publication 1920-1970."

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a string.' [91] This piece exemplifies a growing public interest in so-called 'white slavery,' something Raelene Frances connects with a longer-standing genre of colonial captivity narratives, involving kidnappings of white women by indigenous men. Frances points out that while in the earlier iteration of captivity narratives, rescues of white women restored the 'dispossessors' as the legitimate owners of land, 'white slavery' narratives used the threat of interracial sex to shore up the white race and came to signify 'restoration of the nation.' [92]

Another view of 'oriental despotism' came in the form of ethnographic-type travel journalism, which introduced its readers to Japanese society and culture and made much of the 'slavery' in Japanese family and gender relations. These articles amplified exoticized stereotypes of submissive middle-class wives and of parents who sold their children. For example, an article entitled 'The Japanese Frau' conceived of the Japanese wife this way:

By law and custom woman is a chattel. When taken out at all, the wife clatters behind her husband. He enters the room first. She stands while he sits. She dines when the great man has finished. Humbly, when he goes or returns home, she taps her forehead on the mat. [93]

Unusually, this article contrasted several 'types' of Japanese womanhood: the drudging wife, the idealized figure of the Japanese Geisha and the poverty-stricken women 'of the Yoshiwara.' In describing the public slavery of prospective sex workers, the writer spun a wild story of government complicity in human trafficking. It sensationally claimed that young girls were being sacrificed by their parents and 'cooped up in cages and baskets with prices attached' and 'sold like cattle' to places like 'Korea, Manchuria and Northern Australia.'[94] David Ambaras has pointed to the role media sensationalism plays in guiding the public to 'make sense of the exotic and bizarre' as they 'navigate new spaces. Building on Shelley Streeby's observation that the 'materialism' and 'corporality' of sensationalist texts is tied up with the politics of class,

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[91] "The Jap Slave Trade."
[92] Frances, "Sex Workers or Citizens?" 111
[93] "The Japanese Frau. [FOR THE BULLETIN.]," *Bulletin*, May 27, 1909, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-705781233.
[94] "The Japanese Frau."

race and empire, Ambaras argues that sensationalised images become part of the readers' real or vicarious experience of those places.[95] For Australian readers such exaggerated images of slavery and abduction provided ways of navigating and imagining Japan, not just as player on the world stage, but also the Japan within Australian borders: the Japan of indentured migrants, businessmen, and sex workers.

The focus on Japanese domestic and sexual slavery in the publications like the *Bulletin* and the *Worker* needs to be read in the context of Australian women's growing activism in politics and the public sphere at the beginning of the twentieth century. This activism was influenced by diverse currents and associations and was connected to wider imperial circuits of knowledge and action. On one hand, in the late nineteenth century the rising popularity of purity societies had focused government's attention on questions of public morality, including temperance, raising the age of consent, repealing the Contagious Diseases Act, prostitution, and anti-trafficking. On the other hand, women's labour rights became a key concern of the union movement with anti-sweating campaigns.[96] From the early 1890s, women became active contributors to labour newspapers, like the *Worker*, and in 1899, the paper started publishing a dedicated women's column.[97] 'In a Woman's Mind' took a particular interest in the slave-like status of Japanese wives. An article published in December, 1903 noted especially how women's work outside the home created a double-burden:'industrial equality between the sexes' and domestic slavery for women in the homes.'[98] Another column, published in September 1904, seemed intent on disrupting airbrushed ideas about Japanese womanhood, reporting that

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[95] David Richard Ambaras, *Japan's Imperial Underworlds: Intimate Encounters at the Borders of Empire*, Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University ([Cambridge, United Kingdom] ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018). 23-24

[96] Richard Phillips, "Imperialism and the Regulation of Sexuality: Colonial Legislation on Contagious Diseases and Ages of Consent," *Journal of Historical Geography* 28, no. 3 (July 2002): 339–62, https://doi.org/10.1006/jhge.2002.0456.

[97] See for example the contributions for Lucinda Sharpe in the 1890s , through a woman's eyes from 1899 and In a woman's mind in 1900

[98] Comrade Mary, "In a Woman's Mind," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., December 5, 1903).

'the Jap woman was called the handmaiden of her husband—It sounds much better than "drudge," although it means the same slave.'[99] We need only look at the prominent, though somewhat controversial, 'feminism' of the *Worker*'s first editor, William Lane to see that this recurring emphasis on domestic and sexual slavery acted as a point of contrast for a labour movement which put women's equality and social progress at the core of its campaign for social democracy.[100] Lane believed that the excesses of capitalism were responsible for the both the flourishing of prostitution and for making women 'the weary sex,' overburdened by paid and domestic work.[101] While this strain of socialism never really resolved the tensions between an advocacy for women's 'right to paid work,' and a belief in upholding racial supremacy through 'the national work of motherhood,' [102] reporting on Japanese men's exploitation of middle-class Japanese wives and lower-class sex workers created an emotive marker of 'standards of civilization' and a powerful argument for civilizational incompatibility.

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[99] Comrade Mary, "In a Woman's Mind," *Worker (Brisbane, Qld. : 1890 - 1955)* (Brisbane, Qld., September 24, 1904).

[100] For the debate on William Lane's feminism see Marilyn Lake, "Socialism and Manhood: The Case of William Lane," *Labour History*, no. 50 (1986): 54, https://doi.org/10.2307/27508782.; Bruce Scates, "Socialism, Feminism and the Case of William Lane: A Reply to Marilyn Lake," *Labour History*, no. 59 (1990): 45, https://doi.org/10.2307/27509016. ; Marilyn Lake, "Socialism and Manhood: A Reply to Bruce Scates," *Labour History*, no. 60 (1991): 114, https://doi.org/10.2307/27509053.

[101] Michelle McFarland, "Sexuality in Utopia: Catherine Helen Spence, William Lane and Social Dreaming in Nineteenth-Century Australia," *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies* 8, no. 1 (2020): 35–44.Lake, "Socialism and Manhood," 1986. 117

[102] Lake, "Socialism and Manhood," 1986. 117

A Servile Race

> *The population is constitutionally fitted to work hard upon what*
> *would scarcely keep breath in an Englishman's body*
> — *the Worker* 8th July 1893

Working class identities in settler colonies were expressed in racial and gendered terms as the difference between real men and servile indentured labourers: 'beef-eating men' and 'rice-eating men'.[103] Asian workers were depicted as less virile, submissive, and as inherently indifferent to comfort. In July 1893 the *Worker* described the archetypal Japanese migrant 'in his own land' as 'passing rich on a handful of brass coins. He lives, like a Chinaman, largely on rice. He works long hours and sings over his work, and he has never yet, as far as one can learn, organised a successful strike'.[104] Articles like this one, pointed to the cultural habits and lifestyles of indentured labourers, expressed in material terms, to support of the idea that people racialized as non-white were innately servile. The key point being made here was that Asian and South Sea Islander workers' alleged failure to recognize or aspire to 'civilized standards of living' was undermining the labour movement's struggle for worker's rights. On the 5th of February 1898, an article in the *Worker* claimed that the presence of 'aliens with a lower standard of living is a menace to the community.'[105] An editorial entitled 'Australians, Hold your own!,' published a year earlier on the 15th of May 1897, argued that competition in the labour market resulting from capitalism's regard for labour as a pure commodity would 'degrade and drag...(the Australian worker)… down to the almost bestial levels to be seen in places where coloured labour swarms and hives.'[106] The animalistic imagery is unmissable here,

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[103] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*. 153
[104] "A Plague of Japs," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 8, 1893), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70863311.
[105] "Stray Notes.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., February 5, 1898), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70927785.
[106] "Editorial Mill: Australians, Hold Your Own!," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., May 15, 1897), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70931305.

the 'swarming' and 'hiving' of non-white workers suggestive of a sense of harassment, irritation, and also of danger, with something anthropologist, Ghassan Hage suggests is a visceral aspect of 'the racial imaginary." [107] The article went on to argue that white and non-white races were civilizationally incompatible, given non-whites' 'wants are fewer and their standard of living much lower than ours'. Coexistence in a society based on equality was impossible to imagine. Ominously, it observed that *'white and coloured races cannot exist together in any country for any length of time without conflict'*.[108]

Campaigning against indentured 'alien' labour, the press drew parallels between Australia's 'coloured labour question' and the political consequences of slavery for the United States. For example, an article appearing in the *Worker* on the 10th of March 1894 reported back on a lecture given at the Colonial Institute in London by Flora Shaw, apologist for the British Empire and Colonial Editor at the *Times*. According to the report, Shaw had insinuated that settlers' political activism would divide Australia into a productive 'aristocracy in the North' and a 'labour democracy in the South' 'that won't do any work.' [109] The *Worker,* quoting from the Melbourne paper, *The Argus,* warned that should this division happen, the lessons of climate and history from the United States would make real the prospect of a civil war between 'free' and 'virtually slave states.'[110]

At the end of the nineteenth century, the United States held a significant place in the imagination of Australian opinion makers and politicians. Nation builders, like Alfred Deakin, Henry Higgins and Edmund Barton were well read in American history and political theory and looked to the United States as a model of masculine self-government. [111] They felt an affinity based on

[107] Ghassan Hage, *Is Racism an Environmental Threat?*, Debating Race (Malden, MA: Polity, 2017).
[108] "Editorial Mill: Australians, Hold Your Own!"
[109] "The World of Labour," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., March 10, 1894), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70860031.
[110] "The World of Labour."
[111] Marilyn Lake, "White Man's Country: The Trans-national History of a National Project," *Australian Historical Studies* 34, no. 122 (October 2003): 346–63, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314610308596259.

a shared Anglo-Saxon racial identification and a sense of belonging to a community of 'white men' confronting comparable multiracial legacies of slavery and colonialism. The United States' historical experience of Radical Reconstruction—that brief period of multiracial democracy between 1865-1877, when emancipated blacks were given equal voting rights and representation—became a key reference point for Australian leaders in meetings to draw up the nation's constitution, and the historical interpretation they relied on was James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth*. [112] Bryce's study of American government and society argued that Radical Reconstruction had been a mistake. It had encouraged the democratic participation of 'half-civilized' and 'child-like' people, vulnerable to manipulation and exploitation by politicians.[113] In addition, the prospect of black majority rule was a humiliation to whites, which perpetuated racial violence against black people and instilled a sense of inferiority. Bryce concluded that 'two races so differently advanced' could not enjoy equality in public life.' [114]

This view was taken up by the press and became commonplace in late 1890s discussions of Asian immigration. The *Bulletin* described the historical experience of slavery in the United States 'as fraught with momentous lessons for young communities' of racial antagonism and the prospect of international conflict.[115] The *Worker* took a similar position. Joe Lessina's July 1899 editorial explicitly rejected the possibility of a multiracial nation, arguing that with the current labour regime in place, Australians would never be 'one people one destiny'.[116] Turning to address the 'fierce hatred … between whites and negroes of America' in the aftermath of slavery, he suggested that by 'encouraging the employment of alien labour in our midst to the

[112] Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line*. 69
[113] Lake and Reynolds.68
[114] Lake and Reynolds.66
[115] "A Colossal Problem," *The Bulletin*, December 28, 1889, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-511470840.
[116] Joe Lessina M.L.A, "The Coloured Alien Curse.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 29, 1899), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70927848.

detriment of white labour we are clearing the way for the war of races being fought out on our own ground.'

 The comparison between slavery in the United States and indentured Asian labour in the Australian colonies complicated the binary racial thinking between black and white, which was so prevalent in the 'white men's country' discourse. In the Australian colonies, the press conceived all non-white labour as 'black labour,' but within this category, it still used differentiated racialisations which conformed to older Enlightenment theories of the progress of humanity. South Sea Islanders, perceived as sitting lower on the scale of humanity, were described as 'docile' labour, whereas Japanese labourers, who some regarded as almost white, were seen as 'cunning'. To a certain extent, this idea of civilizational scale already influenced the production of differentiated arguments for migrant exclusion, but the comparison of Asian labour in Australia with black slavery in the United States prompted more convoluted argumentation. An editorial published by the *Worker* in July 1898 in the lead up to the Queensland parliamentary elections warned that *'*America's troubles will be ours.'[117] However, it had to qualify and argue around the civilizational scale which placed 'negroes —a low type of humanity' in a position inferior 'in many respects to the Jap., the Hindoo, and even the Chinaman.' The article contended that since Asians' 'greater intelligence and inventive genius' meant that they 'could live on next to nothing,' their relative civilizational advancement constituted a greater threat to the settler-democracy in Queensland than either South Sea Islanders or black slaves in the United States. [118] The article is interesting for the way it entwines classic stadial thinking about higher and lower races and natural slavery with a settler standard based on migrants' capacity to earn less money, and it provides insight into the labour thinking which linked an assumed racial preference to maintain a lower standard of living and

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[117] "Editorial Mill: Piebald Queensland."
[118] "EDITORIAL MILL: Piebald Queensland," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 9, 1898), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70927900.

ideals of what makes a fair society, using this to try to prove the incompatibility of migrant indentured labour with democracy.

Gender and the 'Standards of Civilization' Debate

The idea that a nation could not contain coexisting systems of free and slave labour had a gendered aspect, and both the *Bulletin* and the *Worker* drew attention to the pernicious effects of sex selective recruitment under indentured labour regimes. Holding the government to account on the numbers of incoming migrants, the press took special note of the demographic profile of Japanese arrivals. For example, the *Worker* reported on the ratio of men to women leaving the port of Kobe for destinations worldwide and gave special attention to the 'paucity of women' leaving for Australia, although the statistics showed similar numbers of women for both the United States and Europe.[119] Reports in both the *Bulletin* in October 1897 and the *Worker* in September 1900 gave a detailed breakdown of the ethnicity and sex of the domestic non-citizen population, and they alerted readers to the implications of the gender imbalance for the sexual exploitation of white working-class women. The *Worker* in its commentary calculated that within the non-white population '24 strong, lusty, full-blooded aliens are allowed one woman between them'.[120] It claimed this meant that 'white women in the lower grades of the competitive industrial struggle are drawn upon to make good the sex deficiency'. The *Bulletin* article made the same point but referred to the women as 'vessels of depravity'.[121] In both articles, the allusion to interracial sex seems calculated to create a sense of alarm around white working-class masculinity.

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[119] "World of Labour.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 23, 1898).
[120] "Bystanders' Notebook: Coloured Alien Statistics," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., September 8, 1900).
[121] "Plain English: Queensland's Black Labor," *Bulletin*, October 2, 1897, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-686238843.

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White working-class men were particularly concerned about non-white men's sexual access to white working-class women and what this might mean in terms of their own social and racial backsliding from hard-fought standards of civilization. For liberals, on the other hand, the prospect of a large non-white male migrant population raised concerns about the emergence of an underclass which would degrade Australia's nascent democracy, its political institutions and 'national character.' An early contribution to the debate from the liberal point of view appeared in the 11th of June 1892 edition of the *Worker*. It was an extract from a letter to *The Sydney Telegraph* by the recently retired five-time liberal premier for New South Wales and federation advocate, Henry Parkes. Like so many of his contemporaries, Parkes drew a parallel with the historical experience of slavery in the United States, but where others saw conflict emerging through a clash of civilizations, Parkes saw it beginning in the deprivation of intimacy and domesticity:

The African slavers planted both sexes on those rich lands by their lawful trade in flesh and blood and we know that many happy family groups relieved that tragic gloom of hopeless servitude. But we should have loathsome clusters and sprinklings of one sex embittered by the enforced absence of the other.[122]

Parks argued that a gender imbalance inherent in systems of indentured labour would have serious consequences for the nation, reversing the progress of civilization and initiating 'a system of caste and degraded classes' which would result in 'weakening our free institutions and vitiating our national character'. Although the *Worker* was not natural ally of Parkes, it found enough common ground to re-publish his view, adding the tag 'it is all about right, even though Parkes said it.'

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[122] "Black Labour Doings," *Worker*, Brisbane, June 11, 1892, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70859836.

In other articles, the *Worker* asserted a stronger class position against this perceived sexual threat from non-white men. These arguments drew on sensational imagery of ravishment and class sacrifice. For example, an article appearing in the *Worker* on 20th of February 1904 attacked the class of people who 'in the greed for gain have brought thousands of savages to this country without their women and let them loose upon our female population to glut their sexual passions as they may.'[123] The article branded the support for state-regulated prostitution as a hypocritical move by the pro-indenture employer class who, in order to 'safeguard the virtue of their wives and daughters,' would use 'the ranks of the poor' to 'supply a ceaseless offering of girl and women victims on the altars of lust'. This passage is noteworthy for two reasons: first, because it shows how the social stratification of sexual labour produced class tensions, casting doubt over the common assumption that racial solidarity should trump class divisions;[124] second, because there is silence on the significant role played by Asian and Aboriginal women in providing sexual labour for white and non-white men. Raelene Frances, in assessing the implications of racial and ethnic stratification of commercial sex for settler class ideologies, points to the way settlers maintained myths of a 'worker's paradise' by deflecting attention away from a majority of locally-born Anglo-Celtic urban sex workers to make prostitution a 'frontier' and a 'foreigner's' occupation.[125] However, in the *Worker* article just cited, the figure of the Japanese sex worker is completely eclipsed by the focus on working class white women as sacrificial victims both to non-white men and to the capitalist class running the system of indentured labour.[126] At the same time, there's an interesting parallel between these two different strategies of representation since both concern white working men's potential loss of face within class hierarchies and within racial ones. A further relevant

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[123] "Bystanders' Notebook: Pro-Alien Chivalry," *Worker* Brisbane, February 20, 1904, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article71036951.

[124] Stefanie Affeldt and Wulf D. Hund, "Conflicts in Racism: Broome and White Australia," *Race & Class* 61, no. 2 (October 2019): 43–61, https://doi.org/10.1177/0306396819871412.

[125] Frances, "Sex Workers or Citizens?"

[126] "Bystanders' Notebook: Pro-Alien Chivalry."

point draws from Philippa Levine's work on colonial India which suggests that efforts to prevent non-white men's sexual access to white women upheld white supremacy at a symbolic level within the 'sexual politics of colonial rule.[127] For the working class, whose racial status in relation to the ruling classes had never been secure, the defence of white women against non-white men this position was all the more fierce.[128]

Non-White Migrants and The Family Wage

From the evidence above we can see that the 'single' status of migrant labour recruits was heavily exploited to create a sense of social threat around interracial sex, but it was less often invoked in public debate to make economic arguments about 'unfair competition' or low wages. Nevertheless, Kate Bagnell, writing about depictions of Chinese 'immorality' in the 1870s, points out that the press sometimes argued in favour of a model of family migration, claiming that the 'low wage' problem might be solved 'if he (a Chinese man) lived like a European with his (Chinese) wife and family.[129] While the *Worker* was more likely to focus on Asian migrants' diet, clothing, and housing than on their lack of dependents as a reason for their 'cheapness,' it also took up the idea that migrant indentured labour kept white families in poverty, and it defended men who refused low-paid work 'not out of greed but because they want to feed wife and family'.[130]

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[127] Philippa Levine, "Venereal Disease, Prostitution, and the Politics of Empire: The Case of British India," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 4, no. 4 (1994): 579–602. 593
[128] Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White.'"
[129] Bagnall, "Golden Shadows on a White Land: An Exploration of the Lives of White Women Who Partnered Chinese Men and Their Children in Southern Australia, 1855-1915." 50
[130] "Bystander's Notebook: Farmers and the Labour Question," *Worker* Brisbane, July 7, 1894, http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70861040.

The newspaper claimed that white men were right to refuse 'the same rate of wages as the Japanese,' but if employers were willing to pay 'wages which will provide a moderate living for a family of four persons,' they would not have trouble finding willing white labourers. As Marilyn Lake has pointed out, the spectre of cheap Asian 'slavery' was never too far in the background of the campaigns to set a national minimum wage, campaigns which intensified at the end of the 1890s and culminated in the 1907 Harvester judgement on the first national wage standard.[131] In giving his 1907 ruling, the president of the newly established Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, Justice Henry Higgins, defined the minimum wage to be paid to all adult male workers as a 'living wage,' calculated to support a male 'breadwinner' and his dependents, living 'in a labourer's home of about five persons.'[132] Lake has observed that while the historiography of the 'living wage' debate has focused heavily on its consequences for the gendered operation of labour markets during the twentieth century, it is just as relevant to look back from these reforms to the nineteenth century context of British antislavery and to take a *longue durée* view of global labour relations.[133]

The minimum 'family' wage became a new kind of 'marker of civilization' both in Australia and overseas as social reformers in the United States and in Britain looked to young democracies, like Australia and New Zealand for innovations and ideas on how to regulate the relationship between capital and labour and how to prevent the use of immigrant labour from bringing down workers' wages.[134] However, equally relevant is the context of early twentieth century Australian middle-class and working-class anxieties

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[131] Marilyn Lake, "Challenging the 'Slave-Driving Employers': Understanding Victoria's 1896 Minimum Wage through a World-History Approach," *Australian Historical Studies* 45, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 87–102, https://doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2013.877501.
[132] Henry Bournes Higgins, "Ex Parte H.V. McKay," § Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. (1907), https://www.fwc.gov.au/about-us/history/waltzing-matilda-and-sunshine-harvester-factory/harvester-case.
[133] Lake, "Challenging the 'Slave-Driving Employers.'"
[134] Lake.

about the negative consequences of economic insecurity for marriages, birth rates and family disintegration, anxieties which ultimately rested on the vulnerability of the working class to social decay. An article published by the *Worker* in February 1908, three months after the Harvester Judgement, conveys something of the sense of public alarm about the fragility of the family as an institution. Beginning, as the *Worker* so often did, by pointing to statistics, the article claimed that 'fewer and steadily fewer number of young men are willing to undertake the economic burden and responsibility of maintaining a wife and children' it warned that women and children were being 'compelled to labour' and that 'prostitution is taking the place of marriage.'[135] Alarmist in its tone, the article contended that unregulated capitalism would lead to 'breaking up family life.' What is interesting about this article is that it shows us how gendered anxieties about the possibilities of racial and class degradation, which had arisen during the economic depression and the 'black labour' debates of the early 1890s, lingered into the first decade of the twentieth century and shaped the development of the Australian welfare state. The Harvester judgement was a key reform in those first years after federation. Together with the old age pension (1908) and motherhood endowment (1912) it laid the legal and institutional foundations of the Australian welfare state, but it also enshrined the nuclear family as the natural economic unit supporting the reproduction of the Australian population and it naturalised the idea of a sexually-controlled, settled, 'breadwinner' as its model citizen. In winning justice for the white Australian male worker, Australian social democracy rigidified gender and family relations and tacitly rejected other kinds of domestic arrangements: the polygamous families; temporary sexual and intimate

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[135] "The Enemy of the Family: How Capitalism Undermines the Family Life," *Worker* Brisbane, February 1, 1908 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70871484.

partnerships and commercial sex, which had characterised sexual and family relations on the Australian 'frontier'.

I began this chapter by looking at how the Enlightenment meaning of 'standards of civilization' shifted as it was absorbed into British imperial and American republican discourses of antislavery and subsequently redefined to serve the agenda of free white labour in settler colonies. In the labour-oriented *Worker* representations of Japanese men as sexual despots combined a 'colonizing gaze,' which linked slavery in gender relations to primitivism, with an emerging critique of global capitalism. More generally, these representations affirmed white men's patriarchal status as 'protectors of women' and provided a counterexample for the development of an idea of democratic citizenship. The representation of Japanese women as slavish wives or prostitutes provided both white men and white women a point of contrast in their advocacy of equal citizenship and social progress for women. Anxieties about the impact of indentured migration on white workers' incomes, their ability to maintain a family and enjoy a 'civilized' standard of living was bound up in the white working class's own class and racial insecurities, and these were expressed in alarmist predictions about the degeneration and breaking-up of family life. The construction of the Australian welfare state, and in particular, the Harvester judgement on the minimum wage can be understood as a partial response to these anxieties.

CHAPTER THREE

'BLACK LABOUR' ' YELLOW AGONY'

THE COLONIZATION DEBATE

For most of the second half of the nineteenth century, Chinese migrants were the group against which white settlers defined themselves most aggressively as a sovereign community, but in December 1894 as the war between China and Japan was turning in Japan's favour, the *Bulletin* declared:

'Wanted—Australia for the Japs'

Australia's bogey has changed its mask, and from Chinese become Japanese. For East, North, and West, the Japs are pouring into Australia. At Port Darwin and Thursday Island they have established a virtual monopoly of the pearl fisheries; at Mackay, Geraldton, and Townsville many hundreds have been introduced as labourers on the sugar plantation; and in Westralia,* while the men come to fish for pearls, the Japanese women come by scores to fish for men..[136]

In the mid-1890s a worldwide sense of western vulnerability emerged in the face of Japanese modernization and militarization. Thoralf Klein points out that this international awakening to Japan's rising position within the world order did not grow steadily but burst

*Westralia: Western Australia

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[136] "Plain English: Wanted-Australia for the Japs.," *The Bulletin*, December 22, 1894, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-515576508.

forth in a series of global 'media events': the Japanese victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895; the Boxer War of 1900–1901; and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905.[137] Klein argues that the globalization of communications technologies, especially the international consolidation of the telegraph network, was fundamental to the growth of the 'yellow peril' discourse.[138] In the Australian context, the changes to the way news was transmitted at a world scale also influenced the construction of Japanese 'yellow peril'. However, as the extract from the *Bulletin* cited above makes clear, new anxieties about Japan in the Australian colonies were also significantly shaped by local factors, specifically, by the construction of settler sovereignty through a cultural imaginary which highlighted penetrable and insecure borders.

In the mid-1890s the *Bulletin* and the *Worker* began reporting on Japanese immigration to Queensland's sugar plantations and its pearling centres using the language of invasion, colonization, and empire. The linking of migration and world power politics in this reporting was partly a matter of timing. The first indications of Japan's regional ascendency—the news of its 1894-1895 military victories—roughly coincided with a sharp rise in the visibility of Japanese migrants in Queensland. At Thursday Island, the number of Japanese men engaged in pearling jumped from 100 to 466 between 1891 and 1893 and again to 720 in 1894. The numbers rose in part, because remittances encouraged chain migration, but also, significantly, because Japan transferred its management of emigrants from state to private hands, resulting in a proliferation of new emigration companies. [139] Between 1892 and 1896, one of these companies, the Nihon Yoshisa

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[137] Thoralf Klein, "The 'Yellow Peril' European History Online (EGO)," published by the Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz, October 15, 2015, http://www.ieg-ego.eu/kleint-2015-en.
[138] Klein.
[139] By 1894 emigration was being privately managed within a state legal framework 1894 Immigration Protection Ordinance *(Imin hogo kisoku)*, subsequently the 1896 Emigrant Protection Law (*Imin hogohō*)Dusinberre, "Overseas Migration 1868-1945." 108 . See also David Sissons, *Bridging Australia and Japan: The Writings of David Sissons, Historian and Political Scientist. Volume 1*, ed. James A. A. Stockwin and Keiko Tamura, Asian Studies Series 8 (Acton, ACT: Australian National University Press, 2016). 94

Emigration Company, brought 1126 Japanese workers to Queensland's sugar plantations.[140] The visible increase in migrants gave a concrete form to far off shifts in power. However, more important than these surface level connections, reporting on a Japanese migrant 'invasion' and 'colonization was bound up with the problem of self-government in empire. The Westminster-style parliamentary democracy that came to most Australian colonies with responsible self-government by the late 1850s had given settler communities substantial control over internal governance but left them subservient to the British Empire on imperial affairs and international relations.[141] This meant that during the second half of the nineteenth century, and especially as preparations got underway to unite the six Australian colonies as a federation in the 1890s, the border and the migrants crossing it became key sites for imagining and strengthening popular settler sovereignty.

The goal of this chapter is to trace the development of Japanese 'yellow peril' in the *Bulletin and* the *Worker* with special attention to its gendered aspects. The chapter focuses on the period between the end of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the passing of the Immigration Restriction Act in 1901, the period which saw the most intense speculation on Japanese 'invasion' and 'colonization' in Australian press publications. However, I begin this chapter by locating Japanese 'yellow peril' within an older imaginary of Chinese migrant invasion. I show how the Chinese migrant invasion narrative became codified as a cultural text, and I set it in the context of a settler imperative to define the contours of self-government. Against this background, I discuss the development of a Japanese migrant 'invasion' or 'colonization' narrative, calling attention to the way both the Chinese and Japanese versions dealt with the challenge migrants' social mobility posed to established racial hierarchies. I also discuss how the Japanese migrant 'invasion'

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[140] Sissons, *Bridging Australia and Japan*.
[141] Jeremy C. Martens, *Empire and Asian Migration: Sovereignty, Immigration Restriction and Protest in the British Settler Colonies, 1888-1907* (Crawley, Western Australia: UWA Publishing, 2018).

or 'colonization' narrative intersected with domestic Japanese discourses on expansionist migration. Following that, I look more specifically at representations of Japanese migrant 'invasion' or 'colonization' in the labour press focusing on tensions between imperial and popular sovereignties in the competing post-emancipation systems of 'free' and indentured labour. This developed as a fearful and exclusionary discourse in which Japanese migrants were as imagined as indentured 'black labour' occupying, even 'colonizing' industries and jobs claimed for the emerging nation and for its white working class men. In this discussion I pay close attention to how colonization discourses were gendered. I discuss how the idea of Japanese colonization was conveyed in visual representations of male migrants' bodies, and I assess press representations of the role played by commercial sex in financing Japanese commercial supremacy by setting it against a historical understanding of a transnational economy of Japanese commercial sex. In the final section of this chapter, I look at cross-border smuggling of Japanese women and the everyday encounters of Japanese migrants with the law to show how migrants' (il)legal subjectivity was constructed according to the imperatives of border management in the context of uncertain sovereignty.

At the beginning of the 1890s conditions were ripe for the arrival of a Japanese 'yellow peril' in Queensland. Self-governing political communities in the Australian colonies had for several decades already been building a cultural framework for understanding migration as a threat to sovereignty. With most Australian colonies achieving responsible self-government in the late 1850s, opposition to the presence of Chinese people became a major cultural theme and point of self-definition. In the early 1860s, a wave of violent anti-Chinese sentiment swept the New South Wales goldfields, and resentment persisted in the following decades in colonial labour markets and in the broader community, culminating in a series of attempts during the 1880s to legislate Chinese exclusion. The

anti-Chinese idea found cultural expression in an imaginary of Chinese 'invasion' which cast the Chinese migrant as a threat to white settler society. William Lane's dystopian popular fiction and Charles Pearson's more highbrow political and social analysis are two significant texts whose portrayal of a migrant invasion helped establish its pervasiveness as a cultural idea. Lane's novel 'White or Yellow? A story of the Race War of A.D 1908', published in 1887, imagined white communities rising to resist hordes of Chinese migrant-invaders who had engineered a take-over of Queensland, while Charles Pearson's 'National Life and Character: A Forecast', published in 1893, tried to convey a sense of 'white man' as isolated and vulnerable, confined to the world's 'Temperate Zones' and in danger of being 'swamped' by larger Asian and African populations. [142] The two works differed in tone and intended audience, but as David Walker has pointed out, both writers adopted an 'eliminationist paradigm' which pitted Europeans against Asians in a zero-sum game.[143] Lane and Pearson's texts consolidated the migrant-invasion idea, forming a kind of cultural template onto which future 'perils,' especially the Japanese one, were grafted.

In August 1895, the *Bulletin* published 'The Japanese Invasion,' a piece of reportage on Japanese immigration which re-worked the classic Chinese invasion narrative: a steady, seemingly innocuous but continuous stream of Japanese migrants flow into the pearling and sugar districts, where they quickly over-run white communities by forming monopolies to gain control over natural and economic resources.[144] To illustrate this, the article quoted Government Resident and Magistrate at Thursday Island, John Douglas' warning that Japanese migrants 'are slowly but surely winning Thursday Island and what

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[142] Charles Pearson, *National Life and Character:A Forecast* (London: Macmillan and co., 1893). 13
[143] David Walker, "Survivalist Anxieties Australian Responses to Asia, 1890s to the Present," *Australian Historical Studies* 33, no. 120 (October 2002): 319–30, https://doi.org/10.1080/10314610208596222.321
[144] "The Japanese Invasion," *Bulletin*, August 31, 1895, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-516236571.

they do here they may do elsewhere.' The article pointed to the rapid increase in the number of Japanese-owned boats, and it included Douglas' speculations that Japanese migrants' ambition, work ethic, desire for education, and ability to assimilate would soon lead to 'survival of the fittest.'[145] Looking down the coast, it pointed to more potential threats in sugar labourers who were set on becoming sugar farmers and in Japanese women who outcompeted the white women in commercial sex. This *Bulletin* article may well have drawn from an earlier report in the *Worker*, published in May 1895. That article had reported on a meeting with a group of aspirational Japanese settlers in Geraldton (now Innisfail), a sugar-growing region in far-north Queensland, and it captures even more clearly the figure of the aspirational Chinese or Japanese settler as a source of unease. The article portrayed the group as upstarts, who, having completed their indentured contracts, declared 'We are not going to work for any boss, but for ourselves. We mean to rent land and grow sugar on it.' It gave the article the headline 'Japs Colonising Queensland'.[146] One possible reason why public debates about Japanese migration in the mid-1890s tracked the Chinese invasion narrative so closely was that Chinese and Japanese migrants' social mobility challenged racial hierarchies. Whereas the 'standards of civilization' discourse racialized migrants 'low standards of living' as an unbridgeable racial gap, Chinese and Japanese migrants' social mobility and their assimilability threatened to breach this racial boundary.

The figure of the aspirational settler or colonist was also part of public debates about emigration in 1880s and 1890s in Japan, and there is some evidence that some aspects of this Japanese public debate found their way into the Australian press's discussion of Japanese migration as 'invasion' or 'colonization.' Eiichiro Azuma points out that because

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[145] "The Japanese Invasion."

[146] "Japs Colonising Queensland.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., May 11, 1895), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70861222. See also : "World of Labour," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., March 7, 1896).

Japan's late adoption of a capitalist economy coincided with its rapid rise as a regional military power, its cheap labour exports were often identical with its settler colonists. In Japan, this blurred distinctions between emigration and colonization, and it also led to a blending of categories in the United States. [147] As the earlier *Worker* article demonstrated the Australian press also conflated Japanese emigration with colonization, especially when it involved migrants no longer bound by indenture. [148] In Japan the idea of agricultural-based colonial settlement can be seen as early as the 'opening' of Hokkaido, but it gained currency in public debate with the appointment of Enomoto Takeaki as foreign minister in 1891. Enomoto believed 'settler emigration' (*teijyū imin*) would address Japan's domestic problems and secure its place in the world. [149] Settler emigration would reduce the threat of armed rebellion by providing employment and investment opportunities for disenfranchised samurai. Samurai leadership and property ownership would, in turn, guide the behaviour of emigrants from the lower strata of Japanese society, raising the overall quality of Japanese emigrant communities abroad and moderating calls for racial exclusion. In addition to this, peaceful migration settlement through the development of agricultural monopolies would help extend Japanese territorial sovereignty and influence across the maritime regions in the western Pacific, from India to Australia and across to Latin America. [150] A second important figure in Japanese public debate over expansionist migration was nationalist and newspaper owner, Fukuzawa Yukichi. Fukuzawa argued for emigration along Malthusian lines of overpopulation and

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[147] Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). 19
[148] "Japs Colonising Queensland."
[149] Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930.* 55
[150] Mihalopoulos. 51-58

underemployment, but also had a particular interest in the role emigration might play in Japan's overseas economic expansion and securing Japan's national security. [151]

Snippets of these Japanese public debates about emigration reached Australia through correspondents, businesspeople, and travellers, and were reported in the Australian press as passing references, usually embedded in larger arguments which advocated Japanese exclusion or fearmongered about migrant invasion. A short article in the *Worker* in October 1897 referred to reports 'in the Japanese vernacular papers' confirming Japan's desire to 'acquire at least Thursday Island and they boast that already the place is almost entirely in their hands'.[152] Another *Worker* article on the 27th of April 1895 mentioned a letter 'in the Southern press' from an Australian living in Japan which claimed, 'the Japs are speaking about colonizing Australia and introducing Japanese civilization'.[153] This line was likely taken from an article in Sydney's *Daily Telegraph,* published a few days earlier, which added the typical migrant-invader formula: 'They will learn your business, and then come down and take it from you'.[154] While it's interesting to see where domestic Japanese discussions of expansionist migration and the Australian discussions of migrant invasion intersect, it's important to note that these articles conveyed impressions, sentiments, rumours, and stereotyped images rather than the fully fledged "overseas development" discourse (*kagai hattenron*) of Japanese intellectuals, like Fukuzawa Yukichi or Ennamoto Takeaki. [155] What's more, the Australian version of the Japanese colonization debate had its own set of social and cultural references to guide it: a well-established migrant invasion-narrative; competing systems of ethnically stratified free and

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[151] Mihalopoulos. 96-102
[152] "Stray Notes.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., October 16, 1897).
[153] "Bystanders' Notebook.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., April 27, 1895).
[154] "Trade With Japan," *Worker* (Sydney, NSW, April 19, 1895).
[155] Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930*. 51- 55 and 96-99

indentured labour; and the ongoing struggle for popular sovereignty in the political context of racial nation-building.

An Invasion of Workers: Black Labour

A distinctive characteristic of the migrant-invasion 'peril' in the context of the Australian colonies is that it played out against the larger tensions between free and indentured labour systems, racialized as 'white' and 'black' labour. Since the *Worker* was fundamentally concerned with white workers' 'privileged access to labour markets,'[156] it found ways to incorporate ideas about Japan's military power and its colonial ambition into a more general binary schema of 'free white' and 'servile black' labour. This produced a version of the migrant-invasion narrative which proposed a form of Japanese colonization through Japanese migrant workers' occupation of labour markets and industry on one hand, and the power of Japanese capitalists to control employment on the other.

The front cover of the Worker on the 16th of May 1896 featured a full-page illustration entitled 'March of the Jap'.[157] It was a map of Queensland, drawn to create the optical perspective of a viewer positioned just south of Queensland's border looking to the north out over the territory. A column of Japanese
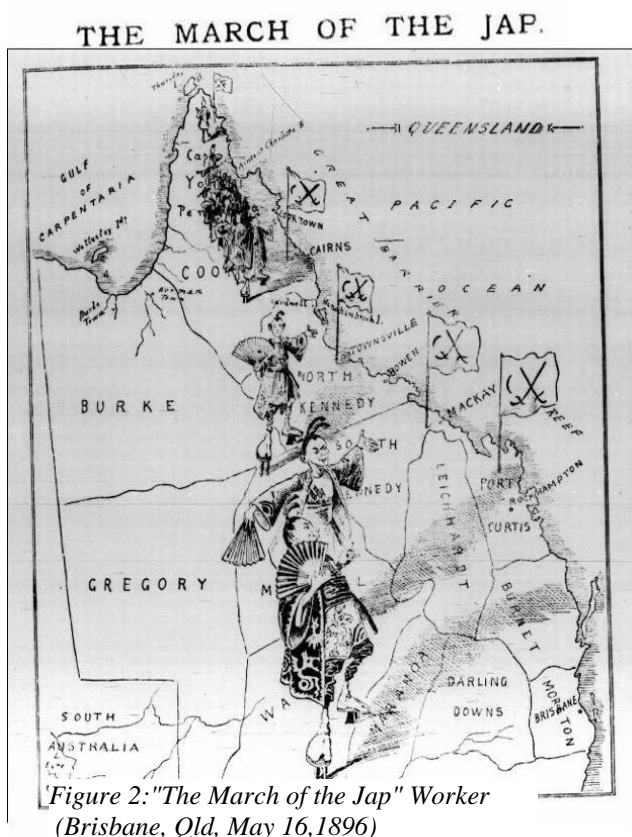

Figure 2:"The March of the Jap" Worker (Brisbane, Qld, May 16,1896)

[156] Hyslop, "The Imperial Working Class Makes Itself 'White.'" 402
[157] "The March of the Jap," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., May 16, 1896).

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men in kimonos, high wooden sandals, and exaggerated top knots bears down on the viewer, their flags planted at key northern towns along the coast. The illustration was accompanied by a long editorial, warning readers about the coming 'Japanese invasion'. In keeping with the *Worker's* focus on industry and employment as a site for Japan's expanding power, the article connected migrants' occupational and social mobility with a broader expansionist program, supporting its argument with the example of pearl divers who had risen to become boat owners and were now 'fast taking possession' of Thursday Island as well as making their way down to 'Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, and right down the coast to Brisbane.' The article argued that Japanese migrants would soon leave the industries of pearling, sugar, and guano, for which they had been recruited and would strike out, threating new industries and jobs, just as Chinese migrants had done before them. The editorial reasoned further that unregulated migration would make Queensland vulnerable to Japan's imperial ambitions, and that Japanese migrants' willingness to accept low wages would inevitably lead to a racial conflict in which Japan's superior military and industrial strength, so recently tested in the Sino-Japanese conflict, would prevail.

The discourse of Japanese migration as a threat to sovereignty was not only, or mainly, constructed around such substantial opinion pieces or such explicit imagery. Throughout the 1890s and into the early years of federation, the *Worker* steadily built up a picture of a migrant 'march' on self-proclaimed 'white men's jobs' through minor news items: reports on the rising numbers of Japanese workers in the sugar mills; news about the employment of Japanese as cooks and domestic servants; and alerts about the opening of Japanese laundries and brothels, drawing specific attention to the southwards drift of these businesses towards the cities and towns. This slow accumulation of impressions gathered in everyday news items would have consolidated the idea of the Japanese migrant as potential invader. Whether referenced explicitly in illustrations and editorials or implied in the reporting of everyday events,

the 'March of the Jap' was an image with staying power, and it remained relevant throughout the second half of the 1890s, especially as the political agenda shifted to questions of federation and the racial composition of a nation-in-formation. An indication of the persistence and adaptability of this image is evident in the 4th of March 1899 reprint of the illustrated map for the *Worker*'s back pages, reminding readers in the midst of an election campaign of what was really at stake when they cast their vote at the polling booth.

Gender and The Colonization Debate

Something striking about the way both the *Bulletin* and the *Worker* associated arguments against unregulated migration with the spectre of territorial colonization was through their use of the migrant body. One article published in the *Bulletin* in November 1897 claimed that 'The Japs, are getting the pearl-shelling industry of Torres Straits pretty well into their own hands.'[158] Another article appearing a few months earlier in the *Worker* claimed that towns in the north were now 'run almost wholly by Chows and Japs,' and turning its attention to Japanese migrants' intentions for the southern capital of Brisbane, it warned that 'once having got their foot in, they'll soon thrust in their bodies'.[159] This imagery references a clear physicality of close combat, perhaps even hand-to-hand struggle, to wrest territory and industry from settler control. The cartoon illustration, 'March of the Jap,' also deployed migrant bodies, in this case, directly onto the map, the largest figure's foot stretched out as if ready to step over the border into the colony of New South Wales.[160] The column of figures trailing up the Queensland coast were shown as shifty, effeminate

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[158] "Japs and North Australian Pearls," *The Bulletin*, November 20, 1897, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-686269091.
[159] "Stray Notes.," May 15, 1897.
[160] "The March of the Jap."

men, creating a contrast with the rough and robust settler masculinity so commonly featured in the colonial press, but there was also something self-confident, even proprietorial drawn into these Japanese figures, a different kind of masculinity, perhaps, and an image of Japanese migrant men which was reproduced in articles, poems and sketches in the nationalist and labour-oriented publications throughout second half of the 1890s.

'March of the Jap' centred the Japanese 'yellow peril' discourse on an image of an all-male migrant-invasion. Still, Japanese migrant women lingered less visibly in the background in public arguments that profits from commercial sex were facilitating Japanese occupation of the pearling industry, an industry claimed for white workers and the nation. With the sharp rise in the number of Japanese migrants working on pearl-shelling boats at Thursday Island between 1892-1894, the press and colonial officials began to imply a form of collusion between Japanese women selling sex on the island and Japanese men trying to get into the pearling game. A report filed for the *Bulletin* in January 1894 made the outraged claim that 'Japanese harlots ply their trade undisturbed and devote their saving towards purchasing boats for their male friends.'[161] The fact that the press aimed to inflame moral panics about the growth of foreign vice makes it hard to assess the true degree that profits from Japanese commercial sex contributed to the commercial power of Japanese migrants in Queensland. However, the broader regional context shows that profits from overseas sex played a significant role in Japanese commercial expansion around the turn of the twentieth century. In China and Southeast Asia, the sheer scale of the Japanese commercial sex industry meant that Japanese overseas sex workers themselves generated markets for Japanese clothing, goods, and services, and in this way,

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[161] "The Japs in the Torres Straits," *Bulletin*, January 6, 1894, http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-514865787.

provided impetus for the growth Japanese businesses.[162] In Queensland and other sites of the Australian 'frontier', the smaller scale of the commercial sex industry meant that Japanese sex workers neither led Japanese commercial expansion nor generated their own markets for consumer goods. What is clear, however, is that commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier' was profitable, and this was indicated by the fact that per capita incomes for Japanese sex workers were the highest in the region. [163]

The flow of profits from sex workers to aspiring Japanese pearl boat-owners was probably not as simple as the *Bulletin* article made out. The original source for the *Bulletin* article, an official government report on Thursday Island's brothels, found that mechanisms for the distribution of profits was obscure. [164] Under conditions of bondage, a portion of women's incomes was returned to the brothel owner (or pimp) who had bought her 'debt' from the procurer, and, indirectly, this money flowed back into trans-regional trafficking networks.[165] Bill Mihalopoulos argues that the system of bondage that tied a sex worker to her employer was designed to 'work against the women' at least until the point at which a broker had recovered his costs. However, Mihalopoulos also shows how these economies were traversed by kinship ties and 'communal networks of solidarity,' and that poor, rural women moved strategically within them. [166] Raelene Francis makes the point that Japanese sex workers, having paid off their 'debt' after four-five years' service, would

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[162] Ambaras, *Japan's Imperial Underworlds*. 175
[163] Sachiko Sone has pointed out that sex work on remote Australian frontier outposts attracted higher rates of pay than the same work in colonial ports closer to home. Quoting an 1896 Japan Mail report she noted that per capita income for Japanese overseas sex workers in Australia was 400 yen per month on average, as compared to 200 yen in India, 120 yen in Singapore, and 100 yen in Hongkong. Sachiko Sone, "The Karayuki-San of Asia, 1868-1938: The Role of Prostitutes Overseas in Japanese Economic and Social Development" (M. A Thesis, Murdoch university, Murdoch Universit), http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/id/eprint/50853. 105
[164] David Sissons, "Karayuki-San: Japanese Prostitutes in Australia, 1887–1916 (I & II)," *Historical Studies,* Vol. 17, no. 68, (1977), https://doi.org/10.1080/10314617708595555.331 331
[165] Bill Mihalopoulos, "世界か Women, Overseas Sex Work and Globalization in Meiji," *The Asia Pacific Journal -Japan Focus* 10, no. 35:1 (August 2012): 24.13
[166] Mihalopoulos. 13-15.

have sought 'more control over their work',[167] and this probably involved new kinds of unequal partnerships in the industries of commercial sex and pearling. The colonial press made much of the sexual and moral taint which profits from commercial sex carried and the sense that these profits were both 'easy' and 'dirty' money played into arguments about 'unfair competition'. From this set of impressions, a conspiratorially-minded reader, culturally conditioned by the migrant-invader narrative might easily conclude that profits form the Japanese migrant sex industry were being mobilized as part of an ethnic plot to gain a foothold into the Australian colonies.

Smuggled Women. Unruly Men: (Il)legalities at the Border

Another way that Japanese women became enmeshed in anxieties about an eventual Japanese colonization of Queensland was through allegations that Japanese migrants, including and especially those managing sex workers, were acting with impunity in their encounters with territorial borders and the legal strictures that made up everyday life in northern Queensland. This argument was developed within colonial government and the press, and while it was primarily focused on the trickle of Japanese women landing unofficially in boats on the north Queensland coast, it was also produced through reporting on the everyday encounters of Japanese migrants with police and government officials. This thread of the colonization debate is particularly interesting for the way it produced Japanese sex workers (il)legal subjectivity.

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[167] Raelene Frances, "'White Slaves' and White Australia: Prostitution and Australian Society1," *Australian Feminist Studies* 19, no. 44 (July 2004): 185–200, https://doi.org/10.1080/0816464042000226483. 189

The most common representation of Japanese migrant sex workers in the Australian press, in public debates and in government reports in the 1890s was as abductees and trafficked commodities. Sensationalist stories about smuggling operations gone wrong, such as, the gruesome deaths and near deaths of twelve women trapped in the coal hauler, Fushiki-maru in 1890 were widely reported in international media, and they produced powerful and lasting impressions of tragic and helpless victims.[168] While abduction narratives did not always absolve Japanese women of criminal responsibility, they generally portrayed them as dupes, 'blinded by stories of easy wealth' and framed their mobility as a social and legal problem to be dealt with through discourses control and protection.[169] In colonial Queensland the framing of Japanese migrant women as abductees and illicit goods highlights two conflicts. First, it signals a struggle between the state and migrants over governance at the border. Here, the cross-border smuggling. of women played into a process of 'illegalization,' whereby state administrators mobilised migrants' 'unruliness' and 'ungovernability' to create a norm about migration as an orderly and regulated flow.[170] Second, the opportunity to focus on the 'illegal' arrivals of women as a border violation, quarantined from the larger debate over Japanese migration, allowed colonial administrators, in a limited way, to buttress an uncertain settler sovereignty, compromised and weakened by imperial capitalism's overlapping sovereign claims on territory, labour markets, and natural resources.

When 21-year-old Usa Hashimoto was apprehended and interrogated after turning up on Thursday Island in Queensland without a passport in December 1897, John Douglas, sent a copy of her interrogation to the Home Secretary, Horace Tozer in Brisbane. Attached to it was a memo summarizing her case as the 'alleged abduction of Japanese women' and

[168] Mihalopoulos, *Sex in Japan's Globalization, 1870-1930*. 26-28, 47-48
[169] Mihalopoulos. 48
[170] On processes of 'Illegalization'see Galemba, "Illegality and Invisibility at Margins and Borders."

noting that her arrival 'represents a curious and not very attractive phase of Japanese colonization as at present existing'. [171] However, in an interview Douglas gave to the Brisbane Telegraph on the same day, he denied 'any sign of what may be called colonization on the part of the Japanese' adding:

'there are no women amongst them, and very few who are recognised as wives. There are some, but not many. Where immigration is simply that of males, it cannot be considered as a lasting element of our population.' [172]

Douglas wavered. He seemed intent in his responses on reassuring the public that the fear of Japanese 'inundation' had 'subsided,' a calculated piece of official messaging, perhaps, to promote the impression that the borders were under control. He also played down the threat of colonization on the basis that it could not be achieved by a group of 'single' males and a handful of sex workers but required settlement, a wife and family. At the same time, Hashimoto's case clearly troubled Douglas, something evident earlier in the interview, where he referred to the problem of the continual arrival of migrants 'without passports from Hong Kong,' who were 'not a very desirable class, especially the women.'[173] He noted that 'the evil is an increasing one and ought to be checked' and affirmed the Japanese government's own definition of the women as 'contraband,' who had been illegally 'smuggled out' of the country. The gap between the two documents is puzzling. At least publicly, Douglas seems to have wanted to portray Japanese migration as an orderly and regulated flow. Thursday Island was a focal point for the Japanese 'yellow peril' migrant-invasion discourse, and as a result, his management of the issue would have been consequential for his reputation as an administrator. Douglas also had

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[171] Douglas, "Correspondence Re Alleged Abduction of a Japanese Woman. Papers of D.C.S. Sissons."
[172] "HON. JOHN DOUGLAS," *Telegraph* (Brisbane, Qld., December 13, 1897), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article172384326.
[173] "HON. JOHN DOUGLAS."

local powerbrokers with ties to Brisbane and Tokyo to consider, [174] and quelling the sense of crisis around Japanese migration would have protected the business interests of the local elite. Given settler opposition to indentured labour schemes, drawing attention to border-crossing sex workers may have helped contain the potential for settler protest by turning the existential threat of migrant-invasion into a more manageable border violation.

Even as the cross-border smuggling of sex workers was reduced to a manageable border violation, it's possible to read the framing of Japanese sex workers as 'contraband' and trafficked commodities in the light of the need to shore up fragile sovereignty claims. David Ambaras, writing on transgressive mobilities in the borderlands between China and Japan, points out that practices of 'contrabanding' and 'smuggling' give state actors access to a rhetoric of moral denunciation of the threat to territorial integrity, even as it exploits and extends 'state capacity and sovereignty claims' [175] Although Douglas' interview in the Brisbane telegraph seems to have walked a delicate line between competing and overlapping interests of imperial capitalism and settler self-government, Douglas was known to be a supporter of federation and the White Australia idea as well as the Chinese invasion imaginary. [176] Following Ambaras' observation about the connection between border violations and sovereignty, Douglas' public denouncement of the cross-border smuggling of 'illegalized' sexually transgressive women may be read in a limited way as an attempt to define sovereign borders in a self-governing settler state still very much under the sway of imperial governance.

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[174] For example, the Burns Philp and Company was heavily involved in indentured labour recruitment, bringing pearl divers and sugar labourers to Queensland. Robert Philp entered Queensland politics in 1886. See David Carlisle Stanley Sissons, "The Japanese in the Australian Pearling Industry," *Queensland Heritage* 3, no. 10 (1979): 9–27. For Japanese elites see Torajiro Satō, a Japanese, lawyer, businessman was registered at the 1897 Pearl Shell commission as Japanese Government Representative Sissons, "'Satō, Torajiro (1864–1928).'"

[175] Ambaras, *Japan's Imperial Underworlds*. 22

[176] R.B Joyce, "'Douglas, John (1828–1904),'" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography Australian National University), accessed June 16, 2022, https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/douglas-john-3430/text5221.

As public voices of settler self-government, the nationalist *Bulletin* and the labour-oriented *Worker* were more resolute than colonial administrators in denouncing illegalities at the border and connecting these to a sense of threatened settler sovereignty. From mid-1897 and into 1898, in the context of public debates about Queensland's adoption of Britain and Japan's 1894 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, these publications argued repeatedly that Japan's diplomatic ties with Britain were giving Japanese migrants' special privileges and unfair advantages at the border. Queensland had decided to enter the treaty in April 1897, just a few months after colonial premiers passed a unanimous resolution to legislate against Japanese immigration by applying the earlier ban on Chinese to 'all coloured labourers.[177] This was portrayed in the press as a sneaky 'back door' deal and a betrayal of the other colonies, of the federation idea and of the white race. [178] The *Bulletin* and the *Worker* were sceptical about the special previsions negotiated by the Queensland government to exclude Japanese artisans and labourers from the treaty, and they called public attention to the way emigration companies circumvented the new regulations. In September 1898, The *Bulletin* highlighted the way the new immigration rules could be gamed with a report on the arrival at Thursday Island of fifty-nine Japanese migrants with passports issued for a different colony, the Northern Territory. Portraying the Queensland and Japanese governments' efforts to regulate their borders as disingenuous, the report claimed that 'when the first seething of the hubbub is over, the little brown man (and his donah*) will get there all the same.'[179]

*Donah: woman or girlfriend

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[177] Sissons, *Bridging Australia and Japan*. 95

[178] "Stray Notes.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 31, 1897), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70932007.

[179] ""Q. Government," *The bulletin*, (September 10, 1898), http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-721946679.

The continued arrival of Japanese women into the colony was seen as a particularly stark measure of the failure of border regulations keep out 'undesirable' migrants. The *Worker* claimed that Japanese migrants were managing to evade regulatory procedures, pointing, as evidence, to a news story about the arrival of Japanese passengers, including six women, who 'it is stated on good authority…obtained passages under fake pretences deceiving the Japanese authorities.' [180] The *Worker* directed a certain amount of frustration at migrants and migration agents, who they perceived as wilfully flouting regulations, and it pointed to the ineffectiveness of the new Japanese screening protocols, part of the 1896 Emigrant Protection Law (*Imin hogohō*), which had been designed to ensure that the wrong kind of prospective emigrants, especially lower-class women, were not granted a passport.[181] However, the *Worker* was most scathing about what it perceived was a lack of political will on the part of the Queensland government, a group it saw as playing into the hands of those who 'wish to have the East for Queensland'.[182] This allusion to international conspiracy of British 'imperial' and 'eastern' colonization went to the heart of the problem of settler self-government, a situation where, as Jeremy Martens points out, settler states, despite winning control of their 'internal affairs,' were expected to yield to Britain's imperial and diplomatic interests on external affairs.[183] The Japanese 'migrant-invasion' and 'colonization' imaginary was, therefore, deeply connected to the incompleteness of settler sovereignty due to its subservience within the British Empire.

In this context local, everyday events at the border: a drunken dispute or a sexual affront took on political value, calling up fragile and incomplete sovereignties. The *Worker* complained that non-white labourers were being treated too leniently by the courts, giving as an example a case of two South Sea Islander men, who, charged with 'drunk and

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[180] "Stray Notes.," July 31, 1897.
[181] Sawada, "Culprits and Gentlemen."
[182] "Stray Notes.," July 31, 1897.
[183] Martens, *Empire and Asian Migration*.2

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disorderly conduct' after a big Friday night in the Japanese quarters in Childers, near Bundaberg, were issued such small fines and short prison sentences that 'it would be a wise and economic act if the Government appoint Jap and Kanaka* magistrates…to save expenses'.[184] The sense that systems of migrant governance, especially the law, were being manipulated against the interests of race and nation is even more clearly present in a report from the 19th of February 1898. With the headline, 'Annexation of Thursday Island', the article reported on the four-day trial of a Japanese migrant, Nakane, who was charged with indecency (probably drunkenness) and resisting arrest.[185] Claiming that favouritism of the Japanese community had led the magistrate, John Douglas, to dismiss the 'resisting arrest' charge, the article suggested that a two-tier system of justice was in play: 'kind treatment for the Jap lawbreaker, the policeman's club for the white fellow.' Drawing a parallel between European annexation of Chinese territory and Japanese 'annexation' of Thursday Island, the article highlights how everyday encounters between migrants and structures of governance at the border, here a local court case, were brought into the realm of international geopolitics in order to make commentary about sovereignty and borders.

*Kanaka: A racialized term for South Sea Islander/Pacific Islander

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[184] "Wedensday , July 28.," *Worker* (Brisbane, Qld., July 31, 1897), http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70932035.
[185] "Bystanders' Notebook: Annexation of Thursday Island," *Worker* Brisbane,February 19, 1898 http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70926214.

This chapter began by considering the historical continuities between narratives of Chinese and Japanese 'migrant invasion' against a background of fragile and uncertain settler sovereignty, and it argued that the focus of these narratives on penetrable and insecure borders reinforced settler claims on the territory and the nation. The chapter has considered the different forms migrant 'invasion' and 'colonization' narratives took— from stories of subversively aspirational migrant-settlers to depictions of labour market colonization to the construction of an '(il)legal' subjectivity of cross-border traffickers and petty criminals, the ultimate expression of migrant ungovernability. I have situated the migrant 'invasion' and 'colonization' narratives that emerged in the Australian colonies within the global context of geopolitical shifts brought on by East Asian modernization, drawing attention to the way Australian imaginings preceded and intersected with European 'yellow peril' discourses in the early twentieth century and identifying where they converged with and departed from Japanese discourses of migrant expansion and settler-emigration. Japanese migrants in commercial sex had a small but interesting role to play in these narratives, on one hand, as the financial supporters of Japanese commercial supremacy, and on the other hand, as cross-border smugglers and illicit commodities. In both cases, transgressive sexuality amplified the sense of threat, creating the occasion for a decisive assertion of sovereignty.

CONCLUSION

This thesis began with a telegraph message between colonial officials. The message reported a decision not to act to confine Japanese commercial sex to a space regulated by the colonial state of Queensland, but to count on or necessitate the activation of regulatory instruments at the border of another state—Japan. The juxtaposition of these two forms of regulation, worked out in the politics of international relations and empire, goes to the heart of the problem of governing a mobile, elusive, and disorderly movement of migrants.

As I argued in the introduction, the colonial state of Queensland was one actor in an 'assemblage of power' which mobilized biopower, sovereignty and the 'de-facto' power of employment and labour to administer the lives and labour power of Japanese migrants in commercial sex on the Australian 'frontier,' forming a regime of transnational biopolitical governance. Understanding the 'unique and conflictual ways' the border brings this 'assemblage of power' together requires us to unlink the now naturalized pairings of nation, state, and sovereignty from their hyphenated forms. Acknowledging that various actors make claims on the state and on sovereignty, it becomes possible to see how political struggles shape the governance of migrants' lives and labour at the border.

In Queensland, white labour activists and middle-class Japanese migrants lobbied the state, making it *want* to know about 'unruly' migrants on the margins. Struggles within diasporic communities also drew in the state to restore 'public order' and good governance. Sometimes agencies of the state created sovereign spaces of 'exception,' such as when the actions of the police went beyond the law to 'give' disorderly migrants 'an object lesson,' or alternatively in the use of contagious diseases legislation to target specific groups of women for confinement or medical surveillance. However, governing the circulation of 'unknown' bodies and

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'unknown' germs happened in less obviously interventionist ways too. The discursive mobilization of race organised the spaces in which Aboriginal, white, and non-white migrant populations could live, work, and socialise. So too, racist social theories naturalised 'letting' Aboriginal women 'die' from venereal disease while implementing policies to protect white citizens and the productivity of Asian male labour. States were often frustrated by the impunity with which traffickers, pimps, and brothel administrators conducted business, but acts of self-governance, like privately organised screenings for venereal disease, were something the state accommodated.

In the public sphere, writers and readers of the radical-nationalist and labour-oriented press combined British and American antislavery; a settler-version of a 'standards of civilization' discourse; and a hardening set of racial taxonomies to create a racialized imaginary which portrayed Chinese and Japanese migrants as slavedrivers and all Asian migrants as slaves— in both cases the antithesis of democratic citizenship. The political struggle over the sugar and pearling industries' 'preference' for Asian indentured labour contributed to the production of race as a binary. One form of labour was free, white, and democratic. The other was unfree, non-white, and anti-democratic, either because it was servile or because it was despotic. In the labour public sphere this binary was adapted to fit a critique of capitalism, but it still overlayed older divisions based on civilizational progress producing Chinese and Japanese allies of capitalism. The racialization of non-white victims of capitalism as 'slaves' prevented expressions of solidarity within the labour public sphere.

Japanese gender and sexual relations were the other site for constructing an antithesis of democratic citizenship. The clearest example of this came in the context of the movement for women's rights, where reporting on the 'slave' status of Japanese wives and sex workers highlighted Japanese social stagnation against Australian social progress. The labour movement was strongly committed to women's rights, yet its need to protect both male and female workers

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from 'cheap Asian slavery' through the 'family wage' paradoxically reinforced their role as 'citizen wives' and 'citizen mothers' within a rigid set of sexual gender and family relations.

In a second set of public debates the radical-nationalist and labour press developed a series of narratives which featured Japanese migrants as the protagonists in an 'invasion' or 'colonization' narrative. I argued that by highlighting vulnerabilities at the border, these narratives became a key site for imagining and strengthening popular settler sovereignty. The Australian and settler migrant 'invasion' narrative linked to a cultural imaginary which highlighted penetrable and insecure borders. I considered its distinctiveness in relation to Europe's 'yellow peril' discourses, but I also identified where they intersected. I also drew attention to Australian interpretations of Japanese discourses of expansionist migration and concluded that there was no evidence of substantial engagement.

The Japanese 'migrant invader' took on different forms, ranging from the aspirational settler-upstart to the migrant-worker 'stealing our jobs' to the trafficker of women and the petty criminals. These depictions coupled with others racialized imaginings of sexual despots and servile sex slaves. What's remarkable in the reporting of public debates in the *Bulletin* and the *Worker* is how often these 'othering' framings mask points of connection that made moments of solidarity invisible. White settlers and non-white migrants were aspirational; both protested poor working conditions and moved on from jobs they didn't like. Differentiated regimes of settler governance made the gap between settlers and marginalized others difficult to bridge.

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