

# Imagined ruralities and the spatial regulation of sex work in Queensland

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School of Justice  
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# STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

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The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements of an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made.

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Date: December 2017

# Abstract

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This research examines the importance of space as a socially constructed concept in political discourse on sex work. In particular, this thesis analyses the extent to which the rural imaginary, and its related values of Christian conservatism, and monogamous heterosexual families, has influenced the creation of the brothel exemption provision in state sex work legislation for small rural towns. This thesis will demonstrate that rural and urban political attitudes to sex work are surprisingly similar, ranging from a moral threat to a public nuisance, or to a grudging acceptance. However rural politicians, through the lens of the rural imaginary, are given more permission to articulate – more openly and more often – a morally conservative position on the disruption of sex work to their rural communities. Moreover, their grudging acceptance is most often linked to mining industries in close proximity, and the threat that unaccompanied men pose to the rural imaginary. The thesis concludes that the concerns raised by rural political representatives regarding sex work in rural contexts are most indicative of their anxieties about the transformation of ‘traditional’ rural spaces to modern urban spaces. Sex work thus becomes an exemplar of the disruption that the urban can make to the rural.

**Key words:** *sex work, rural, rurality, space, regulation, rural imaginary*

## List of Abbreviations

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<b>ABS</b>	Australian Bureau of Statistics
<b>CJC</b>	Criminal Justice Commission
<b>CMC</b>	Crime and Misconduct Commission
<b>DILGP</b>	Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning
<b>DSDIP</b>	Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning
<b>MP</b>	Member for Parliament
<b>NSW</b>	New South Wales
<b>PLA</b>	Prostitution Licensing Authority
<b>QLD</b>	Queensland
<b>QUT</b>	Queensland University of Technology
<b>UHREC</b>	University Human Research Ethics Committee

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# Chapter 1 – Introduction & Overview

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## 1.0 Introduction

This thesis examines the importance of space as a concept and a social construction in political discourse on sex work. In particular, this thesis analyses the extent to which a reliance on the rural imaginary by Queensland political representatives has influenced the creation of the brothel exemption provision in state sex work legislation for small rural towns. Whilst political representatives actively engage with and perpetuate an imagined rurality supporting the differential brothel policy applied, this research will demonstrate that rural and urban political attitudes towards legalised sex work are inherently similar. The findings suggest that instead, concerns raised by political representatives regarding sex work in rural contexts are indicative of anxieties about the transformation of ‘traditional’ rural spaces to modern urban spaces. Essentially, this transformation is seen to result in a loss of cultural and symbolic identity which is reinforced through the rural imaginary.

## 1.1 Background & Impetus for Research

The spatial governance of sex work is a highly politicised practice. The creation and implementation of regulatory approaches for such activity ignites strong debate amongst policymakers, whilst being driven by various political and ideological agendas. Predominantly, these legislative frameworks aim to limit and contain the prevalence and visibility of sex work strictly to spaces deemed

‘appropriate’, such as in industrial areas and away from family-orientated locations. This restrictive spatial regulation of sex work is evident in Queensland.

Licensed brothels and sole operator sex workers can legally operate throughout the state (Prostitution Licensing Authority, 2017); however both are subject to strict regulatory conditions. For example, sole operator sex workers are required to work alone and out of public view and licensed brothels must adhere to location and sizing requirements (PLA, 2017). These include brothels being located at least 200 metres from residential areas, hospitals, schools, parks, and places of worship, and operating with a maximum of five working rooms (Sustainable Planning Act 2009, sch. 1). All other forms of sex work are deemed illegal in Queensland, including street sex work, unlicensed brothels, and escort services.

Despite the state-wide legal sanctioning of licensed brothels in Queensland, a provision within planning and development legislation allows rural towns to be deemed ‘brothel-free’. Local councils of towns with populations of less than 25,000 have legislative authority to apply for an exemption from licensed brothel development, prohibiting such establishments in their jurisdictions, indefinitely (Sustainable Planning Act 2009, sch.1). These local councils are not required to justify their request for brothel exemption (as eligibility is simply based on a population threshold), nor are they expected to regularly review their exempt status once received. This is interesting considering there are more than 200 towns throughout Queensland that have successfully received an exemption from brothel development since the legislation was

enacted in 2000 (PLA 2016, 24). Whilst this provision does not completely prohibit all forms of legal sex work in these areas (as an exempt status does not apply to sole operator sex workers), it does raise questions regarding the initial and continued influence behind the implementation of differential policy for one form of legalised sex work in small Queensland towns.

A similar population restriction for brothel development is practiced in the state of Nevada in the United States. Despite sex work being criminalised throughout the US, several counties in Nevada allow for the legal operation of brothels (Brents 2016, 17). However, in contrast to Queensland's approach, the population threshold in Nevada aims to exclude brothels from larger city areas and restrict to small rural counties. The law states that only counties with population of 700,000 or less may legally grant a license for the operation of a brothel (Spindler 2017, 71; Brents and Hausbeck 2001, 314). The aim of the approach in Nevada is to avoid the encouragement of legal sex work in largely populated and tourist-dominated areas, such as Las Vegas (Brents and Hausbeck 2001, 323). The same justification cannot be applied to the Queensland approach.

With limited existing scholarly literature on sex work specifically in rural Australian contexts (see Scott et al., 2006; Scott, 2016); there is little empirical support for the brothel exemption provision in terms of significant differences between the impact of legal brothels in rural versus urban spaces. Instead, this thesis suggests that the legislation has been underpinned by two key assumptions: firstly, that an inherent difference exists between towns under the population threshold (rural) in comparison to those towns over the threshold

(urban); and secondly, because of this apparent difference, sex work is considered to be an inappropriate disruption in those smaller rural towns.

It is hypothesised that this perceived difference between rural and urban spaces, and the disruption that sex work brings to rural areas, stems from a promotion of the concept of the 'rural idyll' (Bell, 1997). The rural idyll is an imagined conceptualisation of rural areas representing idyllic, harmonious, conflict-free country sides, where sex work does not belong (Scott et al. 2006, 153; Scott 2016, 76). In such a context, the brothel exemption provision applied in Queensland continues to feed into a 'rural imaginary' perpetuating a dichotomous and homogenous understanding of rural and urban spaces.

The purpose of this research is to therefore examine how political discourse pertaining to sex work in Queensland constructs and engages with the rural imaginary in order to gain insight into the creation and continued inclusion of the brothel exemption provision in Queensland sex work legislation. Additionally, this thesis will examine how sex work has been positioned in relation to the constructed understandings of rural spaces in Queensland, highlighting how such activity simultaneously perpetuates, idealises, and challenges the rural imaginary.

It is important to highlight that this research will not attempt to measure the overall effectiveness of the current legislative framework, nor will it argue for an alternative approach to be adopted in Queensland for addressing legalised sex work. Instead, the research engages in a conceptual analysis of how socially and

politically constructed ideas about space, rurality and sex work become influential in government policy and legislation. Based on interviews with rural political representatives across the state of Queensland and examination of parliamentary debates, this thesis will add to the growing body of literature on rural sex work. In particular, it will demonstrate how political constructions of space and rurality utilise an imagined rural idyll to offer united opposition to sex work, which is positioned as not only morally disruptive to the rural imaginary but also as indicative of the fear of urban encroachment into rural space.

## 1.2 Research objectives, questions, and method

The main objectives of this research are to:

- Identify how the rural imaginary has influenced regulatory approaches to sex work in rural spaces in Queensland;
- Determine whether the current attitudes of rural political representatives regarding sex work in rural spaces align or conflict with the brothel exemption provision.

To achieve these objectives, this research is guided by the following research questions:

### **Research Question 1**

How is the rural imaginary constructed in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia?

### **Research Question 2**

How do notions of space play out in discussions of sex work in rural settings?

- a. In existing literature?
- b. In the data collected for this project?

### **Research Question 3**

How does political discourse pertaining to sex work in Queensland engage with the rural imaginary?

- a. How is the rural imaginary perpetuated/idealised?
- b. How is the rural imaginary challenged/disrupted?

As will be outlined in more detail throughout the following chapters, this project uses multiple sources of data and existing literature to answer the research questions. Original data was collected from semi-structured face-to-face interviews with local and state Queensland government representatives. Additionally, secondary data was sourced from online Queensland Parliamentary proceedings (Hansard).

**Research Question 1** will be answered by reviewing key theoretical and conceptual writings on rural spaces and rurality. This discussion will identify how the rural imaginary is constructed in contemporary Australian society and will form the basis of analysis for the remainder of the thesis. Briefly, the rural imaginary in contemporary Australian society is underpinned by key historical processes and iconic stereotypical characteristics which depict rural as being completely opposite to urban. Through this imagining, rural populations are presented as homogenous, sharing the same values, morals and lifestyles. Rural

spaces are therefore deemed safe and protected from negative and/or anti-social behaviours and issues which, according to the rural imaginary, only exist in the metropolis.

**Research Question 2** will be answered in two parts, beginning with a review of existing literature to highlight how notions of space and spatiality are discussed and studied in relation to sex work, followed by a comparison of these ideas to this project's data. Briefly, existing literature focusing on the spatial elements of sex work and the sex industry are largely focused towards and relevant to urban contexts. Whilst previous studies on sex work in rural settings do exist, this research is limited in illustrating the spatial elements of sex work and the sex industry that are specific to rural contexts. This thesis will therefore contribute to this gap in the literature.

The second component of **Research Question 2** will be answered throughout the later sections of the thesis through an examination of the collected data from Parliamentary proceedings and interviews conducted for this project. Specifically, the findings from this research demonstrate that space and spatiality play an important role in the positioning of sex work as threatening to or inappropriate for rural spaces, with political representatives highlighting issues of transparency, proximity and visibility as specific to rural space.

Finally, **Research Question 3** will be answered throughout the final chapters of the thesis by examining the collected parliamentary and interview data to determine how political discourse pertaining to sex work in Queensland

engages with the rural imaginary. More specifically, the discussion will analyse how political representatives simultaneously perpetuate, idealise, challenge and disrupt the rural imaginary in their discussions about sex work. Briefly, political representatives in this study perpetuate and idealise the rural imaginary by positioning sex work as a threat to rural spaces and rurality and associating such activity to metropolitan regions. However, these same representatives also challenge and disrupt the rural imaginary by indicating levels of tolerance and/or acceptance of sex work for rural settings, suggesting that such activity is in some instances 'necessary' for rural communities. These findings will be examined in more detail throughout the later chapters of the thesis.

## 1.3 Terminology

### *1.3.1 Defining sex work*

It is important to clarify and define key terms that will be used throughout this thesis. Sex work and the sex industry are broad terms encompassing many different individuals, acts, and locations. As outlined by Agustin (2005, 619) for example, participants of the sex industry are not limited to those who sell sex directly, but can also include business owners, independent contractors, and non-sexual employees such as bar and security staff. Additionally, sex work is available through physical sites such as brothels and massage parlours, or through erotic phone lines or virtual websites (Agustin 2005, 622). Whilst there are significant diversities with sex work and the sex industry, this thesis will be predominantly focus on one dimension of this activity.

'Sex work' and 'prostitution' will be used interchangeably to refer to the commercial exchange of sex acts and services between a worker and a client (Overall 1992, 709). However, it is acknowledged that there is political and ideological significance attributed to these terms. As will be unpacked in more detail throughout the literature review in Chapter 4, 'prostitution' is described as a pejorative term conveying strong ideas about morality and exploitation, whereas 'sex work' signifies ideas of choice, liberty and empowerment (Prestage and Perkins 1994, 7; Koken 2010, 31). These two terms and the theoretical positions that they speak to, are influenced in significant part, by opposing feminist perspectives, and are used to support a range of political outcomes from complete eradication, through to decriminalisation or legalisation of such activity.

Radical feminists for example use language such as prostitution, prostitute, prostituted woman and prostitution abuser, to reinforce the claim that such activity represents the quintessential example of patriarchal gender relations within society (Jeffreys 1997, 2-5). Radical feminists advocate for the complete eradication and prohibition of all forms of prostitution as they argue it contributes to the overall oppression, subordination and commodification of women and their bodies (Barry 1995, 24; Jeffreys 1997, 2; O'Brien, Hayes and Carpenter 2013, 26). This perspective rejects the idea that prostitution can be freely participated in or voluntarily consented to, as radical feminists consider this activity to always be premised on sexual exploitation (Jeffreys 2009, 8-10). Radical feminists align the act of prostitution with the act of rape, with the only clear distinction between the two being an exchange of money (Dworkin 1993, 3). Radical feminism suggests

that beatings, rape and murder are thus 'occupational hazards' of prostitution (Barry 1995, 36).

In contrast, 'sex as work' and 'pro-rights' perspectives driven by liberal feminism advocate for the regulation of sex work with legalisation and decriminalisation the two options most often discussed (Outshoorn 2005, 145). Preferred terminologies from a liberal feminist perspective is sex work, sex workers, and sex industry in an attempt to normalise and promote this activity as a form of labour autonomously chosen by those involved (Agustin, 2007). Liberal feminists argue against the use of terminology such as prostitution and prostitute as stigmatising and denoting deviance and criminality (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 9).

As an advocate for sex worker rights and a supporter of the decriminalisation and normalisation of the sex industry, my preferred terminologies for this thesis are sex work and sex workers. However, as with any research on this particular topic in a political and/or policy context, it is impossible to completely avoid the use of the terms prostitution and prostitute. This is because such terminology is, and always has been, the dominant language used in political discourse, particularly in state legislation and parliamentary debates. Therefore, to ensure accuracy and consistency when referring to relevant Queensland legislation or quotes from the data collected for this project, the terms prostitution and prostitute will be used in this thesis where necessary.

Additionally, despite the diversification of the sex industry in contemporary society which includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and

queer (LGBTQ) sex work (Smith and Laing 2012, 517), it is acknowledged that this activity most commonly involves a female sex worker selling sex to a heterosexually identified man (Hubbard 2012, 60). Thus, the latter configuration of sex work will be implicit in each reference to the terms sex work or prostitution throughout this thesis, unless otherwise specified.

### *1.3.2 Defining rural*

Defining the term rural presents complexity due to the widespread inconsistencies within definitions utilised in scholarly literature. For example, rural is often defined as an objective entity which can be measured by population size and density, size of geographical land masses, or the distance from metropolitan centres (Pugh and Cheers, 2010). Using physical geography to define and/or measure rural and rurality is however considered flawed as it fails to understand and acknowledge the lived experiences of those living in these contexts (Maidment 2012, 5). Instead, more commonly within academic discussions of rural spaces and rurality, focus is directed towards the cultural and symbolic dimensions of these contexts.

Rural has for example been described as one end of the oldest and most pervasive geographical dichotomies (Woods 2011, 3); as an evident recurrence on a social or geographical continuum (Pahl, 1966); and also as an imagined space that is culturally and historically symbolic (Cloke 2006, 18-19). These definitions have been influential in shaping social understandings and ideas about rural spaces, which tend to align with the perception of such spaces as in complete contrast to urban spaces.

Often reinforced through two main paradigms – the ‘rural idyll’ or the ‘rural horror’ (i.e. glamorised, tranquil landscapes versus scary, ‘backward’ countryside) (Bell, 1997) – rural spaces are perpetuated through popular culture and media discourses as both inherently different to, and in opposition to, those spaces considered urban. This dichotomous positioning of the rural against the urban, however, ultimately suggests that there are only two distinct types of social spaces, both with specific characteristics and ‘ways of life’. Through this process, diverse cultural realities of different geographical spaces located outside of cities are simply compressed into a single, uniform template of ‘rural life’ (Hogg and Carrington 2003, 296-6). However, not only does this approach fail to acknowledge a blurring of the boundaries between rural and urban spaces, but it also fundamentally ignores how ideas of place and space in the contemporary world are socially constructed and imagined (Cloke 2006, 18; Little and Austin 1996, 102; Bourke and Lockie 2001, 8; Harper 1997, 180; Williams, 1973). These theoretical and philosophical origins and perspectives of rural and rurality will be further explored in Chapter 3 of this thesis, where the discussion will unpack the rural imaginary as a concept and a social construction.

In the context of this research however, the term rural will be used in reference to geographical locations in Queensland that are located outside of the large metropolitan areas in the state, such as the greater Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions. <sup>1</sup> This definition is influenced by the brothel exemption

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to map of Queensland in Appendix 1

provision included in state legislation which specifies small (rural) towns as having populations of less than 25,000 people.

#### 1.4 Conclusion and Chapter Outline

This chapter has provided an overview of the research project's focus, aims, objectives and research questions. The aim of this research is to examine the importance of space as a socially constructed concept in political discourse on sex work and analyse how a reliance on the rural imaginary has influenced the creation of the brothel exemption provision in state sex work legislation for small rural towns. The thesis argues that the concerns raised by rural political representatives regarding sex work in rural contexts are most indicative of their anxieties about the transformation of 'traditional' rural spaces to modern urban spaces. Sex work thus becomes an exemplar of the disruption that the urban can make to the rural. The following section will now outline the structure and content for each of the remaining thesis chapters.

**Chapter Two** begins with providing a historical overview of sex work and related legislative policy in Queensland. Following this, the chapter provides a detailed overview of the current legislative framework for sex work in Queensland, including the brothel exemption provision, along with a snapshot of the current context of the sex industry in Queensland and Australia. This chapter illustrates that sex work as a topic of political debate in Queensland has had an extensive history with political and legislative regimes aiming to address and regulate such activity throughout the state. The discussion also highlights several

areas of concern regarding the current framework applied to the sex industry in Queensland.

**Chapter Three** reviews key theoretical and conceptual literature focusing on rural spaces and rurality to identify how the rural imaginary has been constructed in contemporary Australian society. This discussion will begin by examining work of classical theorists, followed by more contemporary approaches and perspectives used towards examining rural spaces and rurality. This discussion will also review key literature which discusses rural spaces and rurality in the context of Australia to highlight how traditional, predominantly English and European perspectives of what is rural and rurality compare to the Australian context. This chapter will identify how the Australian rural imaginary presents rural as representative of Christian conservatism, monogamous heterosexual families, and cohesive safe communities; all of which are contrasted to representations of urban depicting disconnected, secular, and deviant populations occupying unsafe spaces.

**Chapter Four** offers a review of existing literature focusing on the spatial contours and aspects of sex work to identify the influences behind the spatial regulation of such activity. As will be further discussed, this body of literature is predominantly situated within and in reference to urban contexts. The chapter reviews the small body of empirical studies focused on rural sex work specifically to identify what is known about sex work in rural contexts and also, to determine whether such research offers an understanding of the spatial regulation of such activity. These studies of rural sex work are limited in offering spatial

understandings and influences behind regulatory approaches to such activity. Following this, the chapter outlines the two spatial paradigms in which sex work is predominantly studied and discussed.

The first paradigm includes *types of sex work*, in which the physical spaces of where such activity exists and occurs is examined. These include indoor versus outdoor forms of sex work, such as brothels versus street sex work. Through this paradigm, evident social objections to these different forms of sex work are identified, which are highly influential for government policy aiming to regulate such activity. These social objections include factors relating to morality, public nuisance, safety, crime, and health.

The second spatial paradigm in which sex work is studied and discussed is *regulatory approaches* used towards such activity. These include discussions about the political and bureaucratic regulation of sex work enforced through criminal justice frameworks (for example, criminalisation, legalisation and decriminalisation), which delineate aspects of sex work as within either legal or illegal spaces. Additionally, through these frameworks, sex work can be restricted to or prohibited from particular spaces, both public and private. These include brothels being restricted to industrial areas and prohibited from residential spaces, along with sole operator sex workers being required to work alone from private premises. Additionally, the second paradigm includes discussions about the moral regulation of sex work, where sex work is spatially governed and regulated through processes that are influenced by public moralities, social norms

and narratives, and also moral geographies, where sex work is identified as a deviant sexuality polluting the space in which it occupies.

**Chapter Five** will outline the methodological approaches used for this research project. This discussion will provide an overview of the project's theoretical approach, research actions, and methods used for data collection and analysis.

**Chapter Six** presents the first discussion and analysis of the research findings with a focus on how political representatives in this study construct notions of rural and rurality. This chapter identifies the three dominant frameworks that political representatives engage with to construct rural and rurality in their discussions of sex work. These include the rural-urban dichotomy, the rural-urban continuum, and the rural-urban parallel frameworks. This chapter argues that political representatives create contradictory constructions of rural spaces and rurality in their discussions about sex work and related legislation simply to further their own (or their party's) political agenda and further restrict the operation of legal sex work in Queensland.

**Chapter Seven** presents a discussion and analysis of the research findings with a focus on how political representatives position sex work in relation to the three frameworks as presented in the previous chapter. The findings demonstrate that political representatives predominantly engage with the rural-urban dichotomy framework to construct sex work as a threat to rural spaces and as an activity which conflicts with the ideals of rurality. However, many of the objections to sex work identified by political representatives through this

framework align with existing literature regarding objections to sex work in urban settings, suggesting that such attitudes are instead 'parallel'. Further analysis of the findings also demonstrates that political representatives even express levels of acceptance or tolerance for sex work in rural spaces, with some deeming the activity as 'necessary' for rural towns. These conflicting findings highlight the requirement for this research to engage in a further level of analysis by focusing on space and spatiality.

**Chapter Eight** presents the final discussion and analysis of the research findings through the context of space and spatiality. This chapter brings together the three main components of this research to highlight how notions of sex, rurality, and space are influential for government policy. By conducting a spatial analysis of the findings, this thesis identifies how political attitudes depicting sex work as a problem for rural communities are indicative of a fear or anxiety about the transformation of rural space and traditional rurality as perpetuated and underpinned by the rural imaginary. This chapter suggests that political representatives therefore portray sex work as an exemplar of the disruption that the urban can make to the rural.

Finally, **Chapter Nine** will provide a summary and conclusion of the thesis, along with recommendations for directions in future research to expand on the body of knowledge in this field.

## Chapter 2 – History of sex work in Queensland

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### 2.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the historical context of the existence of sex work and relevant legislation in Queensland. This will allow for an understanding of the influence behind the state's legislative reform for such activity over the years. Additionally, this chapter will outline the current legislative framework applied throughout Queensland and provide specific details about definitions, requirements and offences of sex work throughout the state.

### 2.1 Sex work History in Queensland, Australia

The history of sex work in Australia can be traced back to the post-colonial period. Prostitution, as it was referred to during this time, was considered an integral part of the social and economic system of the early convict colonies (Frances 1994, 29). Female prostitution was viewed as providing an outlet for the 'uncontrollable' biologically driven sexual needs of men, thus ensuring order throughout the settlements and preventing the rape of 'respectable' (i.e. upper-class) women and children (Frances 1994, 29-30; Neave 1994, 68). Thus, such activity was deemed to be inevitable and desirable, attracting relatively little attention from authorities (Sullivan 1997, 17). However, this perspective did not persist.

The mid-nineteenth century saw prostitution and other 'deviant' sexual behaviour become the targets of the changing social and moral ethos that was occurring throughout Western societies (Sullivan 1997, 18). In Australia and overseas, prostitution was starting to be perceived as a threat to public order, where prostitutes were identified as the carriers of sexually transmitted diseases (Neave 1994, 68). Legislative measures were then created and implemented to address this growing social concern. Following the approach in Britain, Australian colonies such as Queensland and Tasmania introduced *Contagious Diseases Acts* that aimed to control venereal diseases through forced registration and mandatory health checks of prostitutes (Sullivan 1997, 19). Those prostitutes who did not comply with these legislative requirements, or who were found to have a sexually-transmitted disease, were imprisoned or incarcerated in semi-penal institutions, such as lock hospitals, 'reform' homes or inebriate asylums (Wimshurst 2014, 106).

Whilst the aim of this was to remove 'deviant' women from society and prevent further spread contamination of populations (Wimshurst 2014, 106), these highly discriminatory laws instead evoked a double standard of sexual behaviour, where women were degraded and vilified for engaging in sex work, yet men were encouraged and rewarded (Frances 1994, 41-2; Sullivan 1997, 20). In Queensland, the *Contagious Diseases Act (1868)* remained in force until 1911 and was finally repealed in 1971 (Sullivan 1997, 22). Since then, sex work in Queensland has been subject to a significant amount of legislative reform.

Fast forward to late twentieth century Queensland where the *Contagious Diseases Acts* had been repealed, yet prostitution continued to be outlawed. The Queensland Government amended the *Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act (1931)* which increased the penalties by 400 per cent for prostitution-related offences, such as living off the earnings of prostitution, public solicitation and operating a brothel (Sullivan 1997, 153; Sullivan 2008, 75). This continued until the late 1980s where, despite the illegality of such activity, prostitution was generally tolerated and subject to containment strategies by authorities (Neave 1994, 74). Though street prostitution was targeted by police, brothels were generally permitted to operate with relative impunity, on the condition that workers would oblige to occasional arrests for police reporting purposes (Sullivan 2008, 75). Of course, these practices heavily contributed to widespread corruption and misconduct amongst the Queensland police force resulting in the 1987 Fitzgerald Inquiry (Lewis, Ransley and Homel 2010, 3). In the official report, Commissioner Fitzgerald recommended a review of criminal laws relating to prostitution by stating:

The depressing facts about prostitution do not necessarily mean that prohibition of it and other sex related activities are the best ways of meeting social need. It is safe to assume that prostitution will continue to exist, whether or not it is illegal, so long as people are willing to buy and sell sex. It may be better to control and regulate prostitution, not just prohibit it, for the overall benefit of the community (Queensland Government 1989, 192-3).

The Inquiry also led to the creation of the Criminal Justice Commission (now known as the Crime and Corruption Commission, and formerly known as the Crime and Misconduct Commission) which headed the first official review of prostitution policy reform in Queensland. The report “*Regulating Morality? An Inquiry into Prostitution in Queensland*” was published in 1991 and provided recommendations for a revised legislative framework to address prostitution-related activities throughout the state. These recommendations included the legalisation of licensed sexual service establishments (such as brothels) and individual sex workers operating from their own home; the establishment of a Registration Board to determine requirements of legal prostitution, whilst regulating and monitoring such activity in Queensland; along with the strengthening of current laws to better target prohibited forms of prostitution, such as acts involving children, disadvantaged groups, coercion and intimidation, street prostitution, and offensive advertising (Criminal Justice Commission, 1991). However, the Government at the time demonstrated an overall reluctance to follow the recommendations put forth by the Commission. As expressed by Premier Wayne Goss:

We are not going to rush in, because while we are concerned about the current situation in relation to prostitution, we are also, on behalf of the community, apprehensive about a literal explosion—a dramatic expansion—in the level of male and female prostitution in this State, a dramatic expansion of the exploitation of women that occurs in this sordid, grubby industry and, furthermore, a lowering of the moral standards of the community if male and female single-operator brothels are

going to conduct business in suburban homes in this State (Queensland Parliament 1992c, 4108).

Because of this dominant perspective the Goss Government instead introduced legislation that enforced tougher penalties for sex work and associated activity (Sullivan 1997, 210). The *Prostitution Laws Amendment Bill* proposed to allow one sex worker to operate alone in private, however it would make it illegal for two or more sex workers to operate from the same premises (as this was classed as a 'brothel'), for clients or individuals to be found at a place used for sex work purposes, and also, for individuals to knowingly participate in the provision of sex work services (Banach 1999, 17). As explained by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Honourable Paul Joseph Braddy (Rockhampton MP):

This Bill is directed at addressing the anomalies in the present prostitution laws which have made them unwieldy and unworkable. By limiting prostitution activities to prostitutes who operate on their own and introducing strict criminal sanctions against those involved in organised prostitution, including clients, this Bill should significantly contribute to the reduction of prostitution in our society (Queensland Parliament 1992a, 686).

The *Prostitution Laws Amendment Act (1992)* became Queensland's first legislative framework for sex work; however it was not a regulatory regime but rather a consolidation of a range of prostitution related offences (Scholenhardt and Cameron 2009, 194). This legislative framework was thus highly criticised. Reekie and Wilson (1993) express how the Act simply criminalised a wide range

of ill-defined offences whilst significantly increasing police powers of arrest and surveillance. Essentially, these laws drove the sex industry underground and significantly reduced the space for safe and legal sex work (Sullivan 1999, 9). This legislative framework was therefore considered to be ineffective and ignorant of the recommendations made during the Fitzgerald Inquiry (Banach, 1999; Reekie and Wilson, 1993).

Years later, the Government's ignorance towards Fitzgerald's recommendations for sex work was rectified. Honourable Peter Beattie was elected to Queensland Premier in 1998 and initiated the state's major legislative reform for sex work (Sullivan 2010, 91). The following year, the Prostitution Bill was introduced into Parliament with the stated objective of regulating and controlling prostitution and related activities in Queensland (Queensland Government 1999, 1). The Bill was described as the culmination of work by the Beattie Government and the former Coalition government, along with the extensive public consultation with members of the public and relevant stakeholders (Queensland Parliament 1999c, 4825-6). As outlined in Parliament by the Minister of State Development and Member for the Waterford electorate, the Honourable Thomas Alfred Barton, the laws were developed in guidance with the following principles:

- Ensuring the quality of life for local communities;
- safeguarding against corruption and organised crime;
- addressing social factors which contribute to involvement in the sex industry;
- ensuring a healthy society; and
- promoting safety (Queensland Parliament 1999c, 4826).

Proposed as the ‘toughest prostitution laws in Australia’, the Bill defined strict regulatory conditions and requirements for the legal operation of licensed brothels and sole operators (Queensland Parliament 1999c, 4826). The Bill was passed and the Prostitution Act (1999) came into effect in July 2000. Despite being subject to minor amendments in the years proceeding enactment, the Prostitution Act (1999) continues to be the regulatory framework for sex work in Queensland. The following section will provide a detailed overview of this legislative framework.

## 2.2 Queensland’s Sex Work Legislation

Currently in Queensland, there are two legal forms of sex work including sex work conducted in a licensed brothel and sex work conducted by sole operator workers. All other forms of sex work are prohibited throughout the state, including street sex work, escort agencies and unlicensed brothels. Legal sex work in Queensland is subject to strict regulatory requirements set out across several different pieces of state legislation including the Criminal Code Act (1899), the Prostitution Act (1999), and the Sustainable Planning Act (2009).

The Criminal Code Act (1899) is Queensland’s primary piece of legislation that aims to establish a code of criminal law throughout the state. It provides a legislative definition of sex work, which is defined using the term prostitution, and identifies relevant penalties for related offences. The Act states:

A person engages in **prostitution** if the person engages, or offers to engage, in the provision to another person, under an arrangement of a commercial character, of any of the following activities –

- (a) sexual intercourse;
- (b) masturbation;
- (c) oral sex;
- (d) any activity, other than sexual intercourse, masturbation or oral sex, that involves the use of 1 person by another for his or her sexual satisfaction involving physical contact (Criminal Code 1899, s229E).

The act of prostitution itself is not a criminal offence, however the Queensland Criminal Code (1899) identifies offences relating to this activity, including:

**s229FA** – Obtaining prostitution from a person who is not an adult

**s229G** – Procuring engagement in prostitution

**s229H** – Knowingly participating in the provision of prostitution

**s229HB** – Carrying on a business of providing unlawful prostitution

**s229HC** – Person engaging in or obtaining prostitution through unlawful prostitution business

**s229I** – Persons found in places reasonably suspected of being used for prostitution etc.

**s229K** – Having an interest in premises used for prostitution etc.

**s229L** – Permitting young person etc. to be at place used for prostitution

**s229M** – Evidence that business of prostitution is being carried on

**s229N** – Evidence that place is being used for prostitution

In contrast, the Prostitution Act (1999) aims to regulate Queensland's sex work industry by defining legal forms of sex work, identifying provisions for the application and approval of licensed brothels, providing provisions for sex work conducted by sole operators, along with listing advertising guidelines for both forms of legal prostitution.

The offences outlined in the Prostitution Act (1999) include:

**S73** – Public soliciting for the purposes of prostitution  
**S76** – Nuisances connect with prostitution  
**S77** – Duress  
**S77A** – Prostitute providing sexual intercourse or oral sex without a prophylactic  
**S78-88** – Brothel offences  
**S89** – Permitting prostitute infected with a disease to work in a licensed brothel  
**S92-96C** – Advertising offences

The Prostitution Act (1999) additionally enabled the establishment of the Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA), which was considered a key component of the government's anti-corruption strategy towards the sex industry, and proposed to implement and administer a strict licensing regime to monitor legal sex work in Queensland (Queensland Government 1999, 2). The main objective of the PLA's operation is to "ensure that licensed brothels and prostitution advertising are regulated in accordance with legislative requirements and in the community interest" (PLA 2016, 6). The Authority is currently responsible for deciding brothel licence applications, monitoring the provision of sex work through licensed brothels, receiving complaints about sex work from the public, liaising with the police service and other agencies who encounter sex workers and brothel licensees, along with promoting sexual health care (Prostitution Act 1999, s.101). To align with the goal of preventing corruption, the Act details guidelines for the appointment of the PLA's eight-member board, consisting of:

- a) The chairperson who is to be an independent, and appropriately qualified member of the community nominated by the Premier;
- b) The commissioner, or a police officer of at least the rank of superintendent nominated by the commissioner;

- c) The chairperson, or the senior executive officer (crime), of the Crime and Corruption Commission;
- d) A health practitioner who has at least five years experience in the practitioner's profession;
- e) A lawyer who has been admitted for at least 5 years and has knowledge of or experience in administrative law, company law or criminal law;
- f) A person who represents local government;
- g) 2 persons who represent community interests (Prostitution Act 1999, s.102).

### 2.2.1 Brothel Licensing

To legally operate a brothel in Queensland, an applicant must receive approval and licensing through two separate levels of government. The PLA is the State Government agency responsible for the licensing of individuals to legally operate a brothel in Queensland, with local councils of local government areas responsible for deciding development approval applications in respect of brothels (PLA 2016, 24). Approval application processes can vary between local authorities (Schloenhardt and Cameron 2009, 199), but are generally provided on the basis of the following guidelines set out in Schedule 1 of the Sustainable Planning Act (2009) where a brothel must:

- Have no more than five working rooms;
- Be more than 200 metres from a primarily residential area or an area approved for residential development, or intended to be residential in character;
- Be more than 200 metres from a residential building, place of worship, hospital, school, kindergarten or any other facility or place regularly frequented by children for recreational or cultural activities (PLA 2016, 24).

Additional requirements for brothels are set out in the Prostitution Regulation Act (2014, Schedule 3) which relate to vehicle access to the establishment, parking for staff and clients, external lighting, signage, loitering, outward appearance, along with security and infrastructure, such as sewerage and water connection.

The second part of the brothel licensing process requires an application to be made to another state government agency, the PLA. Prospective brothel owners and managers must apply to the PLA for relevant licenses or certificates. The success of this application is determined on eligibility criteria that seek to ensure brothels are not associated with organised crime, corporate organisations, the general entertainment and hospitality industry, or those individuals who have previously violated licensing provisions (Scholenhardt and Cameron 2009, 199).

The Act declares that:

A person is ineligible to apply for a brothel licence if the person –

- a) Is a corporation;
- b) Is a minor; or
- c) Is an insolvent under administration; or
- d) Holds a licence or permit under the Liquor Act 1992; or
- e) Has been convicted of a disqualifying offence; or
- f) Has had a licence or other authority under this Act or a corresponding law to provide prostitution at a brothel cancelled in the last 3 years; or
- g) Has had a certificate or other authority under this Act or a corresponding law to manage a brothel cancelled in the last 3 years; or
- h) Is subject to an order of the Authority declaring the person to be ineligible to apply for a licence (Prostitution Act 1999, s.8).

The Act also details requirements for third parties (other than the brothel licensee) who may manage or supervise a licensed brothel to apply for an

approved manager certificate. In addition to being assessed on the criteria set out for brothel licensing, applicants are also assessed on the following:

- (a) The applicant's reputation having regard to character, honesty and integrity;
- (b) whether the applicant has been convicted of an offence against this Act or a corresponding law;
- (c) whether the applicant has been convicted of an indictable offence;
- (d) whether the applicant has been convicted of an offence, the circumstances of which constituted the running of a brothel;
- (e) whether the applicant is an associate of a person who has been convicted of a disqualifying offence or an indictable offence;
- (f) whether the applicant is an associate of a body corporate, an executive officer of which has been convicted of a disqualifying offence or an indictable offence;
- (g) whether the applicant has been charged with any offence of a sexual nature that involves violence, intimidation, threats or children, including the circumstances surrounding the laying of the charge and whether proceedings in relation to the charge are continuing or have been discontinued;
- (h) any other matter prescribed under a regulation (Prostitution Act 1999, s.42).

Applications for brothel licensing and approved manager certificates must be submitted to the PLA in the approved form with the inclusion of an application and licensing fee (Prostitution Act 1999, s.10). These mandatory fees are set out in the Prostitution Regulation (2014, Sch.2) as detailed below:

<b>Licences</b>	<b>\$</b>
1 – Application fee under section 10(2)(b) of the Act	7,430.00
2 – Licence fee under section 10(2)(b) of the Act	9,690.00  Plus \$3,874.00 for each room in the brothel
3 – Annual licence fee under section 19(5)(d)(i) of the Act	the amount under item 2
4 – Annual licence return fee under section 19(5)(d)(i) of the Act	4,730.00
5 – Renewal fee under section 23(2)(b) of the Act	the total of amounts under items 1 and 2
6 – Annual licence fee under section 33(5) of the Act	the amount under item 2
7 – Replacement licence	21.05
<b>Certificates</b>	<b>\$</b>
8 – Application fee under section 35(2)(b) of the Act	1,024.55
9 – Certificate fee under section 35(2)(b) of the Act	51.45
10 – Annual certificate fee under section 44(4)(d)(i) of the Act	the amount under item 9
11 – Annual return fee under section 44(4)(d)(i) of the Act	735.55
12 – Variation fee under section 46(2)(b) of the Act	74.30
13 – Renewal fee under section 49(2)(b) of the Act	the total of the amounts under items 8 and 9
14 – Replacement certificates	21.05
<b>Other fees</b>	<b>\$</b>
15 – Fee for giving particulars of a change under section 20(2) or 45(2) of the Act	74.30
16 – Fee for inspection of register under section 111(2)(b) of the Act	nil
17 – Fee for copy of entry in register under section 111(2)(b) of the Act	29.95 plus \$0.55 for each page
18 – Administration fee under section 9(2)	74.30

When approved, brothel licenses are issued for a maximum of three years (unless it is surrendered, suspended or cancelled during that period), with the requirement of annual licensing fees to be paid, along with the potential to renew

a licence (in the approved form and with subsequent fees), within three months of the licence expiry date (Scholenhardt and Cameron 2009, 202). By outlining the various fees associated to licensing brothels in Queensland<sup>2</sup>, it is clear how significant the financial costs are for a brothel licensee.

The Queensland brothel licensing regime has been the subject of much criticism since its implementation. Firstly, it has been identified that there is an overall lack of sex worker ‘voices’ in the decision-making around brothels in Queensland (Sullivan 2008, 82). A prime example of this relates to the election of the PLA board members. As identified earlier in this chapter, the PLA’s eight-member board consists of six professionals from various government departments and two individuals who represent the community, however there are no board positions designated to sex workers. The direct lack of consultation with and inclusion of sex workers in PLA operations has been described by Sullivan (2008, 82) as ‘disgraceful.’

The brothel application process with the PLA has also been heavily criticised. Applying for a brothel in Queensland has been described as ‘challenging’ due to the difficulty for potential applicants to locate a brothel site that complies with the legislative requirements, which subsequently impacts on the likelihood of acquiring development approval from local councils (CMC 2004, 92). Additionally, the legislative requirement for brothel development to occur only in industrial or deserted areas has been identified as contributing to a heightened risk for the safety of sex workers and other staff who work at such

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Appendix 6 for Fee Matrix

establishments (Scholenhardt and Cameron 2009, 214). Compulsory brothel application and licensing fees have also been criticised and are similarly presented as a legislative barrier for brothel applicants. The fee amounts are described as 'excessive', especially when such amounts are compared to current penalties for illegal prostitution (CMC 2004, 97). Questions have been raised as to whether the high compulsory fees for licensed venues may actually encourage illegal brothel operations, with legal establishments less profitable than the illegal ones (Scholenhardt and Cameron 2009, 219).

Another legislative requirement for brothels that has been highly contested relates to legislative provisions regarding the health of sex workers. Sections 89 and 90 of the Prostitution Act (1999) identifies that a sex worker must not engage in prostitution in a brothel whilst infected with an STD, nor can a brothel owner/manager allow a sex worker to engage in prostitution on premises if they know the worker is infected with an STD. Compulsory health checks are therefore required for sex workers who work in licensed brothels, which is currently set for every three months (Prostitution Regulation 2014, s.14). This practice has been argued as discriminatory and oppressive due to how the same principle does not apply to clients, that is, it is not an offence for a client to engage in commercial sex in a brothel whilst infected with either a STD or other contagious illness, nor are clients required to have compulsory health checks before engaging with a sex worker (Sullivan 2008, 83).

### 2.2.2 Sole operator sex work

The provision of commercial sex conducted privately by individual sex workers is considered legal in Queensland, however is not subject to licensing requirements like brothels. Instead, the legislation places restrictions on sole operators regarding working situations and advertising their services. The Criminal Code (1899, s.229H) makes it an offence for an individual to knowingly participate in the provision of prostitution (unless such is conducted in a licensed premises), thereby prohibiting private sex workers from working with or employing other individuals, such as other sex workers or a receptionist (Sullivan 2010, 92). However, to increase safety, the legislation allows private sex workers to employ a security guard, who has been issued with a licence under the *Security Providers Act (1993)*, to provide no more than the services necessary of a bodyguard (Criminal Code 1899, s.229HA). This provision however is not mandatory and sole operators are argued to be more vulnerable to violence due to how they often work alone (Sullivan 2008, 80). It is also an offence under the legislation for a private sex worker to conduct prostitution without a prophylactic or publish prostitution advertisements that do not adhere to guidelines set out in the legislation and have not received approval from the PLA (Sullivan 2010, 92; PLA 2016, 32).

Limitations of the legislation have been identified regarding how sole operators are completely unregulated. Sole operators can legally operate without obtaining a licence or paying fees and are not subject to a security assessment or regular health checks (CMC 2004, 117). Whilst the current system can be

interpreted as allowing sole operators to be less restrained with their work in comparison to brothel workers (Sullivan 2008, 84), arguments supporting the implementation of a regulation system for sole operators in Queensland have identified how it could benefit workers, particularly in the context of health. These include implementing state sanctioned health screening options, reducing potential fraudulent health certificates by arranging a health monitoring system, provide workers with the opportunity to seek approval from body corporate/owners of the premises in which they are operating and also, allow aggrieved customers to raise possible fair-trading issues (CMC 2004, 118).

### 2.2.3 Brothel Exemption/Prohibited Development Provision

The Prostitution Act (1999) additionally provided local councils of towns with populations under 25,000 with legislative authority to apply for an exemption from licensed brothel development. However, the brothel exemption provision was removed from the Prostitution Act (1999) in December of 2009 and replaced with a prohibited brothel development provision under the Sustainable Planning Act (2009). Schedule 1 of the Sustainable Planning Act (2009, sch1.5) states the following for a brothel to be deemed a prohibited development:

For a brothel	
5	<p>Development that is a material change of use for a brothel if—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) more than 5 rooms in the proposed brothel are to be used for providing prostitution; or</li> <li>(b) any land the subject of the development— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) is in, or within 200m of the closest point on any boundary of, a primarily residential area or an area approved for residential development or intended to be residential in character; or</li> <li>(ii) is within 200m of the closest point on any boundary of land on which there is a residential building, place of worship, hospital, school, kindergarten, or any other facility or place regularly frequented by children for recreational or cultural activities;</li> </ul> <p>measured according to the shortest route a person may reasonably and lawfully take, by vehicle or on foot, between the land the subject of the development and the other land; or</p> </li> <li>(c) any land the subject of the development is within 100m of the closest point on any boundary of land on which there is a residential building, place of worship, hospital, school, kindergarten, or any other facility or place regularly frequented by children for recreational or cultural activities, measured in a straight line; or</li> <li>(d) for land the subject of the development that is in a town with a population of less than 25000— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the local government for the local government area has required that all material changes of use for such development within the area be prohibited; and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Because of the legislative amendments, brothel exemption applications are now dealt with directly by local councils and the administering government department, which currently is the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (DILGP).

The Explanatory Notes detailing the impetus behind the creation of Queensland's regulatory framework for legalised sex work fails to adequately outline the justification for the inclusion of the brothel exemption provision. In the year following the enactment of this legislation, a parliamentary motion was

made (and subsequently denied) to extend brothel exemption eligibility to all towns, rather than only towns under the specified population threshold.

In May of 2001, the Prostitution Amendment Bill was introduced into Parliament by the Member for Toowoomba South, Mr Michael Horan. Essentially, this Bill proposed to amend the Act by removing the population threshold attached to the brothel exemption provision and allowing all towns to veto brothel development. Mr Horan (Toowoomba South MP) explained that all councils should have this right because “there is no community demand for brothels; there is merely a requirement under this government’s legislation for councils to approve planning permission for them” (Queensland Parliament 2001a, 886). Other arguments in support of the Bill highlighted the need to ensure there was state-wide legislative consistency for brothel development and that irrespective of its size, all towns across the state should have the right to veto legal brothel development in the community. As questioned by the representative for the rural electorate of Southern Downs, Mr Springborg:

Why does the government have inconsistent legislation that says basically a council that covers an area with a population of fewer than 25,000 people is able to make a decision on moral grounds – or whatever the case may be – but if a council covers an area that has one person more than 25,000 people, it cannot make that decision? (Mr Springborg, Southern Downs MP, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1653).

Despite these arguments, the Bill was largely rejected in Parliament. Members who opposed the Bill argued that removing the population threshold

and allowing all councils to veto brothel applications would simply contradict the initial aims of the Prostitution Act (1999). For example, Mrs Juanita Cunningham (Bundaberg MP) expressed that if all councils received this power, “there would be no point in having the legislation at all” (Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1647). It was during this time that the Minister of Police and Corrective Services, Honourable Anthony McGrady (Mt Isa MP), reinforced the significance of this provision for small towns. He said:

The reason that the government has conferred a power upon councils to reject applications in areas where a town’s population is 25,000 or fewer is that the Beattie Government recognises that in a small regional town or city it may be inappropriate for a brothel to be established for a number of reasons... We recognise that in some cases a council could feel that, as a consequence of a community’s small population, it was undesirable to allow legal brothels to be established. The same cannot be said for larger communities (Hon Anthony McGrady, Mt Isa MP, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1643).

Whilst this statement provides some insight into the justification for the exemption provision, there is still a lack of explanation as to why licensed brothels are deemed ‘undesirable’ for smaller populations and not larger populations, and why sole operator sex workers are more acceptable than licensed brothels in smaller populations. This research project therefore aims to examine the impetus behind the creation and continued inclusion of the brothel exemption provision for small towns in rural Queensland.

#### 2.2.4 Discrimination provision for accommodation providers

Another legislative provision relevant to sex workers in Queensland is section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act (1991). The Act states:

Accommodation for use in connection with work as a sex work  
It is not unlawful for a person (an **accommodation provider**) to discriminate against another person (the **other person**) by –  
(a) refusing to supply accommodation to the other person; or  
(b) evicting the other person from accommodation; or  
(c) treating the other person unfavourably in any way in connection with accommodation;  
if the accommodation provider reasonably believes the other person is using, or intends to use, the accommodation in connection with that person's, or another person's, work as a sex worker (Anti-Discrimination Act 1999, s106C).

In 2012, the Queensland Government amended this legislation to provide accommodation providers the legal ability to evict sex workers from their premises and/or refuse to provide accommodation to them. This amendment was influenced by a Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) case between a sex worker and accommodation provider.

In 2010, a sex worker referred to as GK was refused accommodation at the Drovers Rest Motel in the mining town of Moranbah after the motel owner became aware that GK was providing paid sexual services from one of the motel rooms. GK took the case to QCAT claiming discrimination by the motel owner and requesting financial remuneration, but was initially denied.<sup>3</sup> On appeal in 2012, GK was found to have been discriminated against by the motel owner<sup>4</sup>, with the

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<sup>3</sup> See GK v Dovedeen Pty Ltd & Anor (No 3) [2011] QCAT 509

<sup>4</sup> See GK v Dovedeen Pty Ltd and Anor [2012] QCATA 128

owner then successfully appealing that decision in 2013.<sup>5</sup> As a result of these cases, Queensland legislation was amended to allow accommodation providers to refuse accommodation to individuals without being discriminatory, if they suspect that person intends to use the premises for sex work purposes (Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, s.106C).

### 2.3 Current snapshot of sex work in Queensland

The PLA (2016, 22-23) reports that as of 30 June 2016, there were 22 licensed brothels operating in Queensland.<sup>6</sup> Most of these licensed brothels are in the state's large metropolitan hubs, such as greater Brisbane (10) and Gold Coast regions (6), with two located in outer Brisbane suburbs, and one on the Sunshine Coast. The remaining three licensed brothels are located in regional locations, including Cairns, Toowoomba and Townsville.<sup>7</sup>

One potential reason for the lack of licensed brothels outside of metropolitan areas in Queensland is the brothel exemption provision included in state legislation. As previously outlined, the brothel exemption provision was initially presented in the Prostitution Act (1999) and allowed local councils of towns with populations under 25,000 to apply for an exemption from licensed brothel development. Whilst the provision was administered under this particular Act, there were 204 towns throughout Queensland that had successfully applied for exempt status (PLA 2010, 30)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Dovedeen Pty Ltd & Anor v GK* [2013] QCA 116; *Dovedeen Pty Ltd & Anor v GK* [2013] QCA 194

<sup>6</sup> Refer to Appendix 2 for a full list of licensed brothels in QLD

<sup>7</sup> Refer to Appendix 4 to view the map of licensed brothel locations in Queensland

<sup>8</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for the list of exempt towns published by the PLA (2016)

After the exemption provision was removed and replaced with Schedule 1 of the Sustainable Planning Act (2009), only one local council in Queensland made an application under this new legislative provision. This was the Central Highlands Regional Council, which in 2012 successfully applied to the DILGP to have brothels deemed a 'prohibited development' in the 16 towns within the local council's jurisdiction. In each Annual Report since the legislative change in late 2009, the PLA continue to state that there are over 200 towns throughout Queensland that have successfully applied for an exemption from brothel development (PLA 2010, 30; PLA 2011, 28; PLA 2012, 23; PLA 2013, 26; PLA 2014a, 24; PLA 2015, 25). However, this statement is misrepresentative of how many towns are currently exempt throughout Queensland.

During investigations conducted for this research project, contact was made with the DILGP and the PLA requesting a current list of exempt towns in Queensland. Through this process, it was discovered that exemptions previously obtained under the original provision in the Prostitution Act (1999) did not transfer over under the new provision in the Sustainable Planning Act (2009). Thus, only 16 towns in Queensland have legally deemed licensed brothels as a prohibited development under the new legislative provision. As will be outlined in more detail in the methodology chapter later in the thesis, the research for this project was conducted under the presumption that there were over 200 towns throughout Queensland with current exemptions in place.

### 2.3.1 Sole operator sex workers

In contrast to licensed brothels, the number of sole operator sex workers in Queensland is difficult to ascertain as there is no requirement for workers to be registered or licensed to operate (CMC, 2004). Instead, attempts to quantify populations of sex workers in Queensland and in Australia more broadly consist of estimates. This is due to the clandestine nature of such activity, where sex workers are often reluctant to identify themselves out of fear of incrimination and/or stigma (Brooks-Gordon 2006, 202; Rissel et al. 2017, 81).

A number of different Australian studies have attempted to quantify the sex industry at both a national and state level, however the findings offer an obscure and potentially non-reflective illustration of actual sex worker populations. For example, the New South Wales AIDS Council estimates that in any one year, there are approximately 20,000 sex workers throughout Australia, including legal and illegal forms of sex work (Quadara 2008, 3). When filtering down the scope to capital cities specifically, these numbers present even more variances.

Donovan et al. (2010, 9) identified at the time of their study that the annual sex worker population in Perth was estimated to consist of around 530 brothel-based workers, 50 private workers and 50 escort workers. In Sydney where sex work has been decriminalised, it is estimated that between 3,000-4,500 sex workers operate within 20 kilometres of the CBD in any one year (Donovan et al. 2012, 16). In Queensland, the CMC estimates that street sex workers account for less than 2% of the sex worker population, with approximately 10% operating

within legal brothels, and the remaining portion of the industry consisting of commercial sex provided legally by sole operators, or illegally by escort workers (CMC 2004). Additionally, the CMC (2011, 11) report that there is an increasing involvement of migrant sex workers, particularly of Asian background, in legal and illegal sectors of the Queensland sex industry. However, there is limited evidence to suggest those workers are victims of sex trafficking or debt bondage (CMC 2011, 11). Whilst the actual number of sole operator sex workers in Queensland is unknown, it is acknowledged that there is an active population of sole operators providing commercial sexual services throughout the state.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the history and current status of sex work and relevant legislation in Queensland. Sex work has been subject to significant legislative reform and political debate in Queensland throughout the last two decades. This has resulted in a legislative framework identifying licensed brothels and sole operators as the two legal forms of sex work throughout the state. Additionally, this framework specifies a brothel exemption provision for small towns under the 25,000 population threshold. As there has been limited justification provided for the inclusion of this provision with the legislative framework, this thesis will continue to analyse the premise of the brothel exemption rule for small towns by examining constructions of sex, rurality and space in political discourse.

## Chapter 3 – The rural imaginary

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### 3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to identify and outline how the rural imaginary has been constructed in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia, thereby answering the project's first research question and setting up the foundation of analysis for the remainder of the thesis. It is important to dedicate an entire chapter to this process to allow for an in-depth historical review of the theoretical and conceptual contributions to the rural imaginary as a concept, whilst acknowledging and identifying aspects of contemporary society which continue to shape understandings of it.

To begin, this chapter will provide an overview of the existing, cross-disciplinary and often conflicting literature that engages with and contributes to understandings and interpretations of rural spaces, rurality, and thus, the rural imaginary. This discussion will include an examination of the key theoretical and conceptual writings on the rural-urban dichotomy, the rural-urban continuum, and examinations of rural space as culturally and symbolically significant. The similarities and differences between these perspectives will then be compared and analysed, whilst highlighting the evident dominance of the English and European heritage in such writings.

Following this, the chapter will review relevant theoretical and conceptual writings about rural space and rurality specifically in Australia to situate the discussion in the relevant geographical and societal context for this project. This

part of the discussion will include an overview of the key perspectives and ideologies of rural Australia, such as 'the bush', 'the outback', and the 'Aussie country' which underpin constructions of rural spaces and rurality in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australian society. The discussion will then offer an overview of literature that discusses the evident physical, cultural, and symbolic transformation of rural space in Australia in recent decades as a result of the mining industry and how this affects and challenges socially constructed understandings of rural spaces in Australia.

Overall, the chapter will argue that the rural imaginary as constructed in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia is underpinned by key historical processes, and iconic stereotypical characteristics. Imagined understandings and ideas of rural Australia depict specific cultural characteristics and practices that are considered inherent to Australian rurality, despite the acknowledged physical variances amongst rural spaces. These variances are identified as being dependent on industry characteristics, such as mining and agriculture. Ultimately, rural Australia is constructed as distinct from urban Australia.

Additionally, despite rural spaces in contemporary Australian society being highly urbanised as a result of technology and transportation improvements, imagined understandings of rural Australia continue to hold onto the notion of such spaces representing a pre-industrial, pre-modern version of society.

### 3.1 Historical contributions to the rural imaginary

Before understanding how the rural imaginary is conceptualised and reinforced in contemporary society, it is important to firstly divert to an historical examination of rural spaces and rurality. The following section will outline and unpack classical theoretical literature that has contributed to the understandings of rural space through paradigms such as the rural-urban dichotomy and the rural-urban continuum. From this, it will become clear as to how classical theoretical literature has commonly positioned and portrayed rural spaces and rurality as completely distinct from urban spaces and urban life. Additionally, this discussion will identify how such dominant historical ideas about rural and urban space continue to permeate the boundaries of the social imagination of contemporary society.

#### 3.1.1 Rural-urban dichotomy

The rural-urban dichotomy is undoubtedly one of the most dominant frameworks fuelling the social imagination when rural spaces and rurality are considered. Imputed with ideological elements and linked to contemporary and historical discourses (Andersson et al. 2009, 2), the rural-urban dichotomy persists as an assumed truth in the present day. This is despite the dichotomy being predominantly misrepresentative of actual populations and types of social organisations that exists within and throughout such spaces in contemporary society.

The rural-urban dichotomy originates from the early works of key classical sociological theorists who were concerned with the evident changes occurring in society during the industrial revolution. Whilst such writings may not have explicitly intended to dichotomise rural and urban space per se, the evident commonality between each theorist to examine and capture social entities and formations through an antithetical lens (McKinney and Loomis 2002, 12) have resulted in such works being repeatedly interpreted and applied as such.

Two key theoretical works often referred to during dichotomous analyses of rural and urban spaces include 'Gemeinschaft *und* Gesellschaft' terms coined by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies ([1887]1957) and '*The Division of Labour in Society*' by French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1893). As witnesses to the rise in urbanisation, industrialisation, immigration and population growth (Dillon 2014, 89) within their countries of origin, both Tönnies and Durkheim were interested in examining how these dramatic social changes impacted the world around them. Consequently, both writers produced polarised typologies of the evident formations within their societies.

Tönnies' Gemeinschaft-*Gesellschaft* dichotomy suggests society exists as two ideal types. Gemeinschaft refers to the organic, homogenous collective practicing shared values, moral obligations and natural wills, in opposition to Gesellschaft which consists of a superficial, mechanical order based on individualistic needs, interests and arbitrary will (Tönnies, 1957; Deflem 1999, 89). Moreover, Gemeinschaft represents the collective notion of togetherness, kinship, common values and mutual trust, whereas Gesellschaft represents

individualism, materialism and contractual obligations (Segre 1998, 413). Tönnies used these concepts in reference to the contrast between pre-industrial and post-industrial societies, which he saw as involving not only a shift from country to city, but also in a resultant loss of common values and practices inherent in notions of a *Gemeinschaft* community (Hillyard 2007, 6).

*Gemeinschaft* is most commonly linked to rural spaces and rurality as an exemplar of a community which consists of individuals who share similar beliefs (such as religious views) and ways of life, engage in frequent interaction, and experience strong emotional bonds (Brint 2001, 2-3). *Gemeinschaft* communities are small, socially intimate and cohesive populations who share common social norms and experience little to no social conflict (Donnermeyer 2007, 15; Scott et al. 2006, 153; Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 148). This is despite residents having frequent face-to-face interaction due to the close proximity of individual collectives (Segre 1998, 413).

Tönnies emphasised how family life is a fundamental aspect of *Gemeinschaft*, since communities consider themselves to be reminiscent of large kinship structures responsible for accepting or rejecting the membership of outsiders (Tönnies 1957[1887], 228). '*Gemeinschaftlich*' relations are thus created and sustained through these strong community bonds (Bonner 1998, 175-4; Tönnies, 1957[1887]). Individuals within *Gemeinschaft* societies are not distinguishable from each other, as all work together for common tasks and experience enjoyment from this level of communality (Aldous 1972, 1195). Overall, the nurturing of this particular social organisation is what Tönnies

considered most significant about the Gemeinschaft type of society (Bonner 1998, 175).

In contrast however, Gesellschaft represents everything that Gemeinschaft is not (Hillyard 2007, 8), and is thus linked directly to urban spaces and urbanised lifestyles. As Tönnies (1957[1887], 64-5) explains:

The theory of Gesellschaft deals with the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings which superficially resembles the Gemeinschaft in so far as the individuals live and dwell together peacefully. However, in the Gemeinschaft they remain essentially united in spite of all separating factors, whereas in Gesellschaft they are essentially separated in spite of all uniting factors.

According to Tönnies, Gesellschaft populations exist in larger urbanised metropolitan centres, where residents experience limited interaction, engage in high competition, and hold dissimilar beliefs (Brint 2001, 2-3; Aldous 1972, 1195). The emphasis on commerce and large-scale capitalist industries within urbanised locations encourages these 'Gesellschaftlich' relations (Bonner 1998, 173; Aldous 1972, 1197), which are perceived as impersonal and formal and defined purely by contractual obligations (Donnermeyer 2007, 15-16). Within Gesellschaft, an individual will not give, grant or produce anything for another person, unless it is for an exchange of a gift or labour deemed to be of an equivalent nature (Tönnies 1957[1887], 65). Gesellschaft individuals therefore only interact with the prospect of gaining some form of profit (Aldous 1972, 1195). These clear distinctions between the country and the city, between the rural and the urban, highlighted through Tönnies' dichotomy are similarly present in Durkheim's work.

For Durkheim ([1893]2004), society also exists as two polarised types: a mechanical solidarity society and an organic solidarity society (McKinney and Loomis 2002, 13). He argues how the transition from traditional, pre-industrial societies to modern industrial societies symbolised a passing of mechanical solidarity to one of organic solidarity (Scott 2012, 18; Hillyard 2007, 9). Like Tönnies, Durkheim also attributed specific characteristics to each type of society, reinforcing the distinctiveness between the two.

Mechanical solidarity refers to the structural and cultural sameness evident in traditional, pre-industrial societies, where the creation and maintenance of social ties are deemed 'mechanical' as they are built into the very structure of the community (Dillon 2014, 91). Within these mechanical solidarity societies, a repressive *conscience collective* prevails, stemming from a commonality and uniformity amongst the people residing within it (McKinney and Loomis 2002, 13). Durkheim ([1893]2004, 29) describes this conscience collective as "the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average members of the same society". Due to the shared social bonds, common values and norms amongst people within this traditional society, individuals are absorbed into the conscience collective (Craib 1997, 65), which acts as a strong authority over the community, maintaining and regulating social order and behaviour through clear rules and sanctions (Dillon 2014, 90; Brown and Schafft 2011, 37).

Conversely, organic solidarity refers to the new form of order that develops in capitalist, industrialised societies as a result of an advanced division of labour (Hillyard 2007, 9). Essentially, these modernised collectives found in

cities and urban spaces are considered to be the complete opposite of traditional societies, characterised by population density, urbanisation, and geographical and social mobility, along with diverse occupational, religious, political, ethnic and cultural groups (Dillon 2014, 93).

Whereas the solidarity evident in traditional societies suggests all individuals resemble each other, organic solidarity assumes they are all different (Durkheim [1892]2004, 38). Such diversity creates increased personal freedom, anonymity and impersonality amongst individuals, whilst weakening the social bonds and ultimately changing the norm of sameness to individual difference (Dillon 2014, 93; Lukes 2015, 701). The concomitant increase in the division of labour indicative of such societies, ignites heightened interdependence of individuals, contributing to a weakening of the conscience collective (Scott 2012, 19) and resulting in a state of anomie (Durkheim [1892]2004, 46). Again, these particular characteristics of modernised, organic solidarity societies identified by Durkheim align with those presented in Tönnies' *Gesellschaft* societies. Both suggest clear and discrete types of society with specific attributes attached to each.

Traditional, pre-industrial formations of society attributed to rural and countryside landscapes are conceptualised by Tönnies and Durkheim as homogenous, unified collectives of individuals, who share common beliefs and values, and who engage in frequent interaction. In contrast, Tönnies and Durkheim suggest that those formations of society within industrialised cities and urbanised spaces contain heterogeneous collectives of individuals who hold

different beliefs, lack commonality, and whose interaction is based on personal benefit or gain. Both conceptualisations imply dichotomous societies – the cohesive, communal countryside and the fragmented, individualised metropolis. Of course, there are evident limitations with such perspectives.

Tönnies' conceptual framework depicting the two ideal types of society is argued to lack objectivity (Bonner, 1998; Aldous, 1972; Brint, 2001), conveying a sense of favouritism or preference towards rural *Gemeinschaft* communities (Aldous 1972, 1198) through his misrepresentative and overtly romanticised portrait of rural communities (Brint 2001, 2; Bonner 1998: 176). For example, Tönnies presumes a rural homogeneity, with heterogeneity an intrinsic trait of urbanised *Gesellschaft* areas (DeKeseredy et al. 2007, 298). However, Brint (2001, 3) argues that small numbers of people don't necessarily mean common ways of life and shared beliefs; nor do continuous relationships imply strong emotional bonds. *Gesellschaft* is therefore no less natural or more artificial than *Gemeinschaft*, despite Tönnies' implication (Bonner 1998, 176). These critiques are similarly applied to Durkheim's framework.

Overall, the concepts of mechanical and organic solidarity, identified by Durkheim as a means of understanding the move from pre-industrial to industrial societies, is argued to offer a limited understanding of the impact of this dramatic social change (Craib 1997, 188). Rather, the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity is simply guided by population growth and density. Durkheim's framework therefore vastly understates the degree of interdependence and reciprocity in traditional, mechanical solidarity societies, whilst unnecessarily

associating urban growth with decadence and decline (Craib 1997, 68). Additionally, both mechanical and organic forms of solidarity can be identified in traditional, pre-industrial societies and contemporary urban societies. Thus, despite the juxtaposition presented by Durkheim, mechanical and organic solidarity may not be mutually exclusive (Thijssen 2012, 465).

It is clear that the use of polarised and dichotomous approaches to understanding and interpreting rural and urban spaces and their associated characteristics are limited, particularly in the context of contemporary society. Whilst such frameworks offer useful insight into the shift from pre-and post-industrial societies, they are unable to account for the similarities and differences between rural and urban spaces in current society. Schnore (1966, 135) suggests that instead, 'ideal' characteristics and 'types' of society identified through dichotomous frameworks by writers such as Tönnies and Durkheim, should be acknowledged as a useful starting point which nevertheless needs to incorporate a potential for degrees of difference from place to place and time to time. These critiques enabled scholars to build on the work of these 19<sup>th</sup> century theorists to offer new insights and alternative perspectives for social constructions of space in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.1.2 Rural-urban continuum

The rural-urban continuum presents an alternative approach to the traditional dichotomous frameworks used in previous understandings of social formations. Through the use of a continuum, it is acknowledged that social spaces differ, evolve and become somewhat interlinked as a result of social and economic

change, and technological advances. Along the continuum, communities and populations across a range of geographical jurisdictions vary in size from small to large, in density from high to low, and in levels of homogeneity and heterogeneity (Schnore 1966, 135). Thus, whilst the continuum identifies rural and urban societies existing as opposing types of society, for example as 'completely or truly rural' to 'completely or truly urban', it also suggests subtle changes between each type of ideal society located along the continuum (Phillips 1998, 128). Key contributions to this framework include work by Max Weber (1906), Louis Wirth (1938) and Ronald Frankenberg (1966).

Much like their predecessors, Weber, Wirth and Frankenberg similarly attempted to conceptualise and understand the evident changes occurring in society as a result of industrialisation and modernisation. However, their interpretation of these changes and the identification of evident formations of society differed from previous writers. Whilst they all similarly identified rural and urban as polarised types, the latter writers acknowledged and highlighted the evident differences within and amongst those two categories.

Weber, for example, recognised the distinctiveness of traditional rural districts and highlighted the need for sociological attention to be directed towards such areas (Hillyard 2007, 11). However, he also acknowledged that rural communities were in decline as a result of the growing nation-state (Bonner 1998, 179; Munters 1972, 141). He also recognised the *imaginary* as a way in which an idea of the rural could be maintained:

Of all communities, the social constitution of rural districts are the most individual and the most closely connected

with particular historical developments... For a rural society, separate from the urban social community, does not exist at the present time in a great part of the modern civilized world. It no longer exists in England, except, perhaps in the thoughts of dreamers (Weber [1906]2009, 363).

Weber agreed that rural areas were distinct from urbanised cities, he recognised that at the time, rural settlements themselves differed according to geographical contexts and historical processes. He was also one of the first theorists to highlight the cross-jurisdictional differences between these rural districts (Bonner 1998, 179), identifying the effects of capitalism in old civilised countries in Europe in comparison with its effects in newer nations, such as the United States of America:

The power of tradition inevitably predominates in agriculture; it creates and maintains types of rural population on the European continent which do not exist in a new country, such as the United States... (Weber [1906]2009, 364-5).

Weber's position contrasts with the homogenous grouping of rural societies identified previously by others such as Durkheim and Tönnies, and situated within dichotomous frameworks. Weber questioned the usefulness of 'urban' and 'rural' to distinguish between opposing types of populations, suggesting these terms were becoming less relevant (Bonner 1998, 179). Instead, he believed the notion of rural should be understood in the context of modernity, and that it continued to evolve with social change.

Following Weber, Louis Wirth's (1938) *'Urbanism as a way of life'* offers a further theoretical conceptualisation of the urbanisation of society. His work, premised on the belief that sociology at the time was lacking a clear definition of the modern city, aimed to present a sophisticated and inclusive conceptual

framework for urban society. Whilst he acknowledged the dominance of urbanism throughout society, he also highlighted how urban modes of life and the characteristics associated with it transcended city boundaries as a result of improvements with technology and travel (Wirth 1938, 5). Thus, similarly to Weber, Wirth identified rural and urban as polarised ideal types of society whilst also suggesting that those settlements usually identified as 'rural' were becoming urbanised in the modern world. Wirth's perspective therefore positions rural and urban settlements along a continuum, with central areas of large cities held at one end of a polarised extreme (Pahl 1966, 302).

Much like previous writers, Wirth argued that urban life was fundamentally different from lifestyles which existed in traditional, folk societies (Pahl 1966, 301). He explains:

Nowhere has mankind been farther removed from organic nature than under the conditions of life characteristic of great cities. The contemporary world no longer presents a picture of small isolated groups of human beings scattered over a vast territory... The distinctive feature of the mode of living for man in the modern age is his concentration into gigantic aggregations around which cluster lesser centres and from which radiate the ideas and practices we call civilisation (Wirth 1938, 1-2).

Moreover, Wirth suggested that increases in population size and density as a result of urbanisation contributed to increased social heterogeneity amongst collectives, such as varied occupations, cultural practices and personality traits (Wirth 1938, 11-12; Harper 1989, 169). As such, urbanism can offer individuals a platform to experience more autonomy and freedom (Brown and Schafft 2011,

38), much different to the experiences of traditional rural societies. Though interactions amongst populations in urbanised societies may be face-to-face, Wirth (1938, 12) suggests, similarly to previous writers, that these were “...nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental.” As such, factors attributed to urbanisation led to a weakening of social bonds of kinship, the declining social significance of the family and the neighbourhood, whilst undermining the traditional basis of social solidarity (Wirth 1938, 20-1). These particular characteristics which Wirth attributed to urbanised societies mirror those identified by Tönnies’ *Gesellschaft* societies and Durkheim’s organic solidarity. However, unlike other writers before him, Wirth did not consider this transition to be completely negative. Instead, Wirth’s theory implies that residence in large cities actually encourages greater tolerance and universalism amongst individuals, particularly with regard to racial, ethnic, and cultural differences (Fischer 1971, 847). These attitudes and behaviours were, according to Wirth, less likely to exist in traditional rural communities.

Some decades after Weber and Wirth, work produced by Frankenberg (1966) titled “*Communities in Britain*” added an additional element to the rural-urban continuum by expanding the polar types of rural and urban (or non-rural) through an analysis of districts in Britain using 25 themes<sup>9</sup>. He explained that places could be pinpointed on a morphological continuum, including those that are either truly rural; villages in the country; towns that are villages; small towns;

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<sup>9</sup> Refer to Appendix 5

communities in conurbations; or urban housing estates. Through his examination, Frankenberg aimed to clearly differentiate between those places deemed truly rural and those that were not in order to identify what had been gained and lost through the process of urbanisation (Frankenberg 1966, 11). In each town examined, he identified and described the ascribed and achieved roles, the evident levels of social class and social status, and the sources of conflict and change. His research concluded that at the time of his studies, the ends of the rural-urban continuum were actually quite close (Frankenberg 1966, 283). He explains:

Nearly everybody is part of at least one small group. Most people belong to several, some to many. There are very few who are total social isolates. This means that some, if not all, of the characteristics that are typical of the rural end of the continuum remain as a part of town life. In the move from countryside to town, the nature of society, of the group outside the primary face-to-face group, changes (Frankenberg 1966, 285).

Similarly to Wirth and Weber, Frankenberg interpreted this process of urbanisation as a positive change for society. Whilst he acknowledged that the life of modern towns and cities were far from perfect, he also believed “...the gains of urban life, actual and potential, are infinitely greater than the losses” (Frankenberg 1966, 285). Of course, the idea of a rural-urban continuum also faced heavy criticism within the social sciences.

A key critic of the rural-urban continuum was Raymond Edward Pahl (1966) who opposed all existing approaches to understanding and interpreting rural and urban spaces (Harper 1989, 166). Whilst he acknowledged the use of

the terms 'rural' and 'urban' to differentiate between opposing types of land use, he simultaneously questioned the sociological relevance of these evident physical differences, particularly in industrial societies (Pahl 1966, 299). Additionally, Pahl critiqued the idea that rural and urban spaces existed as either a dichotomy or along a continuum, arguing instead that research had revealed the existence of 'rural and urban', or 'Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft', or even 'mechanical and organic' relations in the same localities (Hillyard 2007, 20). He explains:

...urban villages exist in the centre of cities in which there is a high level of social cohesion based on interwoven kinship networks and a high level of primary contact with familiar faces (Pahl 1966, 302).

Furthermore, whilst central areas of cities may contain cohesive formations usually attributed to rural districts, Pahl (1966, 302) reinforces they are by no means homogenous. Instead, such formations are said to comprise of numerous sub-cultures defined by class, age and wealth, living adjacent to each other within one space (Harper 1989, 169). These findings present ambiguities within both the rural-urban dichotomy and the rural-urban continuum. As Pahl (1966, 322) argues, "Any attempt to tie particular patterns of social relationships to specific geographical milieux is a singularly fruitless exercise."

An alternative method proposed by Pahl to analyse societal formations across geographical districts was to focus sociological attention on factors such as socio-economic class. He argues that social class is highly influential in determining people's lifestyles and living locations (Hillyard 2007, 21). Thus, rather than attributing 'types' of people and particular characteristics to rural and urban spaces, Pahl suggested that variances amongst communities and lifestyles

across locations were determined by their social class ranking (Hillyard 2007, 21). He explains:

Since, by definition, most of the chief earners commute to work in surrounding towns it is possible to have 'urban' choice in a rural landscape and in a rural settlement type. However, the spatial restraint operates differentially so that the amount of choice becomes more limited further down the social scale (Pahl 1966, 305).

From Pahl's perspective, only people with a particular level of social class could 'choose' to live in either rural or urban locations (Hillyard 2007, 21). There is therefore no rural population per se, rather populations exist in rural areas as a result of the spatial constraints placed upon them through the wider systems of social stratification (Harper 1989, 170). To support his position, Pahl formulated major groupings of people, or 'ideal types', that he considered would serve as a useful interpretation of rural or urban districts in society at the time. These include:

1. **Large property owners** – wealthy landowners who are tied locally by tradition and property but who may have considerable financial and other interests elsewhere.
2. **The Salariat** – Business and professional people who have defined for themselves a village-in-the-mind and whose place of residence is subjectively an important aspect in the style of life to which they aspire.
3. **The retired urban workers with some capital** – those who choose to come to the settlement to buy or build a house for retirement
4. **Urban workers with limited capital/income** – those who do not particularly want to live in this settlement type but, owing to the high price of urban land, are forced to seek cheaper housing 'in a village'. These are the reluctant commuters and are numerically, maybe, the most important immigrant element in many newly expanded commuter village.
5. **Rural working class commuters** – those who by inheritance or residential qualifications have the right to a house in the village but who are obliged to seek employment elsewhere. In most metropolitan villages this will be the largest group.
6. **Traditional ruralites** – this is a small, minority element of local tradesmen, agricultural workers and so on whose residence and

employment are both local. There may be close kinship and other links with this group 5 and in practice it is difficult to distinguish between them sociologically (Pahl 1966, 205).

Whilst these writers relied on physical characteristics, geographical location, individual attributes, and even social class as tools for analysis of rural spaces and rurality, more contemporary approaches have moved towards focusing on the cultural and symbolic significance associated with rural and urban space. Throughout the literature, this is often referred to as ‘the cultural turn’, where scholars began to deconstruct the traditional and dominant ways in which rurality and rural spaces had been produced, and instead, examine how individuals and institutions construct and engage with their own realities and meanings they attribute to the world (Woods 2011, 9).

### 3.2 Rural as culturally and symbolically significant

Throughout the cultural turn, analytical focus moves from interpreting space as relative, and later as relational, rather than as absolute (Heley and Jones 2012, 209). With regard to studies on rural spaces, the cultural turn shifted traditional, positivist approaches which relied on dichotomy/continuum frameworks to instead focusing on spatial and cultural aspects (Cloke, 2006). These new perspectives allow for examinations of people’s lives and rural spaces by not only acknowledging the influence of economic and material conditions, but also by the meanings and power attributed to images and myths of rural life (Panelli 2006, 81). One of the first writers to acknowledge the cultural constructions of rural spaces and rurality was Raymond Williams (1973) in his book “*The Country and the City*”.

Williams (1973) presents an important and leading cultural and symbolic examination of society. He reveals how the image of the British countryside as illustrated by others at the time had shifted from a location of work and industry, to one that is mythical and romanticised in societies' popular culture imagination (Hillyard 2007, 137). As Williams (1973, 289) explains:

The country and city are changing historical realities, both in themselves and in their interrelations. Moreover, in our own world, they represent only two kinds of settlement. Our real social experience is not only of the country and the city, in their most singular forms, but of many kinds of intermediate and new kinds of social and physical organisation. Yet the ideas and images of the country and city retain their great force.

Language is identified as an important factor in societal perceptions and interpretations of rural space and rurality. Williams highlights how the terms "country" and "city", along with "rural" and "urban", represent the progression and experience of communities in human society, thus such language continues to evoke powerful feelings and associations amongst individuals (Woods 2011, 3). With society becoming increasingly more industrialised, the countryside offers an alternative from the city which ignites nostalgic images of a picture-postcard tranquil rural landscape (Hillyard 2007, 24; Murdoch et al. 2003, 1). Williams (1973 46-7) suggests however that this romanticised version of the green and peaceful countryside perpetuated in the imagination is not influenced by the working farmer or rural resident, but instead is reinforced through the urban resident who often yearns to retreat from the noise, dangers and traffic of cities.

For Williams, this process commodified the British countryside, turning it from a reality into a symbol (Hillyard 2007, 24). He explains:

What is idealised is not the rural economy, past or present, but a purchased freehold house in the country, or 'a charming coastal retreat', or even 'a barren offshore island'. This is then not a rural but a suburban or dormitory dream (Williams 1973, 47).

This symbolic notion of rurality stemming from imagined and romanticised understandings of the English countryside is referred to as the 'rural idyll', a culturally charged phrase that is both ambiguous and powerful (Short 2006, 133). Much like Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft*, or the idealised countryside identified by Williams, the rural idyll conveys positive images of rural spaces whilst reinforcing simple, healthy and peaceful representations of rurality (Little and Austin 1996, 101). The rural idyll is underpinned by the dominant imagining of the English countryside; a green and pleasant land containing close-knit, peaceful and timeless communities whose relationships are regarded as more 'authentic' and sincere than those found in urban societies which are dishonest and dubious (Valentine 2014, 256; Little and Austin 1996, 102).

Additionally, the rural idyll strongly reinforces the notion of family and heteronormativity, where men and women conform to traditional gender roles and live their lives around the bearing and raising of children (Edgell and Docka 2007, 27; Little 2007, 858). Through this lens, rurality reflects a patriarchal power dynamic where men's roles are situated in the farming or agricultural sphere, with women's importance positioned at the centre of the family and home, (Little and Austin 1996, 102; Little and Panelli 2003, 285). Rural women are constructed

as conservative and traditional, and naturally nurturing and caring (Hughes 1997, 125; Little 1987, 339). Heterosexual family life underpins lifestyles in the rural idyll, and rural spaces are portrayed as safer spaces than the city for children to grow up (Valentine 2014, 257).

These ideas align with a number of traditional perspectives outlined earlier in the chapter which portray rural areas as homogenous spaces, containing specific types of communities and lifestyle characteristics in comparison to urban societies. Such understandings of rural spaces are predominantly positive, reinforced by ideas about tranquillity, communality, and social cohesion. However, unlike these early portrayals of rural spaces, the rural idyll is a phrase which only acquires meaning through the consciousness of, or contradistinction between an un-idyllic 'other' (Short 2006 133). These 'others' are portrayed through the 'rural-horror' or 'anti-idyll' paradigm.

In contrast to the bucolic tranquillity presented in the rural idyll, the rural-horror or anti-idyll paradigm characterises rurality as representing 'backwards' and 'scary' notions of rural life and people (Bell 1997, 94; Murdoch et al. 2003, 257). Through this particular lens, rural spaces are depicted as malignant, decaying, and chaotic, with rural populations thought to engage in incest, inbreeding, and even cannibalism (Valentine 2014, 258). Identities within the rural horror paradigm include 'hillbillies', 'rednecks', and 'white trash', who are still considered country folk, but do not form part of the rural idyll (Bell 2006, 151).

It is clear that whilst the rural idyll often dominates social understandings of rural spaces and rurality, there are acknowledged diversities within such ideas, particularly when comparing rural spaces across international jurisdictions, such as English rural to Australian rural. The following section will outline the specific ways in which rurality is constructed in Australian contexts and compare such constructions with more theoretical constructions of rural space based in the northern hemisphere.

### 3.2.1 Rural Australia

Australia's history of colonisation plays a major role in current understandings and conceptualisations of rurality and rural space. The arrival of European settlers to Australia, for example, also brought the virtues and idealised memory of the English countryside (Davison 2005, 1). As previously outlined, the idyllic representation of a 'green and pleasant land' containing peaceful and timeless communities was the dominant imagining of rural spaces during this time (Valentine 2014, 256). Many newcomers to Australia during settlement therefore retained this idealised memory of the English countryside, which became deeply lodged in the Australian consciousness (Davison 2005, 1). Of course, there are clear contrasts between these two imaginings of rurality.

The English rural idyll is in stark opposition to the 'brown' and 'sunburnt' outback sprawling Australian land, thus Davison (2005, 1) explains that the process of turning the Aussie 'bush' into the English 'countryside' was what colonial Australians often aspired to do. What has resulted is an Australian ideology of national identity that has merged these characteristics to portray rural

Australia or 'the bush' as representing an idyllic quality of life, through picturesque scenery and the sunburnt stockman (Bourke and Lockie 2001, 8). As

Don Watson (2014, 66) explains:

The Australian bush is both real and imaginary. Real, in that it grows in various unmistakable bush-like ways, and dies, rots, burns and grows into the bush again; real, in harbouring life. Imaginary, in that among the life it harbours is the life of the Australian mind. It is, by many accounts, the source of the nation's idea of itself. The bush is everything from the gum tree to any of the creatures that live in it or shelter beneath it, and it is the womb and inspiration of the national character...The bush is a social construct as well as an ecological one: as much as the things that grow and live there, we define it by the people who inhabit it.

This highly romanticised construction of Australian rurality or 'the bush' reinforce images of masculine agriculture and the rural battler (Bell 2005, 177). Rural Australia plays a key role in the construction of this national identity, which is reinforced through images of Ned Kelly, Crocodile Dundee, nameless diggers, sportsmen, pioneers, shearers, swagmen and battlers, all of which demonstrate the quintessential Australian, or 'true-blue Aussie' traits of egalitarianism, loyalty, mateship, physical endurance, and doggedness (Kapferer 1990, 87-8; Bourke and Lockie 2003, 3). Through these portrayals of the Australian rural landscape, women are often rendered invisible (Maidment 2012, 12). This contrasts with constructions of rurality stemming from English influences, where women are domestically situated within the family and the home.

Rural Australian ideology is underpinned by what Don Aitkin (1988) calls 'countrymindedness'. This term refers to a set of beliefs about rural Australia which denote rural communities as superior to urban centres (Bell 2005, 177).

Countrymindedness sets out the following beliefs:

1. Australia depends on its primary producers for its high standard of living, for only those who produce a physical good add to the country's wealth;
2. Therefore all Australians, from city to country alike, should in their own interest support policies aimed at improving the position of the primary industries;
3. Farming and grazing, and rural pursuits generally, are virtuous, ennobling and co-operative; they bring out the best in people;
4. In contrast, city life is competitive and nasty, as well as parasitical
5. The characteristic Australian is a countryman, and the core elements of national character come from the struggles of country people to tame their environment and make it productive. City people are much the same the world over
6. For all these reasons, and others like defence, people should be encouraged to settle in the country, not the city
7. But power resides in the city, where politics is trapped in a sterile debate about classes. There has to be a separate political party for country people to articulate the true voice of the nation

(Aitkin 1988, 51).

This dichotomous distinction between country and city in Australia is an interesting outcome considering the nation's history in comparison to Britain and Europe. As previously outlined, the rural-urban dichotomy stems from the work of classical theorists who were concerned with the process and impacts of industrialisation on traditional folk societies in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century (Tönnies, [1887]1957; Durkheim [1892]2004). In contrast, Australia's history presents a reversed example of these European patterns of migration and urbanisation. As Kapferer (1990, 87) explains:

...the first rural workers and landowners were, by and large, urban people – convicts, currency folk, military men and emancipists. Australian country towns did not develop over long centuries of tribalism and feudalism, but rather sprang, fully armed as it were, from the industrial world of the nineteenth century.

Rural Australia represents a diverse and complex collection of populations, settings, practices, economies, much different to the iconic representations suggested by European theorists of the previous centuries (Maidment 2012, 3; Bell 2005, 176). Such Australian ideals of the rural idyll are thus acknowledged as more imagined than descriptive of contemporary rural contexts (Bourke and Lockie 2001, 3).

These characteristics and images however, continue to find resonance in contemporary understandings and interpretations of rural Australia (Kapferer 1990, 88). Similar to the contrast between the rural idyll and rural horror, those characteristics and actions which differ from what ‘true-blue rural Aussies’ have and do are portrayed by politicians and the media as ‘un-Australian’ (Maidment 2012, 12).

### 3.3 Spatial analyses of rural

The notion of rural has also been subject to spatial analyses. Two key contributors to spatial examinations of rural urban space include Henri Lefebvre (1974) and Keith Halfacree (2006), both of whom developed spatial trilogies to assist in understanding how space is produced, understood and represented in society. Lefebvre’s ([1974]1991) conceptual triad presented in his book “The Production of Space” analyses the interplay between physical, mental, and social

dimensions of space. He described these as either *spatial practices*, *representations of space* and *representational spaces*, or as *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived* spaces (Lefebvre's [1974]1991, 40). Inspired by Lefebvre's work, Halfacree (2006) redeveloped this spatial trilogy to one that applies specifically to rural contexts. His model of rural space identifies three facets: *rural localities*, *formal representations of the rural* and *everyday lives of the rural* (Halfacree 2006, 51). Whilst the rural specification of the latter model highlights a more obvious relevance and applicability to this research, it has been underpinned by and founded upon Lefebvre's spatial trilogy. Therefore, it is important to outline and rely on both frameworks for this research.

### 3.3.1 Henri Lefebvre – The Production of Space

"The Production of Space" was Lefebvre's major philosophical work throughout his career (Merrifield 2013, 99). First published in French in 1974 and later translated to English, Lefebvre's work is considered the foundation of social scientific inquiry into spatiality. Driven by his critical stance of positivist models of science that had been applied to and dominated understandings and conceptualisations of space at that time (Butler 2012, 38-9), Lefebvre developed his own theory to explain spatial relations and connections between *spatial practices*, *representations of space*, and *representational spaces*, or *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived* spaces. Schmid (2008, 41) highlights that Lefebvre's production of space identifies three moments of production: first, material production; second, the production of knowledge; and, third, the production of meaning. They explain how the subject of Lefebvre's theory is not "space in itself",

or the ordering of material objects and artefacts “in space”, but instead, is to be understood in an active sense as an intricate web of relationships that is continuously produced and reproduced (Schmid 2008, 41). According to Lefebvre ([1974]1991, 33), a *spatial practice*:

...embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance.

Spatial practices are the physical practices, routines, networks and communication that arise in everyday life and structure our lived reality (Schmid 2008, 6; Butler 2012, 40; Merrifield 2013, 110). He explains how the spatial practice of a society ‘secretes’ that society's space, whilst propounding and presupposing it in a dialectic interaction (Lefebvre [1974]1991, 38). Spatial practices are therefore revealed through the ‘deciphering’ of space and are closely linked to *perceived* space, that is, people's perceptions of the world and of their world (Merrifield 2013, 110; Halfacree 2006, 50; Lefebvre [1974]1991, 38). These spaces are observable and sensory, which can be directly seen, heard, smelled etc. (Buser 2012, 284).

The second dimension of Lefebvre's ([1974]1991, 33) triad is *representations of space*:

...which are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to ‘frontal’ relations.

They are formal conceptualisations of space as constructed and articulated by planners, geographers, developers, capitalists, and the like (Merrifield 2013, 109; Halfacree 2006, 50). Lefebvre ([1974]1991, 39) considers representations of space as the dominant space in any society. Representations of space are those that are conceptualised, defined and *conceived*, and where order, verbal descriptions, language, discourses, definitions and the written word are produced (Buser 2012, 284; Butler 2012, 41).

The third and final dimension of the triad is *representational spaces*, which Lefebvre ([1974]1991, 33) describes as:

...embodying complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art (which may come eventually to be defined less as a code of space than as a code of representational spaces).

Representational spaces do not refer to the spaces themselves, but to the process of signification that links itself to the (material) symbol (Schmid 2008, 37). To Lefebvre ([1974]1991, 39), representational spaces are directly *lived* through the associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'. Representational spaces are the dominated space, where the imagination seeks change and appropriation through overlaying the physical space and making symbolic use of its objects, through non-verbal symbols and signs (Lefebvre [1974]1991, 39). Whilst this framework identifies three separate dimension which contribute to the production of space, Lefebvre ([1974]1991, 43) reinforces that each must be understood as fundamentally of equal value. Space is therefore at once perceived, conceived, and lived.

### 3.3.2 Keith Halfacree – Three-fold architecture of rural space

Drawing on Lefebvre's work, Keith Halfacree (2006) similarly presents a framework for understanding and interpreting space, but in relation to rural contexts specifically. Halfacree's (2006, 44) three-fold attempts to explore present day characteristics of rural space. The aim of this framework is described by Halfacree (2006) as bringing together dispersed elements of what is already known about rural space, whilst identifying those elements that are unknown or 'lost'. In his previous writings on rural space and rurality, Halfacree (1993, 34) argued how literature failed to make a clear distinction between rural as a type of locality, and also as a social representation – that is, rural as 'space' and rural as 'representing space'. To address this, he explained:

...when we consider (rural) space, we must not only consider the structures producing that space, but also the way in which that space is subsequently used to produce other space and fundamentally to reproduce the original causal structures themselves (Halfacree 1993, 27).

Halfacree's (2006) three-fold model of space includes *rural localities*, *formal representations of the rural* and *everyday lives of the rural*.

Rural localities refer to those distinct spatial practices linked to production or consumption activities, including agricultural and mining practices. These practices are considered as distinct to rural contexts. Formal representations of the rural refer to the way in which rural is framed within and commodified by the (capitalist) production process by bureaucrats or politicians. The final dimension of Halfacree's framework refers to the everyday lives of the rural which

incorporate individual and social elements, such as culture and lifestyle, in cognitive interpretations. Overall, Halfacree's approach emphasises the symbols and signs people imagine when thinking about rural spaces and rurality, rather than simply identifying social, demographic, environmental and economic attributes which distinguish rural from urban (Brown and Schafft 2011, 4-5).

These iconic ideals and the characteristics attributed to rural spaces and the people and communities within them, have been challenged in recent decades due to resources boom and the subsequent increase in the mining industry. These spaces previously familiar with particular customs and 'ways of life' are experiencing dramatic socio-demographic changes and impacts as a result of contemporary mining industry practices (Maidment 2012, 9). The following section will outline the history of mining in rural parts of Australia, and its impact on rural communities, as well as offer an analysis of how mining opens the door to other urban practices, like sex work, which serve to disrupt the rural imaginary.

### 3.4 Australian Mining Industry

The history of Australia's mining industry is extensive. From the gold rushes in the late nineteenth century (Blainey, 2003) to the large scale resource extraction and exportation practiced today, the Australian mining industry has and continues to be an important contributor to the national economy (Measham et al. 2013, 184). This has been particularly evident in the past two decades where Australia's resources sector has reached record heights as a result of increased globalisation and international demand for Australian minerals. For example, in 2010-2011, the mining industry contributed 55% (\$136 billion) of the total value

of goods exported from Australia, adding 8.4% (\$121.5 billion) to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). In 2012-2013, mining industry exports from Australia increased to \$180 billion, contributing 10% (\$149.3 billion) to Australia's GDP (Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics, 2013). Despite slight decreases in subsequent financial years, Australian exports from the resources industry are still expected to reach \$176 billion in the 2016-2017 period (Office of the Chief Economist 2016, 19). Whilst the evident success of the industry can be easily attributed to the extensive supply and range of minerals in Australia's 'resource-rich' landscapes (Richmond and Sharma 1983, 1), a key factor underpinning the most recent and largest boom period has been the dramatic shift in industry practices and structures.

Prior to the 1980s, government approval to operate mining projects in Australia was granted to mining companies on the basis that those corporations would agree to build or substantially finance local community infrastructure, whilst sourcing the majority of their employees from the surrounding town/s (Carrington and Pereira 2011, 3). To meet this requirement, companies instead often established purpose-built towns in rural and regional parts of Australia to accommodate mine workers and their families (Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 337). This was considered as the preferred and sometimes only option for mining companies due to the relative isolation of the proposed mine site, the need to attract workers, and the inability for state or federal government to provide the required funding and infrastructure necessary to begin the development (Sharma 1983, 160). However, by funding the construction and maintenance of a town, the

mining company also retained control of managing the administration of it, leading to many purpose-built towns existing as 'closed communities' (Perry and Rowe 2015, 141). Essentially, this meant that mining companies controlled who entered and resided within the town by only providing access to accommodation and other living requirements/services to individuals employed by the corporation, where termination of employment would inevitably result in forced departure from the town (Sharma 1983, 160). Of course, this created several challenges.

Due to the lack of the critical mass of a population in closed purpose-built towns, such communities lacked a balanced socio-demographic structure and comprehensive human services to serve the residents (Scott, Carrington and Pereira 2011, 154). Issues also arose between mining companies and local government authorities regarding who was responsible for providing (and funding) those amenities and services that were lacking in the townships (Perry and Rowe 2015, 141). Additionally, there were limited opportunities for economic and demographic diversification through the establishments of small businesses and investment from larger companies, as such ventures were dependent on the willingness of the administering mining company to sub-lease land and approve such partnerships (Petkova et al. 2009, 213). However, since the last purpose-built town (Roxby Downs) was established in Australia in the late 1980s, mining companies have moved towards more cost-effective and profitable methods of sourcing employees and investing funds.

Mining projects now operate on continuous 24-hour production cycles with a heavy reliance on non-resident 'Fly-In, Fly-Out' (FIFO) or 'Drive-In, Drive-Out' (DIDO) workforces (Petkova and Marinova 2013, 153; Perry and Rowe 2015, 143; Petkova et al. 2009, 213; Rolfe and Kinnear 2013, 126). Mine workers alternate between 12-hour day and night shifts on block rosters, usually followed by an extended period of leave, for example 14 days on, 7 days off (Lockie et al. 2009, 332; Carrington and Pereira 2011, 3; Storey 2001, 135). In between shifts, workers are mostly housed in temporary accommodation camps located on or nearby the mine sites (Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 340). These camps consist of single person quarters set up in demountable air-conditioned units, also called 'dongas', with the camps also containing common areas for meals, laundry services, sport and recreational facilities, and sometimes even a 'wet mess' serving alcohol (Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 153). However, there are also several towns where mining companies instead rent private houses located within towns for their workers (Perry and Rowe 2015, 145).

By adopting these contemporary practices and work structures, mining companies now avoid costs associated with the construction and maintenance of purpose-built towns, service provisioning and industrial pursuits, whilst avoiding administrative implications of simultaneously managing an entire town and a mine site (Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 338; Storey 2001, 136). Additionally, the FIFO/DIDO option allows companies to attract and source employees from other parts of Australia and around the world, without being required to invest and fund permanent housing or infrastructure (Rolfe and

Kinnear 2013, 126). FIFO/DIDO options also present individualised benefits for mine workers by presenting them with the opportunity to earn high incomes, to have flexibility with where they live versus where they work, whilst also allowing them to use their extended leave periods for recreational purposes (Scott, Carrington, McIntosh 2011, 154). However, despite these advantages, a growing area of research on contemporary FIFO/DIDO mining operations has identified significant issues and impacts of these practices on rural spaces, both communities and individuals.

Rural and regional mining towns throughout Australia subject to FIFO/DIDO practices are experiencing dramatic population growth and demographic imbalance. Large influxes of non-resident, predominantly male 'visitors' to these locations are imposing significant burdens on local services and amenities (such as water, sewerage, hospitals, emergency services and roads) whilst impacting the quality of life for permanent residents (Carrington and Pereira 2011, 13; Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 340; Measham et al. 2013, 187; Hajkowicz, Heyenga and Moffat 2011, 33; Rolfe and Kinnear 2013, 127; Perry and Rowe 2015, 145). The 'fly-over effects' (Storey, 2001) of FIFO/DIDO practices contribute to the loss of local benefits in mining towns, with labour forces, contractors, service centres, and supply chains predominantly being outsourced from larger regional hubs and capital cities (Measham et al. 2013, 189; Rolfe and Kinnear 2013, 126). Local businesses and services find it difficult competing with the high wages and benefits offered by mining companies and therefore struggle to attract and retain employees (Petkova et al. 2009, 220; Petkova and Marinova

2015, 23). Shortages of permanent and temporary affordable housing in mining towns has also been identified as a significant issue, with the industry contributing to the dramatic inflation of costs associated with buying and renting properties (Lockie et al. 2009, 335; Carrington and Pereira 2011, 13; Measham et al. 2012, 187). Many permanent residents in these towns who are low-income earners or non-mine employees simply are unable to afford the increased costs associated with living and housing, therefore forcing them out of the township (Lockie et al. 2009, 336; Measham et al. 2012, 189; Petkova and Marinova 2015, 22). This becomes particularly problematic for mining towns to be 'functional' communities, with key service workers (such as teachers, health practitioners, retail workers etc.) being unable to afford high costs of living in mining regions, and consequently emigrating to other towns (Measham et al. 2013, 189).

With the continuous changing demographic from FIFO/DIDO operations and increased lack of permanency amongst local populations, mining towns are experiencing a loss of identity and an overall sense of community, with an 'us and them' mentality between the two populations often arising (Measham et al. 2013, 189; Petkova and Marinova 2015, 23; Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 160). Within these towns, roads are occupied by unfamiliar vehicles, landscapes are overwhelmed with industrial machinery, and public spaces are full of 'outsiders' who are contrasted against the traditional characteristics of people who live in the area (Everingham, Devenin and Collins 2015; Petkova et al. 2009, 222).

Additionally, FIFO/DIDO culture associated to this industry is perceived by local mining residents as antisocial, where the workers simply 'don't belong' in

rural communities (Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 159). With the long shift work practices of mining and workers predominantly traveling to locations outside of local mining towns during their off-weeks, FIFO/DIDO miners are unable to adequately contribute to and participate in community organisations and groups (Petkova et al. 2009, 222). Therefore, these workers have no meaningful attachment to the surrounding community and present a threat to sustainable community development (Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 340; Petkova and Marinova 2015, 22).

Research also highlights many significant issues of FIFO/DIDO at a micro-level. Periodic absences of FIFO/DIDO mine workers from their permanent residences, compressed work schedules, and long shift hours have been identified as placing physical strains on miners and increasing their safety risk towards themselves and others (Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 154). For example, DIDO practices involving long drives to and from site between shifts or rosters present increased risks for motor vehicle accidents and road fatalities (Petkova et al. 2009, 223; Perry and Rowe 2015, 145). Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh (2011, 346) argue that DIDO mining workers who are fatigued from their atypical work rosters are more likely to be killed or injured on the roads whilst commuting to or from work, than they are on the worksite. Moreover, FIFO/DIDO arrangements have been identified as having negative impacts on workers and their families, contributing to relationship/marriage breakdown, increase of mental health issues, suicides, and drug and alcohol abuse (Petkova et al. 2009, 221-222; Markey, Ryser and Halseth 2015, 141). With high disposable incomes and limited

recreational or entertainment options available whilst rostered on, mine workers have been found to increasingly engage in socially undesirable activities within rural and regional mining communities, such as excessive alcohol consumption, gambling and commercial sex (supplied by FIFO sex workers) (Carrington, McIntosh and Scott 2010, 402; Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 161; Pini, Mayes and Boyer 2013, 169).

These modern trends of mining involving temporary accommodation for large transient populations, who are also predominantly sourced beyond the rural location where the mine is situated, presents a number of issues for rural communities. FIFO/DIDO populations create large burdens on local services and amenities, without any meaningful attachment or contribution to the local community. Such a lack of attachment or contribution stands in opposition to representations of the rural, which emphasise strong community bonds, common tasks and a unified, homogenous population. In fact, these characteristics represent not only conflict with the traditional ideals of rural spaces but a representation of the urban: disconnected populations in competition with dissimilar beliefs. FIFO/DIDO workers are therefore constructed as 'the other' in rural contexts and deemed the cause of any social disorganisation or anti-social behaviour evident in rural towns. Importantly for this thesis, such anti-social behaviour not only includes violence, and criminal behaviour, but the influx of sex work as a key disruptor. While it will be discussed in more detail in later chapters, an ambivalent relationship toward sex work exists in these towns where mining brings the urban male outsider into the rural imaginary, with many of the

concerns underpinned by anxieties about the transformation of traditional rural spaces to modern urban spaces.

### 3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed classic and contemporary literature which engages with rural spaces and ideas of rurality to identify how the rural imaginary has been constructed in contemporary Australian society. From this discussion, it is clear that historical perspectives driven by the rural-urban dichotomy continue to inform present day understandings of rural spaces and rurality with regard to such contexts being distinct to urban spaces. However, the Australian rural imaginary is also heavily influenced by iconic and masculine representations and images of 'the bush', 'the outback', and the 'Aussie battler', where rural communities demonstrate supportive communal relationships towards each other and experience a 'higher quality of life' than people in urban settings. This imagining of rural space suggest that negative and/or anti-social behaviours and issues only exist in the metropolis.

The mining industry however is evidently challenging these ideals and understandings. Mining populations are deemed 'outsiders' and their presence in rural spaces is seen to influence negative and anti-social behaviours and issues in local communities. The existence of sex work in these spaces for example is therefore attributed solely to the presence of mining populations. This interpretation is also applied to other behaviours and activities such as drug and alcohol use, gambling, violence, and crime.

It is clear that these concerns raised regarding the social impacts of mining and mining populations in rural spaces indicate evident anxieties about the transformation of space. The mining 'outsiders' and their associated 'urban' behaviours are interpreted as aiding in the transformation of traditional rural spaces to urban spaces. This particular sense of 'loss' was similarly identified by Tönnies and Durkheim during the industrial revolution. Despite rural spaces in contemporary Australian society being highly urbanised as a result of technology and transportation improvements, imagined understandings of rural Australia continue to hold onto the notion of such spaces representing a pre-industrial, pre-modern version of society.

# Chapter 4 – Literature Review

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## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter will review relevant literature on sex work to determine how notions of space and spatiality are represented and referred to in scholarly discussions of this topic. In doing so, the chapter will answer this project's second research question:

### **2. How do notions of space play out in discussions of rural sex work within existing literature?**

Additionally, the discussion will highlight the gap in existing literature, thereby identifying this project's original and significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

Firstly, the discussion will outline the dominance of urban contexts in current scholarly writings on sex work, whilst subsequently highlighting the overall lack of specific focus and attention directed to sex work in rural spaces. The discussion will then follow on with a review of the small body of existing literature which does focus specifically on sex work in rural contexts to outline what is actually known about sex work in these settings and determine whether notions of space and spatiality are present in such discussions. Following this, the chapter will review a broader scope of existing literature focusing on the spatial contours and spatial governance of sex work. As will be demonstrated, these discussions are predominantly situated within urban contexts.

Overall, the chapter will argue that existing literature is limited in explaining the influences behind the spatial regulation of work in specifically rural contexts. Instead, current knowledge about the spatial influences towards regulatory approaches to sex work in urban spaces is vast, but fails to acknowledge any specificity towards spaces that are rural, or non-urban. This thesis addresses this shortfall by demonstrating the extent to which notions of space, and specifically the rural imaginary, permeate political debate on sex work.

#### 4.1 The study of sex work

Often (mistakenly) claimed as the ‘world’s oldest profession’ (Matthews 2008, 22), sex work has and continues to be a dominant topic for scholarly examination. Purported as a social and moral issue that threatens the integrity of society (Scoular et al. 2007, 11), sex work is argued to be a catalyst for organised crime, the degradation of communities, the increased abuse of drugs and alcohol amongst participants, and acts of official corruption (Harcourt, Egger and Donovan 2005, 121; Gibbs Van Brunschot 2003, 218). Additionally, sex work is frequently linked with human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, violence, the spread of disease (Scott 2011, 63; Scoular 2004, 344; Weitzer 2010b, 71), and thus identified as an issue requiring empirical attention and authoritative intervention. As such, the body of existing literature on sex work is extensive.

Previous research includes studies which have reviewed historical trends of sex work (Sullivan, 1997); theorised and conceptualised sex work (Overall, 1992; Scoular, 2004; Weitzer, 2005a, 2005b); characterised different forms of sex work (Sanders, O’Neill and Pitcher, 2009;); outlined and critiqued criminal justice

and policy approaches addressing sex work (Weitzer 1999, 2009; Crofts and Summerfield, 2007); examined the impacts of sex work on surrounding communities (Kingston, 2014; Bellis et al., 2007; O'Neill et al., 2008); identified risks involved in participating in sex work (Sanders, 2004a, 2004b; Salfati et al., 2008; O'Doherty, 2011); and examined educational programs used to 'deter' clients from seeking out commercial sexual services (Gurd and O'Brien, 2013).

Interestingly though, despite the large and diverse cross-disciplinary collection of scholarly literature on this topic, such empirical discussions are predominantly situated within, and in reference to, sex work in urban contexts and settings. This due to sex work being mostly presented, understood, and examined as a distinctly urban phenomenon (Hubbard 1998, 55; Scott et al. 2006, 152). The dominant urban-centric portrayal of sex work in academic scholarship can be linked to the historic theoretical constructions of rural and rurality as outlined in the previous chapter, where sex work is a form of deviance and vice associated to the disorganisation of the city. However, whilst rural sex work has been largely neglected in empirical studies, it is a growing area of inquiry within the social sciences. The following section will outline the body of research which does focus strictly on rural sex work in both Western and non-Western contexts.

## 4.2 Rural sex work

A small number of studies examining rural sex work in Western contexts have been conducted in Australia and the United States of America (Scott et al. 2006; Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck, 2010), both of which focus on the regulatory issues rather than on the spatial matters, meaning their motivation for the

research was to discuss the impact of legalisation or decriminalisation on sex work, rather than to discuss the spatial context of sex work in a rural community. While it is the latter rather than the former which is the focus for this thesis, their work is nevertheless relevant given the few studies that have engaged with sex work in rural locations in developed nations. Additionally, the findings from these studies identify subtle differences between urban and rural sex work which does support ideals of the rural imaginary.

In the Australian study, Scott et al. (2006) examine rural sex work in New South Wales, the only state in the country to decriminalise the sex industry completely. Similarly, the American research examines the legal brothel industry in rural counties in the state of Nevada, the only jurisdiction in the USA which does not prohibit sex work. The research demonstrates that commercial sex is an increasing and thriving industry in rural contexts as a result of improvements in technology, communication, transportation and growth in industry and tourism (Scott et al. 2006, 159; Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010, 224).

Overall, both projects argue that legalisation or decriminalisation approaches towards sex work are more effective than prohibitionist or abolitionist frameworks. Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck (2010, 233) highlight how Nevada's legal brothels have prevented violence, disease, and severe exploitation amongst workers and clients, whilst also demonstrating that the rural communities surrounding legal brothels do not experience negative impacts. They explain how the legality of brothels in Nevada allows for such establishments to operate as part of a legitimate industry, improving working

conditions and standards of practice (Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2006, 226). Scott et al. (2006) acknowledge similar advantages for the decriminalisation of the industry in NSW. Sex workers experience flexibility with work hours and services, and can generally operate without fear of criminal sanctions throughout the state. However, it is also acknowledged that NSW sex work laws are urban-centric, largely directed at the regulation of inner-city workers (Scott 2016, 79). This can present problems for sex workers in rural settings, as was demonstrated in the past where home based private workers in rural and regional NSW were directly and unfairly targeted by local councils due to regulatory provisions in the legislation (Scott et al. 2006, 155).

The studies also highlight key features of sex work that are distinct to rural contexts, whilst identifying many similarities between brothels and escort work in rural and urban contexts. Findings demonstrate that a diverse range of services are offered by sex workers in rural settings, including physical and emotional forms of labour (Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010; Scott et al. 2006). Brothel workers in Nevada were found to engage in multiple roles to address the needs of different clients, such as playing out complicated fantasies and serving as counsellors to men who simply wanted to have a conversation (Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010, 225). Similarly, sex workers in NSW explained how their clients were more likely to seek intimate and emotional services from them, with a focus on communication and affection (Scott et al. 2006, 161). This was attributed to the attitudes of clients in rural settings who were described as being 'more respectful' than clients in urban contexts (Scott et al. 2006, 161). While the

very existence of sex work in rural spaces is an anathema to much of the theoretical discussions on rural communities, such a finding also plays into the idea of the rural imaginary while simultaneously seeking to disrupt it. The idea that clients are more respectful, supports ideas about the cohesiveness and mutual relations and shared values of rural communities. However, the need for emotional support from paid sex workers appears to undermine these same values, replacing them with urban ideas about impersonality and anonymity.

Women working in the sex industry in rural settings are also described as experiencing a higher job satisfaction than in urban settings. Workers were identified as mostly mature, resourceful individuals who have made a conscious choice to participate in the industry, unlike the common myth of sex work being an act of survival or sex workers as victims lacking agency (Scott et al. 2006, 163). With rural sex workers more often being of an older age than urban workers, they are considered to be more 'comfortable' with the work they engage in (Scott et al. 2006, 161). Additionally, rural sex workers do not disassociate themselves mentally from the work they engage in, but instead, implement effective strategies and techniques for managing and addressing emotional distress and physical or psychological burn-out (Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010, 225-6). Overall, attitudes of sex workers in rural settings regarding their working conditions, experiences, and opinions of the industry were predominantly positive. These again seem to operationalise the ideals of rural communities as capable of counterbalancing the negative consequences of an occupation that is deemed to epitomise the urban, like sex work.

There were however a number of negative factors identified by sex workers with regard to working in rural contexts. Despite the legality of sex work in these contexts, the reported positive attitudes of workers and clients, and the appropriate conditions of the industry, such work is still subject to levels of shame and stigma leading to the poor enforcement of house rules that surpass set labour laws, through restrictions on mobility, excessive fines, and 24-hour shifts (Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010, 150). For private workers in NSW, sex work is also a stigmatised activity and confidentiality in rural settings was identified as a concern. With smaller populations in rural areas, there is an increased likelihood for sex workers (and their families) to come into contact with clients in public (Scott et al. 2006, 162). The unified nature of rural spaces, the frequent interactions between community members and their cohesiveness is driving such concerns. Related issues of privacy are also raised by rural politicians in subsequent chapters when supporting the brothel provisions of the Prostitution Act. As such, they elaborate on early 19<sup>th</sup> century theorisations of rural space as a *Gemeinschaft* form of community and thus present an idealised form that is unlikely to exist except in the imaginary.

Other negative aspects of rural sex work relate to specialist and health services for workers in rural settings. Whilst the findings indicated that safe sex practices and condom use is of a high standard amongst rural sex workers (Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010, 126; Scott et al. 2006, 162), access to relevant health services presented challenges. Sexual health clinics are often located in larger regional or metropolitan hubs, and general medical services in

rural towns are often in high demand with limited hours of operation (Scott 2016, 80). Therefore, rural sex workers face unique difficulties regarding access to health checks and screenings in comparison to workers in urban settings. Here the rural works to disadvantage the sex worker who seeks anonymity in accessing medical clinics.

Studies on sex work in rural spaces are not restricted to the Western world. However, like research on rural sex work in developed nations, such research is motivated by an exploration of working conditions and sexual health of workers rather than by spatial considerations. Interestingly, such research on rural sex work in underdeveloped nations has identified diverse and contrasting sex industries, characteristics, and working conditions in rural communities, thus appearing to challenge western theorisations that centred on unity and cohesiveness across rural spaces. However, like western research on rural sex work, comparisons between rural and urban sex work dominate, perhaps due to the impersonal and contractual relationship epitomised in sex work that makes it so representative of urban spaces.

Puradiredja and Coast (2012) created a typology of sex work by analysing and comparing female sex workers (FSW) in rural and urban settings in Indonesia. Findings indicated FSW in rural contexts were generally more disadvantaged than their urban counterparts, older and less educated (Puradiredja and Coast 2012, 2). Additionally, consistent condom use was identified as lower by rural FSW due to the lack of accessibility to HIV/STI intervention and prevention efforts compared to urban workers (Puradiredja and

Coast 2012, 9). This finding contrasts with the previously discussed research by Scott et al. (2006) and Brents, Jackson and Hausbeck (2010), which indicated high standards of safe sex in rural contexts they studied in western nations. However, this difference is attributed to the contrasting socio-economic context of rural settings in developed and underdeveloped nations and appears to challenge western notions of the rural imaginary.

The lack of economic opportunities for women in non-western rural contexts was also highlighted by Dandona et al. (2006). They examined FSW in rural and urban parts of Andhra Pradesh, a state in India which has one of the highest rates of HIV prevalence in the country. The study indicated that on average, rural FSW in this region started sex work at an earlier age than urban FSW and were therefore identified as more vulnerable to HIV infection (Dandona et al., 2006).

Other research in these contexts focus on how family and kinship networks influence participation in the sex industry. Taylor (2005) conducted an examination of two villages in northern Thailand to identify the predictive risk factors associated with young girls entering into hazardous labour. The findings indicated that birth position, parental marital instability, and educational attainment were key predictors of a girl entering child labour, prostitution, and trafficking (Taylor 2005, 411). For example, because of the common structure of the family in these villages, a firstborn daughter, who is considered responsible for her younger siblings, was generally found to be more protected from hazardous labour due to the importance of her role in the home (Taylor 2005,

423). This was contrasted in research by Sano (2012) which examined the resilience of adolescent girls from rural Indramayu (West Java) who entered the sex industry. Through case studies of four young girls, the research identified how parents and family members often played vital roles in influencing or forcing them into the sex trade. Despite resisting, the young girls often succumbed to pressure from relatives to enter the industry as a means to financially support their families (Sano 2012, 25-32).

Though diverse, these studies offer an important insight into the conditions and characteristics of rural sex work, highlighting both distinct and similar features to sex work in urban contexts, and also, of rural sex work in developed and undeveloped countries. Whilst there are implicit references to the spatial contours of rural sex work with regard to the physical locations of where the activity occurs, these studies are limited in providing an understanding about the influence behind the spatial governance of sex work in rural contexts.

The Australian and US research indicate that the spatial regulation of sex work in rural contexts is driven by the legal status of such activity. For example, sex work in America is restricted to brothels in rural counties away from busy tourist districts (Bretners, Jackson and Hausbeck 2010), with rural sex work in NSW restricted to private spaces such as brothels, motels and homes (Scott et al. 2006, 159). Both studies highlight the aim of legislative practices, which is to restrict the visibility of sex work. The research on rural sex work in undeveloped nations provides examples of the diversity of sex industries across various rural contexts but again, empirical focus is predominantly towards the characteristics of sex

workers and the work they engage with, rather than the spatial regulation of such activity. It is therefore important to review existing literature which does discuss the spatial governance of sex work in urban settings to identify what is and is not known about this particular topic and to identify how the current research will contribute a rural perspective to this body of knowledge.

### 4.3 Spatial approaches to sex work

There are two clear paradigms through which notions of space and spatiality are highlighted throughout scholarly discussions of sex work. The first paradigm focuses on ***types of sex work*** by discussing the physical spaces in which the various forms of sex work exist. This includes indoor versus outdoor sex work, public versus private sex (work), and thus rural versus urban sex work. As previously identified, the existing literature on rural sex work specifically is limited, therefore this part of the discussion will focus on research situated in urban contexts. Additionally, this section of the chapter will provide a discussion about why sex work is often deemed a social problem and why it is generally objected to. As will be further elaborated, such attitudes towards sex work are highly influential for the spatial regulation and governance of sex work in rural communities.

The second paradigm which highlights the spatial contours of sex work relates to the ***regulatory approaches*** used to govern such activity. These include discussions about the political and bureaucratic regulation of sex work enforced through criminal justice frameworks (for example, criminalisation, legalisation and decriminalisation). Through these frameworks, sex work can be restricted to

or prohibited from particular spaces, both public and private. The second paradigm also includes discussions about the moral regulation of sex work, where sex work is spatially governed and regulated through processes that are influenced by public moralities, social norms and narratives, and also moral geographies.

#### 4.3.1 Existence of sex work

Throughout scholarly discussions about the existence and types of sex work in society, notions of space and spatiality are highlighted with regard to the physical spaces where such activity takes place. Two key typologies produced include Weitzer's (2010, 8) indoor vs. outdoor sex work and Harcourt and Donovan's (2005) direct and indirect types of sex work. The first typology identifies six types of sex work and provides a simplified list of physical spaces where such activity occurs including private premises and hotels, brothels, and massage parlours (Weitzer 2010, 8). Sex work locations have been expanded in more detail by others to include licensed and unlicensed brothels, saunas and massage parlours, privately rented or owned flats or houses or hotels, clubs and bars (Sanders 2007, 34; Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 35). In contrast, outdoor forms of sex work occur in streets, cars, alleyways and parks (Weitzer 2010, 8).

Harcourt and Donovan (2005) offer a more detailed and expanded typology of sex work by categorising such activity as either direct or indirect. They explain how sex work is identified as 'direct' if the primary purpose of the

interaction is to exchange sex for a fee, with indirect sex work involving little to no genital intercourse, or genital intercourse after a previous transaction has been made (Harcourt and Donovan 2005, 201). Examples of these include broader activities that may involve little to no genital contact, such as lap dancing, bondage and discipline, and erotic massage, along with 'sex for drugs' or 'survival sex', where a sex worker will provide sexual services in exchange for drugs and/or food (Harcourt and Donovan 2005, 203).

The typology identifies similar physical spaces for where direct and indirect forms of sex work exist, including brothels, hotels, private homes, clubs, bars, streets, and parks (Harcourt and Donovan 2005, 202). Additionally, it highlights the existence of sex work on transportation vehicles, where sex workers board trains, trucks or ships to service crew members. Unlike the previous typology, Harcourt and Donovan (2005, 203) also acknowledge how sex work is facilitated through technological or virtual spaces including the internet, telephone and mobile phones, and CB radios.

There are of course differing social attitudes and objections towards the various types of sex work which contribute to and influence regulatory approaches towards such activity. Often conducted out of public view, indoor forms of sex work are more discreet in nature (Abel 2014, 587; Weitzer 2012, 23) and therefore generate little public nuisance, resulting in less negative attention from the police and public (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 36). Indoor sex work is also arguably the 'safer' form of sex work due to the number of formal control and security practices commonly implemented in such activity. Licensed

venues such as brothels and massage parlours for example are subject to official regulation, legal requirements and compulsory security measures, such as video surveillance, panic buttons installed in working rooms and the ability to call police for assistance if required due to having the status of a licensed business (Weitzer 2009, 218-9; Weitzer 2012a, 23; Hausbeck and Brents 2010, 272; Sanders and Campbell 2008, 51). However, indoor forms of sex work are not always safe and risk-free.

Escort work for example, where sex workers conduct 'call-out' services to clients' hotel rooms or residences whilst alone, is considered risky and significantly contributes to the vulnerability of workers (Weitzer 2009, 219). However interestingly, escort services are considered to have higher status and social acceptance than other instances of sex work. This can be linked to financial and social factors that are relative to escort work specifically, such as the types of clientele attracted to such services (generally individuals with high socio-economic status due to costly service fees), the high profits presented for the workers, along with the overall discreet nature of such work limiting public awareness and therefore objection to this particular form of sex work (Lewis et al. 2005, 149; Weitzer 2009, 219). Additionally, structural conditions can influence a sex worker's vulnerability when conducting indoor sex work. These include the workers' immigration status, drug dependency, third-party practices (such as protectors vs. exploiters), net earnings and options for leaving the trade (Weitzer 2009, 218). Despite this, forms of outdoor or street sex work are argued to present a higher risk of danger for workers and clients.

Outdoor or street sex work is portrayed as the most undesirable form of commercial sex as it presents increased risks for drug and alcohol abuse, violence, exploitation, coercion and HIV/AIDS (Harcourt and Donovan 2005, 202; Porter and Bonilla 2010, 164; Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 19; Weitzer 2010a, 9). Though all these aspects can exist in any form of sex work, street practices present the most prevalent cases. Street sex workers are described as occupying the lowest branch of the sex work hierarchy, whilst simultaneously receiving the majority of negative stigma from society (Thompson 2000, 225-6; Weitzer 2005, 215). The high visibility of street-based sex workers often leads to this group being the subject of moral and public nuisance discourses arguing for the exclusion of this group from social spaces (Abel 2014, 589).

Street-based sex workers are also more likely to engage in risky sexual practices (such as unprotected sex) or 'survival sex' out of the dire necessity to support substance abuse habits (Harcourt and Donovan 2005, 204; Weitzer 2009, 218; Weitzer 2007, 28). Additionally, street sex workers are argued to be most vulnerable to victimisation by instances of rape, kidnapping, robbery and assault (Weitzer 2005, 216; Phoenix, 2007; Thompson 2000, 226; Plumridge and Abel 2001, 82). Customers are found to be the most frequent perpetrators of these crimes against sex workers; however, pimps, police officers and other sex workers have been known to perpetrate violence (Porter and Bonilla 2010, 164). Whilst a large collection of research identifies street sex work as presenting the most risk for sex workers, it is important to recognise that not all cases of street sex work can be understood in this manner. Some sex workers prefer to engage

in street or outdoor work, due to the potentially increased level of autonomy and unregulated working conditions that they can gain as a result (Harcourt and Donovan 2005, 202).

However, despite this, the majority of social and scholarly discussion around sex work is most commonly directed towards the outdoor or street instances of such activity (Weitzer, 2010a; O'Doherty, 2011; Hubbard and Prior, 2012). This is despite street sex work generally accounting for only a minimal proportion of the industry (Porter and Bonilla 2010, 163; Hubbard and Prior 2012, 142). Ideas and understandings about street sex work continue to reinforce the stereotypical image of the damaged, diseased and drug-addicted sex worker which dominates cultural understandings and perspectives of the sex industry (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 19; Weitzer 2010a, 9). These negative generalisations are frequently portrayed through the media and are thus highly influential towards social attitudes and regulatory approaches towards sex work (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 38).

There are five clear themes that emerge from the literature with regard to the social objections to sex work, including factors relating to morality, public nuisance, safety, crime, and health. Again, these objections are predominantly discussed in relation to the existence of sex work in urban settings.

#### *4.3.1.1 Sex work as an issue of 'morality'*

Sex work involves the transaction of sexual services for something of value, such as money or drugs (Monto 2004, 161), and is therefore argued to deviate from the socially acceptable 'norm' of sex – being sex with a loved partner, or sex

between spouses in a nuclear family (Agustin 2005, 67). Essentially, sex work is positioned as standing at the boundary between sexualities that are considered by society as good, healthy and normal, with those that are considered overtly deviant (Hubbard and Prior 2012, 143). Sex is constructed to be an activity reserved for married couples (Weitzer 2006, 33). This activity is therefore identified as a threat to the institution of marriage, because of how it breaks the link between sex, love and reproduction (Weitzer and Ditmore 2010, 332; Weitzer 2010b, 70). Thus, the commercial exchange of sex lacks the socially constructed 'emotional' aspect attributed to 'normal' sex and is therefore interpreted by society to be immoral and deviant.

Individuals who engage in sex work are similarly condemned and considered somewhat morally degenerate due to their willingness to reduce sex to a simple commercial exchange (O'Neill et al. 2008, 76; Scott 2011, 54). However, this differentiation between the 'deviants' who engage in sex work, and the morally 'good' individuals in society who don't, is evident more so towards sex workers rather than the clients. Despite an act of sex work requiring the involvement of two parties – a sex worker and client – it is predominantly the sex worker that receives the majority of the negative stigma and attention. The different social perceptions of sex workers and clients can be linked to traditional social constructions of gender where there is a sexual double standard making women more culpable than men for engaging in such activity (Sallmaan 2010, 147). Males are often assumed to have a 'biological need for sex' (Carpenter 2000, 19); therefore, the practice of a male client purchasing commercial sexual services

fits the social construction of masculinity, due to how such behaviour can be regarded as biologically 'normal' for that gender. Soliciting a sex worker is thus a temporal activity for men, but women who engage in such activity are subject to negative stigma (Sallmaan 2010, 147).

The practice of sex work highly conflicts with the constructed ideals of femininity, which are described as representing notions of purity and chastity (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 2). Females who engage in sex work are separated from those females who do not, and are positioned as being an abject 'other' in society (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 39; Abel and Fitzgerald 2010b, 239). They are considered deviant and psychologically damaged, with the ability to corrupt men and 'good' women (Sullivan 1997, 100). Female sex workers are argued to symbolise an unacceptable form of femininity due to how their 'deviant sexual behaviour' diminishes overall levels of female 'purity' (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 2) and undermines the 'family' character of the surrounding neighbourhood of where such behaviour occurs (O'Neill et al. 2008, 78). Through their positioning as the anti-social 'other' in society, sex workers are identified as engaging in behaviour that fails to positively contribute to surrounding communities (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 38; O'Neill et al. 2008, 78).

#### *4.3.1.2 Sex work as an issue of 'public nuisance'*

Arguments that identify sex work as a problem are quite often linked to the idea of public nuisance. Overall, the existence of sex work is argued to impact on the quality of life for residents in the surrounding communities of where such activity occurs (Anderson 2002, 748; Scoular et al. 2007, 12). The presence of

various sex markets in communities are seen to contribute to the general degeneration of the area, impacting on property values and the viability of local businesses (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 132; Shdaimah et al. 2012, 9). Other nuisances of sex work commonly identified include increases in traffic and noise where public solicitation occurs, the littering of used condoms and syringes and the performance of sexual acts in publicly visible locations (O'Neill et al. 2008, 76; Scoular et al. 2007, 12). All of these factors then contribute to an even more significant community concern regarding the impact that these public nuisances may have on vulnerable women and children. O'Neill and Campbell (2006, 46) explain this concern is more so emphasised towards children, who may witness sexual acts being conducted in public at inappropriate ages, which could then lead to their 'potential loss of innocence and an untimely introduction to sexual matters.' Ultimately, the existence of sex work is identified by communities as undermining the family character of the neighbourhood (O'Neill et al. 2008, 78) whilst impinging on residents' use of public space (Scoular et al. 2007, 12).

Whilst these various public nuisance issues are often associated with sex work in a general sense, it is evident that such factors are predominantly linked with instances of publicly visible street sex work. Other more discreet forms of sex work (such as indoor sex work) are characteristically invisible (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 133), therefore such activity often avoids public scrutiny and community objection. Public nuisance issues relating to discreet forms of sex work are not identified by communities due to the overall lack of awareness that such activity exists in the area (Hubbard and Prior 2012, 145). Despite this, the

identified issues of public nuisance relating to street sex work are commonly attributed to all forms of sex work, leading to communities' overall objection to the industry as a whole.

#### *4.3.1.3 Sex work as an issue of 'safety'*

Another argument dominating debates objecting to the existence of sex work is the level of perceived risk that is involved in such activity. Women who engage in this activity are portrayed as having a heightened risk of being subject to violence, abuse and homicide (O'Neill 2008, 83). The idea of risk is connected to physical, mental and sexual health, due to how the nature of such work involves multiple sexual partners, dangerous working environments, violence from clients and pimps, along with risky practices such as drug use and unsafe sex (Sanders and Campbell 2008, 48). Other identified risks of engaging in sex work include sexual assault, verbal abuse, kidnapping, drugging, stalking and robbery (Hubbard and Prior 2012, 152). However, the assumption being expressed by this perspective that all sex work is violence against women is argued to be completely ignorant of the realities of the diversity and difference of experience amongst differing workers and sectors of the industry (Sanders and Campbell 2008, 48).

Whilst sex work is purported to be an issue of safety for sex workers who engage in such activity, concerns have similarly been expressed regarding how the existence of sex work presents risk for others in the community. Residents are identified as being at risk of coming into contact with hazardous paraphernalia such as used condoms and needles that have been discarded in public places from those who engage in sex work activity (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 132).

Additionally, residents report levels of fear and intimidation as a result of sex work in the area, especially for women and children (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 34). Female residents can often feel reluctant to leave their homes unaccompanied, especially at night out of fear of being harassed by clients of sex work (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 133; Scoular et al. 2007, 12). Male residents can also feel intimidated whilst out in public due to being consistently solicited by sex workers (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 34). However similarly to the identified issues of public nuisance, the issues surrounding the perceived risk that sex work presents to surrounding communities predominantly relate to instances of street sex work.

#### *4.3.1.4 Sex work as an issue of 'crime'*

Another identified issue of concern for communities is the link between sex work and crime. The sex industry is commonly linked with drug markets (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 132; May and Hunter 2006, 176) and is viewed as amplifying the extent of society's drug problem. Lever and Dolnick (2010, 195) identify how sex workers and clients often collectively engage in the use of illicit substances during their interactions. Additionally, sex workers have been found to assist drug dealers in their transactions of illicit substances by supplying drugs to clients (May and Hunter 2006, 176), thereby contributing to the proliferation of such behaviour. Despite the common association between the sex industry and the use or dealing of drugs, such a relationship significantly depends on the environment where the activity is occurring. Drug use is identified as being more prolific in settings of street sex work as opposed to indoor sex work (Weitzer

2010, 9; May and Hunter 2006, 171). This is due to how indoor venues commonly prohibit substance use and will refuse to allow 'using' workers to be employed (Sanders 2006, 105).

An additional factor of crime linked to sex work is the issue of sex trafficking. Those who oppose sex work identify how sex work and trafficking are intrinsically linked (Outshoorn 2005, 146; Weitzer 2012b, 1342; Abel 2014, 582). Often reinforced through radical feminist ideas, arguments have been made identifying sex work as a form of sexual exploitation that is fuelling human trafficking on a large scale (Outshoorn 2005, 141; Hubbard, Matthews and Scoular 2008, 145; Raymond 2004a, 1157). Media sources contribute to social anxiety about this issue through the portrayal of ideas that transnational criminal networks are expanding and targeting young, innocent females, forcing them into sex work and turning them into sex slaves (Hubbard, Matthews and Scoular 2008, 139; O'Neill et al. 2008, 75-6). Such panic is then amplified with exaggerated claims regarding how trafficking is inseparable from sex work and that most sex workers have been trafficked and exploited to some degree (Weitzer 2010, 71; Weitzer 2012b, 1347). It is evident that this construction of sex work and trafficking as a collective phenomenon is misrepresentative of the realities of both issues. Discussion surrounding sex trafficking and sex work commonly fails to acknowledge the agency of women, for example in instances where sex workers freely choose to migrate across borders to work in the sex industry (Agustin 2006, 124; van der Anker 2008, 139).

#### *4.3.1.5 Sex work as issue of 'health'*

A further area of concern relating to the existence of sex work is the issue of health, particularly how sex work contributes to the spread of blood-borne viruses and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C (May and Hunter 2006, 178; Hubbard and Prior 2012, 141; Shdaimah et al. 2012, 9). This can be linked to the traditional social constructions of women working in the sex industry who are represented as drug-addicted carriers and transmitters of disease (Sanders and Campbell 2008, 50; Hubbard, Matthews and Scoular 2008, 138). Whilst it is acknowledged that there is a high prevalence of substance abuse in the sex industry, such activity is more commonly associated to instances of unregulated or illegal sex work, such as street sex work (Weitzer 2010a, 9; May and Hunter 2006, 171). Drug use, (which can individually contribute to disease transmission) is then presented as an influential factor for sex workers to engage in risky practices such as unprotected sex, which again creates potential for the spread of STDs (May and Hunter 2006, 179).

However, it is important to clarify that despite these factors, research indicate that overall there are relatively low rates of sexually transmitted diseases amongst sex working populations (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 143; Ward et al. 2004, 374). Sex workers are well informed on matters of sexual health (O'Neill et al. 2008, 75) and most commonly engage in safe sex with clients (May and Hunter 2006, 179; Ward et al. 2004, 374). However, these findings are more common for workers who engage in sex work in legalised settings, such as licensed brothels (Lee et al. 2005, 434). Despite this, sex workers are frequently

positioned as the ‘scapegoats’ for public health concerns regarding spread of diseases (Sanders and Campbell 2008, 50). It is clear how such perceptions about and objections to sex work can influence policies and legislative approaches towards such activity.

#### 4.3.2 Criminal justice frameworks

The second paradigm in which notions of space and spatiality are represented in scholarly discussions about sex work is through the regulatory triumvirate of criminalisation, legalisation, and decriminalisation. The legality of sex work has been identified as significant to the experience of sex workers (with regard to working conditions and risk of violence), and influential in societal attitudes to sex work (O’Neill, 2008; Hubbard and Prior, 2012). It is also the case that these regulatory approaches enable governments to engage with spatial arguments about the appropriateness of sex work in public places, and its potential disruption to spaces positioned as antithetical to sex in public places such as those where children and families might frequent.

##### *4.3.2.1 Criminalisation*

The criminalisation or prohibitionist framework is one of the most commonly adopted criminal justice approaches directed towards sex work (Harcourt, Egger and Donovan 2005, 122). Under this framework, the commercial exchange of sex and all related sex work activities are considered illegal (Thompson 2000, 239; Abel and Fitzgerald 2010a, 2). Often founded upon feminist, moral or religious grounds, the criminalisation approach aims to

completely abolish sex work from society (Crofts and Summerfield 2007, 292-3). Within this framework, sex work is regarded as inherently oppressive and exploitative (Weitzer 2009a, 89; Weitzer 2010c, 15), due to how it is perceived to always involve the economic exploitation of lower-status, marginalised individuals such as women, immigrants and the socially outcast (McCarthy et al. 2012, 260). This approach also highly emphasises the link between sex work and other forms of criminal activity such as drugs, organised crime and official corruption (Thompson 2000, 240; Abel and Fitzgerald 2010a, 2). The criminalisation approach therefore attempts to repress and prohibit sex work to protect individuals from vice and exploitation, whilst protecting society from the threat sex work brings to public health, safety and moral decency (McCarthy et al. 2012, 260). However, the criminalisation approach has been highly criticised for reinforcing negative stereotypes of the industry and ignoring the economic and social heterogeneity of various types of sex work (Weitzer 2009b, 229; McCarthy et al. 2012, 261).

#### *4.3.2.2 Legalisation*

The legalisation framework involves repealing criminal offences and penalties relating to sex work or particular aspects of the industry, whilst instituting a requirement for a licence/s to be obtained in order for such work to be considered legal (Crofts and Summerfield 2008, 212; Abel and Fitzgerald 2010a, 6). Advocates for this approach acknowledge that sex work is an 'unstoppable' social exchange; therefore, legalisation is considered the most appropriate approach to reduce or avoid the potential harms of the industry

(Brent and Hausbeck 2005, 273; Crofts and Summerfield 2008, 212). Through this framework, governments often allow for the legal operation of commercial sex in some situations whilst prohibiting it in others, thus essentially trying to manage the industry rather than abolish it (McCarthy et al. 2012, 262). Examples of such legalisation practices towards sex work include the registration and licensing of business owners and workers, mandatory health requirements, periodic site visits from officials and zoning restrictions (Weitzer 2010c, 22). The process of legalisation has been argued as contributing to the normalisation of sex work, thereby resulting in positive changes with regard to community attitudes to such activity (Weitzer 2009b, 230).

The legalisation approach has however been met with various criticisms. Raymond (2004b, 316) explains how the process of legalisation makes the harm caused to women by sex work “invisible”, further disempowering females and leading to an expansion of the harmful sex industry. Legalising sex work is further considered problematic due to how this framework transforms and empowers the exploitative ‘prostitution abusers’, such as pimps and clients, into legitimate sexual entrepreneurs and consumers of sex (Raymond 2004b, 316). Governments are also portrayed as ‘pimps’ who control sex workers with regard to with whom and where they engage in sex work (Thompson 2000, 243). The process of legalisation is interpreted by some critics as an official stamp of approval by governments for a ‘vile’ institution (Harcourt, Egger and Donovan 2005, 123; Weitzer 2010c, 22). Whilst legalisation defines some forms of sex work to be

acceptable under the law, ultimately this legislative framework suggests strict intervention and regulation is vital for the sex industry.

#### *4.3.2.3 Decriminalisation*

The decriminalisation approach involves the removal of criminal offences and penalties from sex work whilst enforcing regulations that apply to other legal businesses (Crofts and Summerfield 2007, 294; Abel 2014, 581). Under this framework, sex work is subject to local or municipal levels of regulation which relate to non-sex-work-specific laws and codes addressing liquor licensing, hygiene, public nuisance, labour law, entertainment venues and taxation (McCarthy et al. 2012, 266). This approach attempts to normalise the sex industry and protect sex workers with the same industrial conditions as other workers in various industries (Harcourt, Egger and Donovan 2005, 125). The decriminalisation of sex work therefore aims to empower sex workers and provide them with rights relating to working conditions, the implementation of health and safety requirements and protection under the law (Thompson 2000, 245; Abel and Fitzgerald 2010a, 8). Through this framework, the government is provided with less power to intervene in what is described as a contract between two consenting adults who are engaged in a non-coercive commercial transaction (McCarthy et al. 2012, 267). Additionally, the decriminalisation of sex work aids in positive relationships and interactions between sex workers and legal authorities (Abel and Fitzgerald 2010c, 228), where the criminal law can instead focus on and target instances of involuntary and harmful sex work such as

trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation, coercive and underage sex (Harcourt, Egger and Donovan 2005, 125).

However, there are some limitations that have been identified regarding this approach. Similar to the legalisation model, critics have identified how the decriminalisation of sex work means decriminalising the whole industry and not just the workers, thereby empowering third parties such as pimps and clients as legitimate consumers of sex (Raymond 2004b, 316; Jeffreys 2009, 173). Therefore, this framework is argued to portray a message to boys and men that women are sexual commodities and that commercial sex is harmless fun (Raymond 2004b, 322; Jeffreys 2009, 177). Decriminalisation is also argued to not recognise the unique nature of the sex industry, where certain types of sex work may require tailored legal responses to protect workers or other vulnerable entities (Crofts and Summerfield 2007, 294). However, despite this, the decriminalisation framework has been purported by some as the most effective means to assist in providing sex workers with rights and freedoms with regard to their occupation (Thompson 2000, 247). Whilst it is assumed that government policies directed towards regulating sex work are based upon evidence and rationality, it is acknowledged that such frameworks are often politicised and underpinned by factors relating to moral panics and morality (Maginn and Steinmetz, 2015, 7). It might be argued that a regulatory framework influenced by decriminalisation is least influenced by spatial arguments with regard to the potential disruption of sex work to public space. By positioning sex work as no different to any other night time industry, it removes moral arguments against the

commercial transaction of sex for money and thus undermines its disruption in public space.

#### 4.3.3 Moral regulation

The third way in which notions of space and spatiality are represented in sex work literature is through the moral regulation of such activity. This includes the regulation of sex work through social narratives and norms, moral geographies and heteronormative ideals. Again, these discussions are predominantly in reference to urban contexts as a result of a preoccupation with sex work being a distinctly urban phenomenon (Hubbard, 1999; Scott et al. 2006).

Geographical space in society is governed by heteronormative discourses and practices which determine what is and is not appropriate behaviour for particular areas (Hayes, Carpenter and Dwyer 2012, 46-7; Hubbard and Sander 2003, 79). This is referred to as a moral geography. Behaviour that is deemed as appropriate or 'in place' for certain spaces evokes a sense of belonging, whilst in contrast, those behaviours out of place ignite a sense of moral panic (Hubbard 2012, 34). Sexual behaviour and sexualities are highly subject to moral geographies that are constructed through legislation and policies. These frameworks governing sexual behaviour in public space privilege traditional institutions such as families and heterosexual marriage, therefore targeting behaviour that is offensive to those ideals (Hayes, Carpenter and Dwyer 2012, 46-7).

As sex work is perceived as immoral, it is deemed as neither good sex nor good work and instead, as an impure form of sex conflicting with femininity

(Hubbard 2012, 36). Additionally, it challenges the sanctity of the family and monogamous, procreative sex between husbands and wives (Hayes, Carpenter and Dwyer 2012, 93). Policies regulating or enforcing penalties for such activity therefore aim to remove the deleterious effects and impact of these non-heteronormative and commercialised sexual practices from family zones and 'safe' spaces (Maginn and Steinmetz 2015, 8; Hubbard and Sander 2003, 79). Whilst commercial sex premises are permitted in some spaces under legalisation or regulation frameworks, they are treated as noxious or undesirable land uses (Hubbard 2012, 56). This is because commercialised sex markets are considered to have a polluting presence, affecting surround property and (appropriate) business values (Hubbard 2012, 34).

It is not uncommon for these representations of sexuality to be socially and politically opposed, particularly when they are publicly visible. Premises where nudity is presented as 'adult entertainment' for example are often presumed to be associated with multiple forms of vice and criminality whilst offering representations of 'scary' and deviant sexualities (Hubbard and Colosi, 2013; Hubbard, 1999; Pini, Mayes and Boyer, 2013; Hennelly, 2010). Spaces associated with sex work are therefore labelled and stigmatised with disorderly and criminogenic status (Crofts, Hubbard and Prior 2013, 62; Crofts 2010, 160).

#### 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed existing literature relating to the spatial contours and regulation of sex work. The chapter firstly outlined the small body of research focusing on sex work in rural contexts specifically. From this, the

discussion reinforced the general lack of empirical focus in this area, but also, how such research is limited in identifying what influences the spatial governance and regulation of sex work in rural contexts. Instead, the discussion turned to spatial examinations of sex work in urban settings. Two key paradigms in which the spatial contexts of sex work are analysed include ***types of sex work*** and ***regulatory approaches***. Through this examination of research, it was identified that the different physical spaces where sex work exists, such as indoor and outdoor spaces, are subject to differing levels of public attention and therefore, differing approaches to spatial regulation. For example, street sex work and commercial sex work establishments are often most objected to by surrounding communities due to being highly visible and being representative of immorality and social decay. Therefore, spatial regulatory approaches towards such activity often aim to protect and shield local communities from such vice through rules and restrictions on where and if such activity can occur.

The second paradigm focusing on the spatial contours of sex work included discussions about the political and moral regulation of such activity in society. The different approaches outlined include criminalisation, legalisation and decriminalisation, along with moral regulation through moral geographies. Overall, this discussion identified how public space is governed and regulated according to heteronormative discourses that identify sex work as an immoral activity which communities need to be protected from. Therefore, sex work is often restricted to spaces outside of zones that are allocated to and representative of heterosexual nuclear families.

From this examination of literature, it is clear that the spatial regulation of sex work in urban contexts is driven by understandings of sex work as an act of depravity and immorality, with regulatory approaches therefore aimed at restricting such activity to spaces away from the 'morally decent' populations in society. However, there is a clear gap within existing literature which fails to identify the influences behind the spatial regulation and governance of sex work in specifically rural settings. This project therefore aims to examine this particular area of study to identify whether there are similarities or differences between the spatial regulation and governance of sex work in rural versus urban contexts.

## Chapter 5 - Methodology

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### 5.0 Introduction

As previously explained throughout the thesis, the aim of my research is to examine how socially and politically constructed ideas about rurality, spatiality, and sex have influenced regulatory approaches to sex work in rural and regional areas throughout Queensland. More specifically, I aim to identify how policymakers have attributed notions of rurality, fuelled by the rural imaginary, to spaces outside the metropolis in order to further support and reinforce the differential policy approach applied to these areas. My research therefore aims to gauge how Queensland sex work legislation and political representatives simultaneously perpetuate, idealise, challenge, and disrupt the 'rural imaginary'.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed overview of the various methodological approaches and research actions applied, along with the empirical challenges experienced in order to achieve these objectives. This includes outlining my chosen epistemology, the key theoretical and conceptual works that I have drawn upon to guide my research, and the methods of data collection and analysis employed.

### 5.1 Research framework

Using a social constructionist epistemology (Crotty 2003, 3; Mason 2002, 16) to guide my project, I approached this research from the perspective that the production of knowledge, understandings of society, and the meanings attributed to it do not occur or exist naturally, but instead, are socially constructed and

produced by the individuals who live and engage within it (Gurbrium and Holstein 2013, 3; Crotty 2003, 42). By adopting this epistemological position, I have conducted my research with the view that the ideas and understandings about space, rurality, and sex work used to inform and support current regulatory approaches to sex work in Queensland are socially and politically constructed, and these ideas continue to feed into the 'rural imaginary'.

As previously outlined in Chapter 2, the construction of the rural imaginary in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia is highly influenced and underpinned by historical processes, theoretical perspectives, and iconic stereotypical characteristics. Imagined understandings and ideas of rural Australia depict specific cultural characteristics and practices that are considered inherent to Australian rurality. These variances are identified as being dependent on industry characteristics, such as mining and agriculture. Ultimately, rural Australia is constructed as distinct from urban Australia.

In order to adequately capture what ideas about rurality, rural spaces, and the 'rural imaginary' have been and continue to be present within political discourse pertaining to legalised sex work in Queensland, I adopted a qualitative methodology. Qualitative research is concerned with examining how human beings understand, experience, interpret and produce the social world by analysing textual, rather than numerical, sources of data (Mason 2002, 3; Guest, MacQueen and Namey 2012, 6; Berg 2009, 3). A qualitative, rather than quantitative, approach is therefore more appropriate to achieve the aims of this project.

## 5.2 Research Methods

Hansard proceedings were chosen as the first source of data for this research project as the documents are officially recorded and published transcripts of debates between state government representatives during Queensland Parliamentary sittings. As these political representatives are responsible for debating, amending and implementing state legislation in Queensland, Hansard records provide an insight into the arguments used in support of and in opposition to the different legislative proposals for addressing sex work throughout the state, such as the exemption/prohibited development provision for licensed brothels. Hansard records therefore also highlight the particular ideas and representations of rural and regional spaces, communities, lifestyles, and characteristics that were expressed by parliamentarians to initially support the brothel exemption provision, and also, the ideas of such spaces portrayed in debates about Queensland sex work legislation since then.

The second source of data that I collected for this project was from semi-structured interviews with local and state government representatives. Interviewing is a beneficial source of data as it allows a researcher to explore the points of view of interview participants and provides access to the meanings and symbols they attribute to their social worlds (Miller and Glassner 2004, 126-7). Interviews were a suitable choice of data collection for this project to gain a more thorough insight into how political representatives understand and conceptualise rural space and sex work by directly questioning participants on such matters. Whilst Hansard records are a useful resource for these purposes, the data

collected is restricted to the context of state government representatives only. Interviews therefore provide the opportunity to target local government representatives to gather valuable data from that particular context. This is important because whilst state government representatives are responsible for creating and implementing state legislation, such as the brothel exemption provision, it is local government representatives who manage and apply such legislative provisions within their relevant jurisdictions. By incorporating data from state and local levels of government, this project has acquired a macro and micro perspective on this particular topic.

Due to the context of the interviews in comparison to Hansard proceedings, that is, interviewees being directly questioned about the jurisdictions they politically represent as opposed to broader Parliamentary discussions of legislation by state representatives, it was expected that the interview data would present more emphasised and specific references to rural and regional contexts. However, as Members of Parliament are elected by the majority of their constituents, their statements recorded in Hansard proceedings are considered to be reflective of the context of the electorate they represent. Statements from Hansard have therefore been interpreted as such.

## 5.3 Data collection

### 5.3.1 Hansard

Hansard records are publicly available online in digital format through the Queensland Parliament website. Visitors to the website can examine the online records by conducting searches through the database system, using specific

search terms and date ranges. For this research, I conducted a search of Hansard proceedings specifically available on the Queensland Parliament website and used the key term 'prostitution' for records dated from 1990-2015. The search term 'prostitution' was chosen (rather than sex work) as it is the dominant language used in legislation and by government representatives regarding such activity. Additionally, the specified timeframe used allowed for the inclusion of debates that occurred before the legislation was implemented until the time of the search.

From the initial search, I identified 240 digital documents containing the term prostitution. An electronic search for the term 'prostitution' was then conducted on each individual document through the Adobe computer program to determine the relevance of the material presented. Using this process, I filtered through the proceedings and identified 35 relevant documents. That is, records of 35 separate Parliamentary sittings involving relevant discussions about the regulation of sex work in Queensland.

From the document search conducted, it is evident that the peak time for parliamentary discussions about sex work was during the years 1999-2001, where the Prostitution Bill 1999 was introduced, debated and agreed to, followed by the two Prostitution Amendment Bills in 2001. Since this time, there have been brief debates in 2002, 2006 and 2010 with additional amendment Bills being introduced into Parliament. However, despite these instances, the topic of prostitution has been largely absent in Queensland Parliamentary discussions since 2010.

### 5.3.2 Interviews

Several processes were implemented for identifying potential interview participants for this study. By adopting a targeted or purposive sample selection approach, I could identify specific local and state government representatives of rural and regional areas in Queensland. Purposive sampling strategies are used to select individuals or groups to study based on their relevance to the research being conducted (Mason 2002, 124). This approach uses a researcher's own judgement to build a sample through strategic targeting of interviewees who have expertise in the area being studied and who can add a depth of knowledge to the research (Richards 2011, 69-70). Whilst purposive sampling strategies are often criticised for lacking wide generalisability, the targeted approach underpinning these types of samples is also argued to result in rich data for the specific areas of study being examined (Berg 2009, 49).

I implemented this sample selection strategy with the aim of targeting potential interviewees who, at the time, were in Queensland government representative positions at a local or state level for jurisdictions outside of the greater Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions. This included state representatives who had contributed to parliamentary debates about sex work legislation, and/or who have the ability to introduce Bills into parliament, along with local government representatives who contributed to brothel exemption applications for their regions, or who have the ability to apply for or retract an exemption for their jurisdictions.

The first method implemented to identify potential interviewees for this research was examining the collected Hansard transcripts for names of state representatives of rural and regional electorates throughout Queensland. For this project, Queensland state electorates were classified as rural or regional if they are located outside of the greater Brisbane, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions. This classification criterion was similarly applied to local government areas. The Electoral Commission Queensland (2016) provide lists and detailed maps of state districts and local government areas<sup>10</sup> throughout the state. Using the aforementioned criteria, the scope was narrowed to a manageable and time-effective sample size.

To begin, Hansard proceedings were examined for potential interviewees from rural and regional electorates who firstly, had engaged with the parliamentary debates about sex work in Queensland, and secondly, who were still in parliamentary positions at the time of the search. As will be outlined in the following section, it was important for ethical clearance purposes that all interviewees were in political representative positions at the time of the interviews. As the Hansard data collected for this project spans over a decade, there were numerous MPs identified in the data that had contributed to parliamentary debates throughout this period, however were no longer in political representative positions. Through this elimination process, 10 state government representatives were identified as eligible for interviews. Contact

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<sup>10</sup> Refer to Appendix 1

details for these representatives were then collected from the Queensland Parliamentary website.

The process of narrowing the scope for local government representatives was more complex. It is important to reiterate that at the time of identifying potential interviewees for this project, as explained briefly in Chapter 1, the research was being approached from the perspective that there were 217 towns throughout Queensland with brothel exemptions in place.<sup>11</sup> Brothel exemptions were used as a filtering criterion to narrow the scope of rural and regional local government areas. By categorising exempt towns according to the local government districts in which they were situated, I was able to identify those local councils who represented either only exempt towns or only non-exempt towns. Interestingly, this process also highlighted a small number of local councils which simultaneously represented both exempt and non-exempt towns. This however is most likely the result of local shires being amalgamated into larger regional councils after brothel exemptions had been received

As the research is concerned with examining the influences behind the brothel exemption provision, it was vital for the sample to consist of local or state government representatives for towns that had current exemptions in place. This would allow me to directly question those representatives during interviews about the justification behind the exemption application submitted, and whether exempt status was still relevant to their town and constituents. Conversely, it was important for the sample to include representatives of towns that were not

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to Appendix 3 for list of exempt towns

considered exempt in order to question them about why this status wasn't applied for and the likelihood of the town receiving an exemption. Overall, twenty-six local councils were identified as eligible for this sample.

#### *5.3.2.1 Ethics*

Ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC) was required before I could conduct interviews for this project. This committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring human research conducted by QUT staff and students (QUT, 2016). The category of ethical approval required for this project was 'low-risk research'. The research proposed was deemed 'low-risk' as the only foreseeable risks involved for participants were potentially feeling discomfort from being interviewed, or being inconvenienced by participating in the interview (National Health and Medical Research Council 2015, 13). This is because the content of interview questions and discussions for this project was quite generalised, rather than personal, intimate or sensitive. It was important to ensure that representatives being approached for the interviews were, at the time, in political positions at a local or state government level. This allowed for consistency and ensured that participants were already familiar with discussing government policy and legislation in a professional setting.

#### *5.3.2.2 Contacting local/state government representatives*

Once ethical approval was received, contact was made with local and state government representatives via email using their professional email addresses listed on the Queensland Parliament website, or relevant local council websites. A

generic invitation email template was used to contact potential interviewees which detailed a personal introduction, a summary of what this project is about, an explanation for why I was contacting them specifically, and a request for their participation in an interview either over the phone or in person. Each email was individually tailored to the representative to reflect their name, title, position, local government area or state electorate they represent, and what town/s in their jurisdiction had current exemptions in place.

In total, five state government representatives and twenty-three local government representatives were contacted over a six-month period. Out of the twenty-eight representatives contacted during this timeframe, ten accepted the request to participate in a face-to-face interview, one representative agreed to answer questions via email only, another representative agreed to answer questions via email, then did not respond (despite being contacted again three times), seven representatives declined the request, and the remaining nine representatives were unresponsive to the initial email and follow-up emails. The challenges presented in gaining access to all the state and local government representatives contacted was not unexpected.

It is well acknowledged that interviewing 'elite' participants (as opposed to marginalised groups or disadvantaged individuals) can present difficulties due to how these individuals have demanding positions and are generally time-poor (Richards 2011, 71), particularly with regard to giving their time for interviews that may not be of benefit to them. However, from my experience, whilst there were a few representatives who initially seemed reluctant to participate in an

interview due to their own perceived lack of knowledge on the subject, the majority expressed enthusiasm and interest in talking about the topic. This was more so evident when it was reinforced to them about how their confidentiality would be upheld by removing any identifying information from interview transcripts.

The interviews for this project were conducted over a ten-month period from July 2014 until May 2015. Eight of the interviews were conducted in rural towns throughout Queensland. The distance between these towns and Brisbane ranged from 156 kilometres to 1,028 kilometres. The interviews were mostly conducted in the participant's work office; however, one interview was conducted at a local café in the representative's town. Conveniently, I was able to secure two interviews in Brisbane; one took place at Parliament House and one at a café near Brisbane airport.

At the beginning of each interview conducted in person, participants were provided with a consent form detailing information about the research, how the interview would proceed, their right to refuse questions, and also a reminder that they could discontinue the interview at any time. This information was also provided as an attachment to the participant completing the interview via email. Participants were reminded about interviews being recorded for transcription purposes, and also that all identifying information would be removed in the transcriptions, with the recording being permanently deleted after the interview was transcribed. Participants were also reminded that they were entitled to

receive a copy of the final transcription for their approval if they were interested. None of the participants requested a copy of the final transcript of their interview.

To address potential technical failures, interviews were recorded across two devices. As most interviews were conducted in private settings, the audio recordings were clear and easily transcribed. However, there were two interviews in café settings which presented challenges with audio clarity, however this did not affect the transcription process. The timing of the interviews ranged from approximately twenty minutes to ninety minutes and consisted of a combination of direct questions based on the interview schedule and free flowing conversations.

#### *5.3.2.3 Demographics of interviewees*

A total of 11 interview participants were included in this sample, two from state government and nine from local government. Ten interviews were conducted altogether, nine face-to-face and one via email, with one of the face-to-face interviews involving two participants being interviewed together. Of the eleven participants, four were female and seven were male. Their experience in either local or state government ranged from three years to thirty-four years, and their positions included Member for Parliament (state), Mayor or Councillor (local). All eleven participants lived in a rural or regional town at the time of the interview and the majority of participants indicated during the introductory part of their interview that they had spent most of their lives living in the same or nearby locations. To protect the identities of interviewees, each participant and the region they represent have been assigned a pseudonym. See table below.

5.3.2.4 Table – Participant demographics

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Level of Government</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Experience in Local/State Government</u>	<u>Number of Towns Represented</u>	<u>Exempt Towns Represented</u>
Mayor of Jarrah	Local	Male	25 years	18	5
Mayor of Teak	Local	Male	24 Years	23	11
Mayor of Bluegum	Local	Male	20 years	10	0
Mayor of Cottonwood	Local	Female	34 years	7	6
MP Kokoti Electorate	State	Male	25 years	30	16
Mayor of Beech	Local	Male	28 years	12	12
Councillor of Maple	Local	Female	8 years	3	3
MP Walnut Electorate	State	Female	27 years	26	0
Councillor of Laurel	Local	Female	3years	6	4
Councillor of Canarium	Local	Male	4 years	12	2
Mayor of Pine	Local	Male	6 years	14	14

#### ***Mayor of Jarrah***

This male participant was a local government representative with twenty-five years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, he was the Mayor of the Jarrah Regional Council alongside eight other Councillors. The Jarrah Regional Council governs an area consisting of 18 small towns with permanent resident populations ranging in size from 250 – 13,000 people. Of these towns, 5 had received exempt status from brothels. At the time of the interview, the Jarrah region was experiencing large-scale mining operations with FIFO/DIDO populations of up to 10,000 people housed in several mining camps on the borders of the main town.

#### ***Mayor of Teak***

This male participant was a local government representative with twenty-four years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, he was the Mayor of the Teak Regional Council alongside seven other Councillors.

The Teak Regional Council governs an area in Queensland consisting of 23 small towns with permanent resident populations ranging in size from 300 – 12,500 people. Of these towns, 11 had received exempt status from brothels. At the time of the interview, there was no mining industry activity occurring within the Teak region. This local government area was described by this participant as being pastoral and agricultural-based.

### ***Mayor of Bluegum***

This male participant was a local government representative with 20 years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, he was the Mayor of the Bluegum Regional Council alongside eight other Councillors. The Bluegum Regional Council governs an area in Queensland consisting of 10 small towns with permanent resident populations ranging from 400 – 8,000 people. None of the 10 towns had received an exemption from brothel development. At the time of the interview, there was large-scale mining industry practices occurring within the Bluegum region, with FIFO/DIDO populations of up to 6,000 people being housed in mining camps on the borders of the main town.

### ***Mayor of Cottonwood***

This female participant was a local government representative with over 34 years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, she was the Mayor of the Cottonwood Regional Council alongside six other Councillors. The Cottonwood Regional Council governs an area in Queensland consisting of 7 small towns, with permanent resident populations ranging from 350 – 3,500 people. Of those towns, 6 had received an exemption from brothel

development. At the time of the interview, there was no mining activity occurring within the Cottonwood region, with the participant describing the region as being heavily focused on the agricultural industry.

***Member of Parliament for Kokoti Electorate***

This male participant was a state government representative with 25 years' experience in both state and local government politics. At the time of the interview, he was the state representative for the Kokoti Electorate, one of the largest electorates in Queensland covering an area of Queensland containing over 30 towns. Of those towns, 16 had received an exemption from brothel development. At the time of the interview, the Kokoti region was experiencing large-scale mining activity across three of the major towns within the electorate.

***Mayor of Beech***

This male participant was a local government representative with almost 30 years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, he was the Mayor of the Beech Regional Council alongside eight other Councillors. The Beech Regional Council governs an area in Queensland extending over 50,000 square kilometres and consisting of 12 towns with a permanent resident population of over 30,000 people collectively. All towns within the region of Beech had received an exemption from brothel development. At the time of the interview, the Beech region was experiencing large-scale activity within the mining, agricultural and horticultural industries.

***Councillor of Maple***

This female participant was a local government representative with 8 years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, she was the Councillor for Maple, a division within the Beech Regional Council consisting of 3 towns with a permanent resident population of between 5,000-8,000 people. This participant was interviewed at the same time as the Mayor of Beech.

***Member of Parliament for Walnut Electorate***

This female participant was a state government representative with 27 years' experience in both state and local government politics. At the time of the interview, she was the state representative for the Walnut Electorate which covered an area of Queensland containing 26 towns, none of which had brothel exemptions. The permanent resident population in the Walnut electorate was just over 60,000 people, with a non-resident FIFO/DIDO population from large scale mining activity of approximately 2,000.

***Councillor for Laurel***

This female participant was a local government representative with just over three years' experience in local government politics. She represented a division in the Laurel region alongside 7 other councillors. The region itself consisted of a population of over 28,000 permanent residents, with just under 4000 living in this participant's division. At the time of the interview, there was no large-scale mining occurring within the Laurel region and instead, the region had a thriving agricultural industry.

***Councillor of Canarium***

This male participant was a local government representative with just over four years' experience in local government politics. He was a Councillor for the Canarium region consisting of 12 towns, two of which had exempt status. The Canarium region had a permanent resident population of just under 25,000 people and a non-resident FIFO/DIDO population of over 11,000 people. At the time of the interview, the Canarium region was experiencing extensive large-scale mining activity.

***Councillor of Pine***

This male participant was a local government representative with six years' experience in local government politics. At the time of the interview, the Pine region had a permanent resident population of just under 18,000 people and no transient FIFO/DIDO mining population due to no mining activity taking place.

**5.4 Data analysis**

I adopted a thematic content analysis to examine the two sources of data. Content analysis in qualitative research involves the examination of documentary materials to identify patterns, cultural meanings and insights from the text (Noaks and Wincup 2004, 127; Julien 2008, 121). I used a thematic coding and analysis strategy in conjunction with this process which allowed for the identification and categorisation of important concepts and patterns within the data set (Ayres 2008, 868). The thematic coding and analytical framework I used for this project was informed by the evident themes portrayed through relevant literature. As previously identified, these themes were in relation to constructions of rural

spaces and rurality as perpetuated through the rural imaginary, along with objections to sex work.

The aim of the research is to examine how political representatives engage with the rural imaginary in the context of regulating sex work in Queensland. Therefore, two different phases of manual coding were completed. Firstly, data was coded according to evident references to and representations of rural spaces and rurality. Examples include discussions about ‘the bush’, ‘the outback’, and ‘rural communities’. This phase of coding aimed to identify how representatives constructed rural spaces, lifestyles and characteristics, and examine if such constructions align or conflict with the construction of the rural imaginary identified in Chapter 3.

Secondly, the data was coded according to the evident themes in the literature regarding common objections towards sex work. As identified in Chapter 4, these include factors relating to morality, public nuisance, safety, crime, and health. This phase of coding aimed to identify how representatives perceive sex work and whether such perceptions align with constructions of the rural imaginary. Additionally, through this phase of coding, the research can compare objections to sex work evident in the data (rural contexts) and compare with those reflected in the literature (urban contexts).

## 5.5 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter has outlined the various research approaches and actions used for this project. Through these processes, quality data was collected and analysed accordingly. The following chapters will now outline the main

findings from the research conducted, thereby answering the projects remaining research questions.

## Chapter 6 – Rural

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### 6.0 Introduction

The purpose of the following three chapters is to utilise parliamentary debates and interview transcripts to examine how Queensland political representatives engage with the rural imaginary in their discussions about sex work in rural spaces. From this discussion, this thesis will identify the role played by the rural imaginary in both the creation and continued inclusion of the brothel exemption provision in state legislation for small rural towns in Queensland. Each chapter will deal with one element of the relationship between sex work, rural space and the rural imaginary. This chapter will outline how notions of rural spaces and rurality are constructed through political discourse pertaining to sex work in Queensland and will compare these with the theorisation of the rural introduced in chapter three. The following chapter will analyse the ways in which political representatives position sex work in relation to these constructions of rural spaces and rurality. Finally, the third findings chapter will critically analyse the ways in which political concerns about and objections to sex work are indicative or representative of a fear or anxiety about the perceived transformation of rural spaces.

As explored in detail in the third chapter of this thesis, the construction of the rural imaginary in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Australia is highly influenced and underpinned by historical processes, theoretical perspectives, and stereotypical characteristics that are representative of Australian national identity (Andersson et al. 2009;

Kapferer 1990, 88; Bourke and Lockie, 2001). Historical perspectives driven by the rural-urban dichotomy, for example, continue to inform contemporary understandings of rural spaces and notions of rurality, which are presented as being distinct to urban spaces and notions of urbanism. Additionally, the Australian rural imaginary is heavily influenced by iconic and masculine representations and images of 'the bush', 'the outback', and the 'Aussie battler' (Bourke and Lockie, 2001; Kapferer 1990), with rural communities being portrayed as supportive and cohesive and thus offering a 'higher quality of life' for residents than communities in urban settings (Bell, 2005; Aitkin, 1988). These particular understandings and ideas of rural Australia depict specific cultural characteristics and practices that are considered inherent to Australian rurality, despite there being physical variances amongst rural spaces and the prevalence of differing industries within them. It is through this conceptualisation of rural space and rurality that behaviours and social issues perceived as negative and/or anti-social, such as sex work, are attributed to the metropolis and considered to result directly from urban disorganisation (Hubbard, 1998; Scott et al., 2006).

To begin this examination and set up the foundation of analysis for the remainder of the thesis, this chapter will present and analyse findings from the collected data which identify how political representatives in this study construct rural spaces and rurality and determine whether such ideas align with those characteristics perpetuated through the rural imaginary.

In this study, political representatives construct rural spaces and rurality through three dominant frameworks: the rural-urban dichotomy, the rural-urban continuum, and the rural-urban parallel. In the first framework, the notion of rural is constructed in opposition to the urban, meaning that the spaces, communities, people, characteristics, and lifestyles associated to rural are homogenously categorised by political representatives as being completely distinct from those deemed urban, and are thus positioned on opposing ends of a dichotomy (Andersson et al. 2009; Hillyard 2007).

The second framework adopted by political representatives in this study presents the notion of rural as distinct to urban, yet acknowledges that rural spaces are evolving from traditional conservative and cohesive community presented in the dichotomous framework. Through this construction, political representatives position rural and urban along a continuum, rather than at opposite ends of a dichotomy, where variations to the ideal are perceived to exist amongst and within rural and urban communities and populations (Schnore 1966, 135). Though this framework acknowledges subtle differences between types of rural societies and types of urban societies (Phillips 1998, 128), political representatives still present rural as being 'other' to urban and urban people, occupations and values as a disruptive influence on a rural way of life.

The third framework used by political representatives in this study suggests there are no significant differences between rural and urban settings, contexts, characteristics, or communities. Rather, political representatives present rural and urban as similar communities with the same problems, values

and populations. In this way, rural and urban communities are deemed to exist as parallel. The parallel framework challenges the ideas perpetuated through the dichotomy and continuum frameworks and reinforces the influence of various social, cultural and spatial aspects on political constructions on rural spaces and notions of rurality (Heley and Jones, 2012; Cloke, 2006; Panelli, 2006; Williams, 1973).

To begin, this chapter will demonstrate how political representatives dichotomously construct rural spaces and rurality as in opposition to urban contexts. This part of the discussion will begin with an examination of political representatives' use of dichotomous language in their discussions about sex work which reinforces the distinctiveness between rural and urban contexts. Following this, the discussion will analyse the ways in which political representatives further reinforce the perceived distinction between rural and urban contexts with how they identify and apply specific characteristics to rural spaces, communities, and residents.

The second section of this chapter will illustrate how political representatives construct rural spaces and rurality along a continuum. Through this framework, rural contexts are understood and reinforced as different to urban contexts, however, political representatives acknowledge that these spaces are evolving as a result of broader social, geographical, and demographic changes, such as technological developments and large industry-specific growth (for example, agriculture and mining practices).

The final section of this chapter will demonstrate how political representatives construct rural spaces and rurality as similar to urban contexts and urbanism. This part of the discussion will identify and examine how political representatives have questioned and/or rejected the ‘uniqueness’ applied to rural spaces and rurality evidenced in the previous two frameworks.

As will become clearer throughout the remainder of this chapter, the majority of political representatives in this study demonstrate a substantial level of engagement with the rural-urban dichotomy framework throughout Hansard debates and during interviews. This indicates that political representatives are contributing to the perpetuation and idolisation of the rural imaginary in the political discourse pertaining to sex work and related legislation in Queensland. However, these same political representatives also simultaneously engage in the continuum and parallel frameworks during their discussions about sex work and related policy, though to a lesser degree, suggesting that they understand the changing nature of rural space and the problems associated with resisting the benefits associated with traditional urban environments.

### 6.1 The rural-urban dichotomy framework

In the Queensland Parliamentary debates and interviews transcripts analysed for this study, political representatives actively engage with and perpetuate rural spaces, rural communities, and rural lifestyles as being in opposition to urban contexts. This dichotomous construction is demonstrated through the language used by representatives in their discussions about rural spaces and rurality, along with the specific characteristics they attribute to such

contexts and the people residing within them. Through this construction, rural communities are homogenously categorised as practicing the same lifestyles and sharing the same morals and values. It is these characteristics that contribute to the perceived uniqueness and difference of rural spaces, communities and lifestyles in comparison to those people, spaces, and lifestyles attributed to urban contexts. Additionally, through this dichotomy, rural communities are constructed as ‘close-knit’, in comparison to communities in urban spaces which are understood as disconnected and fragmented.

#### 6.1.1 Rural-urban dichotomy through language and labels

The first way that political representatives reinforce the distinction between rural and urban is through language and terminology. In this way, political representatives actively homogenise rural and urban contexts and reinforce the distinctiveness between them. Examples of the unique language used by political representatives include rural locations in Queensland being collectively labelled with terms such as ‘the outback’ (Mayor of Jarrah), ‘the country’ (Mayor of Bluegum) and ‘the bush’ (Kokoti MP). In contrast, references to urban spaces are made by using the individual name of the location itself, such as ‘Brisbane’ or ‘the Gold Coast’ (Councillor of Maple); although, ‘the city’ (Mayor of Cottonwood) was also used to encapsulate those spaces that are considered non-rural.

These particular labels are used by political representatives to distinguish between rural and urban contexts both geographically and symbolically. In the

geographical, or literal sense, political representatives apply specific labels to rural and urban contexts to distinguish between spaces that are collectively located inside the metropolitan (urban) regions of Queensland versus those spaces which are not (rural). However, it is clear these labels are also symbolic to representatives, where the meaning conveyed through such labels expands much further than a simple geographical distinction. For example, at the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to provide background details about their time spent living in a rural town. The Mayor of the agricultural town of Cottonwood explained how a brief absence from their rural hometown following high school served as an important reminder of where they feel most at home. She explained:

When I first left high school, I thought the bright lights was the spot for me, having spent all my life in the bush. Six weeks I stayed in the city and it didn't take me long to realise that the bush is where I belong (Mayor of Cottonwood).

Throughout this statement, this participant only makes reference to locations through the application of the homogenising labels previously identified, rather than using the names of towns. Not only do these labels differentiate between physical spaces, they also convey the symbolic significance attributed to each. The representative for the Cottonwood region identifies 'the bush' as a location where they have spent the majority of their life, but also as symbolically representing a space where they feel a sense of belonging and therefore, as part of their identity. Through this, it is clear how 'the bush' is a powerful label that is being used by

political representatives in reference to something that is both real and imaginary (Watson 2014, 66). It is real in the sense of 'the bush' referring to an actual rural town, yet also imagined as it is a symbolic representation of rural Australian national identity.

The distinction between rural and urban contexts is further expanded through the particular labels political representatives apply to the people who reside in rural spaces. Again, through these labels, political representatives construct residents of rural spaces as being different or unique to people who reside in urban spaces. Examples of the labels applied to rural residents include 'country people' (Councillor of Laurel), 'country folks' (Mayor of Bluegum), and, 'rednecks', as expressed by the representative for the Jarrah region:

Look, and you've got to remember that we're a rural regional community, very much what would I say, redneck... quite different to people from the city (Mayor of Jarrah).

The use of the term 'redneck' here is interesting. Bell (2006, 151) notes how identities such as 'rednecks' are commonly associated to the rural-horror paradigm, which represents the 'backwards' and 'scary' notions of rural life and rural people (Bell 1997, 94; Murdoch et al 2003, 257). However, in this study, such terminology is used more positively to distinguish between residents of rural and urban settings and to reinforce the rural-urban dichotomy as perpetuated in the construction of the Australian rural imaginary. The use of rural-specific language and labels in discussions about rural contexts is acknowledged as a powerful tool

for evoking emotion (Woods 2011, 3). This was certainly evident amongst the data analysed for this study. For example, during parliamentary discussions about the removal of the population threshold for the brothel exemption provision, the Member for the Darling Downs electorate, Mr Raymond Gordon Hopper made use of rural-specific labels to reinforce the distinction between 'the country' and the capital city of Brisbane. He expressed:

We are not talking about Brisbane here, we are talking about country regions where country people live and country people will continue to rule (Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1657).

The reliance on this dichotomous language aligns with Aitkin's (1988) concepts of 'countrymindedness'; a set of beliefs about rural Australia which denote rural communities as superior to urban centres (Bell 2005, 177). Through this perspective, the use of the label 'country people' is purposely reinforced to make the clear distinction between people who reside in rural versus urban locations. According to countrymindedness logic, 'the characteristic Australian is a countryman' (Aitkin 1988, 51), and the 'country people' label used in parliament by the representative of the Darling Downs electorate embodies this same notion of national identity perpetuated through rural Australian ideology. Through the application of the 'country people' label to all individuals residing in country regions, Mr Hopper effectively homogenises people residing in rural settings and whilst emphasising the clear divide between Brisbane, as the metropolitan capital city of the state, and the rural area he represents, demonstrates a clear refusal for rural areas to be governed by the metropolitan centre. Whilst language is

certainly important in the way political representatives distinguish between rural and urban contexts, this distinction is further expanded through the identification and application of specific characteristics to the people and places within such spaces. The following section of this chapter will detail these specific characteristics that have been held up by political representatives as specific to rural spaces, communities, and people.

### 6.1.2 Conservative (rural) vs. non-conservative (urban)

The most common way in which political representatives in this study identify, define and differentiate rural spaces from urban spaces is through the notion of conservatism. Rural communities, rural lifestyles, and characteristics of rural residents are collectively labelled and described in this study as 'conservative'. Examples during interviews include representatives explicitly stating:

...we are very conservative communities (Mayor of Teak);

Rural communities are known for being very conservative... (Mayor of Cottonwood);

These people are very conservative in these areas... (Kokoti MP).

But what exactly do political representatives mean by 'conservative', and do their interpretations of conservatism collectively align? Within existing literature, conservatism is acknowledged as representing a diverse range of

perspectives, rather than being a monolithic, uniform ideology (Wright and DeLisi 2016, 36). For instance, conservatism in politics today could refer to the ideology that government should be minimally intrusive into individual's lives. Alternatively, the term conservatism can be taken to imply traditional values in which the government plays a role in enforcing moral codes (Heywood 2013, 176).

Whilst diversities do exist amongst contemporary conservatives, the conservatism emerging within this project's data does not reflect an adherence to conservatism as a political ideology or ideal of government. Rather, it reflects a common belief in an enduring moral order, and centrality of family to community life, both of which are heavily reinforced through religious ideology. Therefore, in this study, rural conservatism, as it will be termed from this point forward, is underpinned by religion, family, and morals.

#### *6.1.2.1 Rural conservatism as 'religious'*

Throughout this study, political representatives identify religion as a dominant characteristic of conservative rural communities. Representatives commonly describe residents of rural communities as religious, predominantly Christian, individuals who lead their lives adhering to particular values and morals ascribed to their faith. During interviews, several representatives offered generalisations about the religiosity of rural communities, for example:

People in the bush are generally quite religious... (Mayor of Cottonwood);

...they're [the community] very conservative in everything they do. You know Sunday is the day of worshipping the lord or whatever, so things would revolve around those ideals (Councillor of Canarium).

This evident link between religion and rurality is not surprising, with existing research indicating that there are often higher levels of reported religious affiliation in rural areas, particularly amongst elderly populations (Peach 2003, 20; Mitchell and Weatherly 2000, 37). In this project, however, not only do political representatives identify religion as a key aspect of rural conservatism, but they imply that in rural spaces, religious ideology is more influential in shaping views and behaviours than in urban settings. The representative of the Beech region suggests that whilst religious affiliation and adherence to religious doctrine isn't 'extremist' in rural communities, he believes the status of religion is considerably different from that in urban settings. He said:

...It's not that people are out Bible bashing and knocking down doors or anything like that, but I suppose religion is more important to us, or at least taken more seriously (Mayor of Beech).

While there is no quantifiable indication of the degree to which religion is likely to override competing viewpoints on matters such as the legalisation of sex work, it is nevertheless invoked as a factor that would influence attitudes in rural communities, and thus decisions made by rural political representatives. This perception of religion being more influential or 'important' in rural settings is premised, at least in part, on the apparent inevitability of religiosity in such contexts. For political representatives in this study, religious affiliation and

influence is understood to transcend generations. As explained by the representation for the Jarrah region:

...we are, you know, religious... I come from a religious background. My mother still teaches religion (Mayor of Jarrah).

Existing research concurs with the importance of cross-generational familial influence in the reproduction and continuation of religious affiliation and influence (King, Elder and Whitbeck 1997, 449). In this study, though, political representatives suggest this is a distinctive trait of religious practices in rural settings.

Stemming from these perceptions of religion being an important aspect of life in rural contexts, political representatives in this study also acknowledge and reinforce the influence of the Church as a powerful institution in moderating behaviour and moral standards in rural conservative communities. Again, this perception is underpinned by the presumed inevitability of religiosity in rural contexts. An example of this is demonstrated in the following quote by the representative of the Bluegum region, who explains how a recent example of community outrage regarding the establishment of an adult entertainment venue in a town nearby was very much driven by residents' connection to the Church and its associated religion. He said:

...the most recent example is where there was a topless bar established in the main street there... Yeah, so there was a bit of talk. A lot of people claimed to be pretty outraged that they've been allowed to establish it in the middle of town.

But there's a high church influence there, so that reaction is not surprising at all (Mayor of Bluegum).

This instant justification of evident community 'outrage' as due to the influence of a religious institution further reinforces political representatives' acceptance of religious ideology as inevitable and influential in rural settings. The influence of the Church is not challenged or questioned by representatives, but instead, is positioned as a key social institution within rural communities, effectively shaping and justifying the views of the majority of residents living within such contexts.

The influence of religion and religious institutions in shaping attitudes and perspectives towards social activity is also evident in parliamentary debates about sex work legislation. This is particularly demonstrated by Members of Parliament for rural electorates who demonstrate their opposition to the legalisation of sex work. During the second reading of the Prostitution Bill (1999) for example, the representative for the Toowoomba South electorate, Mr Michael James Horan, dedicated a large portion of his Parliamentary address to explaining how, at the time, there was strong opposition to the proposed legislation from "...well over 40 Churches throughout the state..." (Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5702). In support of this claim, Mr Horan (Toowoomba South MP) submitted three letters to the Legislative Assembly which he had received from church leaders and groups, detailing the specific reasons why the legislation should be opposed (Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5697-5702). Other MPs who similarly

made references to religious institutions and groups during their parliamentary addresses include Mr Jeffrey Alan Knuth (Burdekin MP) who expressed:

Many churches and church people have written to me...They are all united against this proposed legislation... (Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5815);

And Mr James Pearce (Fitzroy MP) who stated:

Some church leaders and members of a number of religious groups have damned the Government for these reforms. I understand their fears (Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5739).

Through these comments, it is clear how parliamentary representatives for rural electorates attribute a high level of significance to religion and religious institutions. Religion as a factor is viewed not only as an influence on the attitudes of rural communities towards sex work, but also as a justification for opposition to sex work. This is done through their explicit labelling of 'churches', 'church people' and 'church leaders', as opposed to more generalised labels such as 'community groups' or 'community leaders'. This labelling and the frequent references to religion in rural spaces has the effect of suggesting that people in rural areas, and 'church people' may be one and the same, thus contributing to the construction of rural communities as religious.

#### *6.1.2.2 Rural conservatism as 'family-orientated'*

In this study, the construction of rural communities as conservative is also highly underpinned by the notion of family, where residents are described as

family-orientated and adherent to family-values, with rural spaces thus being deemed family-friendly. These ideas are, of course, contrasted to urban settings, where urban residents are considered to be individualistic and selfish, urban communities and families are seen as disjointed, and urban spaces are perceived as unfriendly and unsafe. These conceptualisations continue to fuel the dichotomous construction of rural and urban contexts. Political representatives interviewed for this study often explicitly labelled rural communities and spaces as 'family-friendly'. For example:

...people in small towns are very family-orientated...  
(Councillor of Canarium);

People in the bush are... very family-orientated... (Mayor of  
Cottonwood);

...we're all family-orientated, you know...it's a family town  
(Kokoti MP).

Members for Parliament also made reference to rural spaces being family-orientated, with Mr Johnson (Gregory MP) stating:

...I will just dwell on Toowoomba for a moment... It is a very family-orientated town..." (Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1644).

Representatives also share the view that rural spaces contain mostly families:

...I come from a rural area. If one looks at the demographics of rural areas, one finds that it is mostly families who live in rural areas rather than large groups of single people... (Mr Nelson, Tablelands MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5733).

But what exactly do representatives mean when they refer to family and family-orientated communities, and how are these ideas specific to rural contexts? In contemporary society, the term 'family' encompasses diverse meanings and ideas. For example, family structures include same-sex couples with and without children, divorced parents with or without children, married couples living with children and extended family members (Harker Tillman and Nam 2008, 368). In this project however, characterisations of family demonstrate a strict alignment with a heteronormative framework. Heteronormative family ideals and structures revolve around the concept of the nuclear family, generally consisting of a married male-female couple who organise and live their lives around the bearing and raising of children (Edgell and Docka 2007, 27; Little 2007, 858). This representation of family was evident in the data for this project, yet was reinforced by political representatives as being distinctly rural.

In this study, 'family' is portrayed as heterosexual married couples with children, often spanning generations. This understanding was mostly based on representatives' own family structures which had been mentioned during discussions in interviews and parliamentary debates. For example:

I've got a wife, kids and grandkids... ([Male] Councillor of Canarium);

...as a father of two daughters... (Mr Shine, Toowoomba North MP, Queensland Parliament 2005a, 2951);

I'm a wife and a mum... and I'm a grandma too ([Female] Walnut MP);

...when you've got children of your own, your outlook changes totally. I'm the father of two daughters, I've got a son too, but he's not married, but my daughters, they're the mothers of my four granddaughters... ([Male] Kokoti MP).

These statements offer a clear representation of the nuclear family structure idealised in heteronormative expressions of families. With heterosexual family life reinforced through the rural imaginary as a fundamental aspect of rural communities (Valentine 2014, 257), it is evident how political representatives often identify this characteristic as being a distinctive feature of rural spaces. They also suggest that rural communities are adherent to rural-specific family values, which essentially are reflective of heteronormative family ideals and structures:

We stand for family values and the preservation of the family unit (Mr Johnson, Gregory MP, Queensland Parliament 1992b, 977);

...everybody in this House has a responsibility to... reflect those community and family values that are held in our electorate... (Mr Michael James Horan, Toowoomba South MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5694).

Another way in which representatives in this study claim conservative rural spaces to be family-orientated is through the ways in which they understand rural families to be much larger and more extended than families in urban settings. As explained by the representative of the Kokoti electorate:

...a lot of families out here have the grandma and grandads and the aunts and uncles and cousins, they're very extended... (Kokoti MP).

For this representative, families typically found in rural spaces, or as they've termed '*families out here*', who are related through bloodlines or marriages, are considered to be more expansive, yet more strongly connected, than families in urban contexts. This understanding of family is reflective of the ideals perpetuated through Tönnies' (1957[1887]) dichotomy, where populations are portrayed as experiencing closer connections and familial bonds in rural *Gemeinschaft* contexts, compared to the more disjointed populations found in *Gesellschaft* urban societies. Importantly, whilst families in rural spaces are described as large and expansive, the connections within and structures of rural communities as collectives were also identified by representatives as resembling a family. During the interview with the representative of the Laurel region for example, they expressed how their town was "...like a big family..."

This idea of large extended heterosexual families is therefore reinforced as distinct to rural communities, an understanding which neatly aligns with the ideas perpetuated through the rural idyll and attributed to *Gemeinschaft* communities

(Little 2007, 858; Valentine 2014, 257; Bonner 1998, 175-4; Tönnies, 1957[1887]). Tönnies emphasised how family life is a fundamental aspect of *Gemeinschaft*, in which communities consider themselves to be large families responsible for accepting or rejecting the membership of outsiders (Tönnies 1957[1887], 228). 'Gemeinschaftlich' relations are created and sustained through the strong familial bonds (Bonner 1998, 175-4; Tönnies, 1957[1887]). Individuals within *Gemeinschaft* societies are not distinguishable from each other, as all work together for common tasks and experience enjoyment from this level of communality (Aldous 1972, 1195). This communality also extends to standards of behaviour and morality for members of rural communities.

#### *6.1.2.3 Rural conservatism based on 'morality'*

In this study, rural conservatism is also underpinned by a particular morality which political representatives identify as specific to rural settings. Driven by the religious beliefs and family values discussed earlier, morality in rural conservatism specifies particular standards of behaviour for individuals, whilst also reinforcing traditional gender roles and norms. Political representatives identify these characteristics as distinct traits of conservative rural communities.

The Mayor for the region of Pine sternly reinforces this view about a specific morality existing with rural settings when questioned about why the

brothel exemption had been applied for by the Council. He suggests it is due to a high standard of morality in rural towns:

High moral standards exist in rural towns! There is a city only 100 kilometres away offering this activity, so why would we need a brothel here? (Mayor of Pine).

During parliament, political representatives of rural electorates present similar perspectives about the existence of specific standards of morality amongst rural populations. The representative for the Fitzroy electorate said:

I have received some 67 letters from central Queenslanders... from, as I see it, decent people with strong beliefs and a commitment to moral standards that instils family values... (Mr Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5738).

Political representatives in this study also highlight the importance of morality in how creating a particular 'moral fabric' in rural communities. The introduction of legislation allowing for the legal operation of sex work was therefore understood to impact on this moral fabric. The MP for the Burdekin electorate stated his opposition to the proposal for legal brothels and sole operators because of how it would 'destroy the moral fabric of society':

...we must consider the morals and ethics of what we are considering in this Chamber...I could never support a party that is blatantly destroying the moral fabric of our society... (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP 1999, 5814-6).

Similarly, the MP for Gladstone expressed how her constituents were against proposals for legalised sex work because of how it would unravel the fabric of society which is underpinned by strong moral and family values:

People do not want the fabric of society further unravelled. They want their children and grandchildren to grow up in a society where honesty, integrity, moral values and family are highly valued... (Mrs Cunningham, Gladstone MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5817).

The term 'family values' is used as a shorthand for heteronormative sexual morality within the context of a marital relationship. Yet, moral values are also being used in the same context and in reference to the same thing. These terminologies are both derived from the centrality of a traditional family, influenced by moral religious codes of behaviour for members of that family.

#### *6.1.2.4 Rural conservative morality as gendered*

Morality through the lens of rural conservatism is also extremely gendered, where the moral value and worth of an individual is measured on their adherence to stereotypical gender roles and norms. Through the rural imaginary, feminine gender roles depict nurturing, caring and passive women who are central figures in the family and the home (Little and Austin 1996, 102; Little and Panelli 2003, 285; Hughes 1997, 125; Little 1987, 339). A woman's level of morality and respectability in rural conservative communities is therefore often based on these characteristics. This is certainly evident in the data collected for this study. The representative of the Kokoti electorate highlights this point when

discussing his opposition to sex work due to how it impacted a woman's level of respectability. He said:

...it's the values that we're brought up with in the bush, the respect values you know, where women come first sort of thing... you respected them and you treat them as special people. Whether it's your sister, or your daughter, or your mother or grandmother, or your aunty... I've got young granddaughters and I would like for them to become upstanding women in the community. I think there is nothing more beautiful than a woman who is respected, you know what I mean? It's just the way I've been brought up... (Kokoti MP).

Through this statement, this representative makes an implicit distinction between respectable moral women versus unrespectable, immoral sex workers. He implies that being a sex worker and being an upstanding respected woman in the community are mutually exclusive. This will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

In comparison, the rural imaginary depicts men as dependable, loyal, and hardworking members of the community who have a moral obligation to their family and community (Little 2003, 2007; Pini, Mayes and Boyer 2013). Political representatives in this study engage with this construction of masculinity. Male interviewees for example often emphasised these characteristics when outlining their experience before and during their time in local and state government representative roles. The Councillor for the region of Canarium for example offers an overview of the various contributions he has made to the community over the

last two decades whilst his wife has been the primary caregiver to his children at home. He said:

I've been involved in community groups for as long as I can remember. I think it's really important in these small towns to give back to the community. I was the Secretary of the union for 18 years, I've been the president of the softball and football clubs for many years, I've volunteered at the ambulance centre, the hospital and I'm president of the P&C committee at the primary school still. My wife helps out with a few of these things too. It's easier for her now to do that because our kids have grown up and she's not stuck at home with them (Councillor of Canarium).

The representative for the Kokoti electorate identified similar experiences and characteristics about themselves which align with constructions of rural masculinity. He said:

After school, I got experience working in the pastoral industry because my family had a property in the next town over. Then shortly after, I swapped over to the transport industry, then I came back here and did a term in local council. I was very young, but it taught me a lot. Since my kids came along, I've been more involved community groups like pony clubs, football clubs and school committees. I'm a community-minded person and I'd like to think I've taught my kids these values (Kokoti MP).

For representatives in this study, the standard of morality for males in rural conservatism is measured by their work ethic and how much they contribute back to the community. With regard to sexual morality, rural conservatism continues to construct moral sexual practices in the confines of heterosexual marriage. However, in this study, political representatives demonstrate a level of

leniency with the standards of sexual morality for men. This will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

### 6.1.3 Rural communities as 'close-knit'

Another example of how political representatives in this study dichotomously construct rural as being opposite to or distinct from urban is by the way in which they identify, define and describe rural communities as 'close-knit'. But what exactly does it mean for a rural community to be 'close-knit'? And are these characteristics or traits of a 'close-knit' community being identified by political representative actually specific to rural settings? From the parliamentary debates and interview transcripts analysed, it is clear that a 'close-knit' rural community is premised on the understanding of community members being closely connected, supportive, and cohesive. However, because of these factors, 'close-knit' communities are also identified as lacking transparency and anonymity. These specific characteristics are then positioned in direct contrast to residents of communities in urban settings, in which political representatives suggest are disconnected and unknown to each other.

The close connections perceived to exist within rural communities stem from the idea that all residents are known to each other. This is accepted as an inevitable occurrence simply because of the rural context where the community is situated. For example:

...this is a rural community; you know everybody here...  
(Mayor of Jarrah).

Based on the close connections, valuable relationships are considered to organically evolve between members of rural communities, resulting in a strong collective foundation:

Our community, well, we're a team and we work as a team...  
(Councillor of Maple).

Political representatives therefore attribute a high level of significance to these relationships, as demonstrated in the following quote from the local government representative of the Cottonwood region:

It is a very special time for me here as Mayor because it is very close-knit. I have a good relationship with all community members, from the teachers, truck drivers, the laborers, bakers, even the publicans! We all work as one  
(Mayor of Cottonwood).

Ultimately, these collective foundations based on the strong connections and relationships amongst residents are identified as distinct traits of 'close-knit' rural communities. According to political representatives in this study, such characteristics don't exist in urban settings, with the representative for the Laurel region suggesting:

...there's more of a sense of community in small towns...  
(Councillor of Laurel).

The representative for the Walnut electorate similarly indicated there is a lack of cohesiveness in urban settings:

...bigger cities are less personable... people are not as aware of their neighbours and what's happening around them in cities... (Walnut MP).

In addition to members of rural communities being perceived as sharing close connections and working together towards particular goals, political representatives in this study also highlight how residents of rural communities are inherently supportive of each other. The two state government representatives interviewed for this project both described the high level of support amongst rural communities. They said:

...we're very supportive and understanding of each other and each other's needs. That's basically what we're about in these parts and I think that's what keeps these small communities going... (Kokoti MP);

...overwhelmingly, our community is a good community, very supportive... (Walnut MP).

These two representatives further reinforced this level of support amongst members of the community by referring to the community response when events or tragedies occur:

...if somebody is sick, or ill or passes away, well people are certainly there to join in and support them and look after them. That's the beauty of rural Queensland, I think, you know it's the heartland of what true rural Australia is all about... (Kokoti MP);

...You know if there's a catastrophe, a fire or a death or whatever, people will come and support the family and give what they need, as much as possible... (Walnut MP).

The supportive nature of residents in 'close-knit' rural communities is contrasted to individuals who originate from or reside elsewhere. In the following quote, the Member of Parliament for the Walnut electorate explains how people who are new to a 'close-knit' rural community would essentially need to learn the supportive ways of residents:

...we need to re-inoculate, if you like, into those that are new to the community that we do care, that we do support, that we are a community that, well, we don't live in one another's pocket, but we do look after one another... (Walnut MP).

The use of the terminology 're-inoculate' is particularly telling in characterising rural and urban people as distinct to one another, even within national or even regional boundaries. The term 'inoculate' conjures up the idea of a foreign traveller requiring vaccinations before migrating to strange areas. Its usage here conveys the message that people from urban areas coming into rural areas are spatial migrants, requiring intervention to enable them to function as members of a rural community.

The characteristics of 'close-knit' rural communities identified in this project's data align with the traditional dichotomous ideas and understandings of rural and rurality expressed through Tönnies (1957[1887]) *Gemeinschaft* and Durkheim's ([1893]2004) mechanical societies. Political representatives in this

study unanimously perceive all members of rural communities to be known to each other, and, regardless of profession or status, they all work together for a common objective to experience communal joy and satisfaction as a result (Donnermeyer 2007, 15; Scott et al 2006, 153; Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 148). This is similar to Durkheim's perspective in that strong social ties and bonds which are considered to be inevitable in close-knit rural communities and are deemed 'mechanical' as they are built into the very structure of the community (Brint 2001, 2-3; Dillon 2014, 91). As such, a 'collective conscience' prevails amongst the community which refers to a 'totality of beliefs and sentiments amongst residents' (Durkheim ([1893]2004, 29). In the data for this study, the 'close-knit' status of a rural community is representative of Durkheim's collective conscience.

Political representatives in this study also perceive rural communities to be cohesive in their views towards particular issues, behaviours and activities. Similar to Durkheim's collective conscience, community cohesion in rural communities contributes to community members sharing the same ideals and values, therefore maintaining and regulating social order and behaviour (Dillon 2014, 90; Brown and Schafft 2011, 37). This can be demonstrated in the following two quotes:

So, we are a pretty close bunch of people who live in rural and regional Queensland and we all have similar sorts of ideals and values and principles... it's the values that we're brought up with in the bush... (Kokoti MP);

People in the bush... have old fashioned values... (Mayor of Cottonwood).

The ideals and values of 'close-knit' rural communities relate to the previously discussed characteristics attributed to rural conservatism, namely those relating to family and morality. In the parliamentary debate about sex work, and interviews with political representatives, a fairly consistent picture of rural spaces emerges as a homogenous community possessed of conservative values derived from religious beliefs and the centrality of the traditional family structure.

#### *6.1.3.1 Transparent communities*

The idea presented through this project's data about rural communities being 'close-knit' also extends to the understanding that all members of a rural community are known to each other and they are all aware of each other's personal matters/business. This suggests that rural communities are subject to a level of transparency that urban communities do not experience. This sentiment is clearly evident in the political debate surrounding sex work, with interviewees explaining:

Everyone knows each other's business and all that sort of stuff... (Mayor of Bluegum);

...because in a smaller town everyone knows everyone, everyone knows what everyone is doing... (Mayor of Cottonwood).

Political representatives indicate that as a result of this transparency in rural settings, there is a lack of anonymity within rural communities. The representative of the Cottonwood region for example explains:

...because there are eyes and ears everywhere in small communities. If the dog barks, everyone knows. (Mayor of Cottonwood)

Political representatives therefore identify how the lack of anonymity in 'close-knit' rural communities is influencing or restricting people's behaviours and activities that they engage in. An example of this identified by two political representatives is visiting adult shops in a rural town:

There used to be three adult shops in town, now there is one... I wouldn't go into one locally because someone would tell someone else... (Mayor of Beech);

...could you imagine walking into it and as you walk out you see Joe Blow from down the road... (Councillor of Laurel).

This lack of anonymity is reinforced as a distinct trait of 'close-knit' rural communities. In the following quote, the local government representative of the Laurel region provides a clear example of how different anonymity is in rural versus urban settings:

I think the biggest difference between an urban area and a rural area, and I'll just give you an example. So our kids ... when they were at high school and exploring sex etc. and I want them to be having safe sex. Yet, if they walk into any

of the chemists in town, they're going to say 'oh hello', because they know them. Now when you're about 17 and you're going to buy condoms, you really don't want your mother's friend to be the one you're buying them from! In Brisbane... you're anonymous. In a small town you're not (Councillor of Laurel).

The representation of rural communities as close-knit and, to a degree, lacking in privacy relates to the conceptualisation of rural communities as one big extended family. In the earlier discussion around rural spaces as defined by their adherence to family values, this is particularly relevant in debates around sex work. Members of rural communities are positioned as more than fellow citizens, or even neighbours. They are characterised as family members, implying both a degree of homogeneity in the values they share, as well as a reduced degree of privacy in their lives. The importance of rural areas conceptualised as close-knit meaning transparent, or lacking in anonymity, is a key issue in the political debate surrounding sex work. The next findings chapter will explore this issue in detail, with respect to the positioning of sex work as threatening to the close-knit nature of rural communities.

## [6.2 The rural-urban continuum framework](#)

In this study, the second dominant framework used in the construction of rural spaces and rurality by political representatives suggests that the notion of rural exists along a continuum, rather than at one end of a dichotomy. Essentially, through the continuum framework, political representatives present the notion of

rural as still different to the notion of urban, yet they also acknowledge how rural spaces are evolving. Through the rural-urban continuum framework, the characteristics and traits of rural conservatism as previously outlined in this chapter are identified as being less significant. Factors contributing to the evolution or transformation of rural conservatism in rural settings include technological developments and large industry-specific growth, such as agriculture and mining practices. Ultimately though, through the continuum framework, political representatives continue to identify the variations of rural as still being 'other' than urban.

The first factor identified by political representatives in this study as influencing change or evolution in rural settings is mild to moderate population growth occurring over periods of time. During the interview with representative of the rural electorate of Kokoti, they explained how the population size had dramatically increased since first moving to their region:

...I have both seen it grow. I remember in 1966 when I first come (sic) through, there was only about three thousand people. Now there's fifteen thousand or something like that! And it's still growing... (Kokoti MP).

This example of varying population sizes and densities over time is a clear indicator of how rural contexts can be situated along the continuum (Schnore 1966, 135). Yet, political representatives in this study really only consider this type of change in the community as being significant if such expansion in the population is linked with the mining industry, for example:

...about eight years ago we had about fifteen thousand people every year using the airport, but we rebuilt the airport and a new terminal based on projections that said we'd have about ninety thousand people per year using it. We built it, but it's already too small so this year we had three hundred and seven thousand fly-in, fly-out... It's the main FIFO centre out here... (Mayor of Bluegum);

I think towns that have experienced large development and therefore transient populations have definitely evolved and changed... (Councillor of Laurel);

I've seen enormous change... particularly when I've got ten and a half thousand personnel today in camps sitting out here in the western ends alone. That puts a whole different complexion of people that's in here (Mayor of Jarrah).

Population growth was therefore not highlighted by representatives as an issue for communities that were not directly associated to mining, for example:

At the moment, well our population growth is one percent per year. Most of the mining is further west than us... So we don't have a lot of that. We don't have any fly-in, fly-out. Some people go from our area, mostly drive-in, drive-out, because it's only a couple of hours drive. So there's not a lot of transient workforce in the region... (Councillor of Laurel);

...we have a number of people who are engaged in the resources sector, both coal seam gas and mining. The activity isn't actually occurring in our region. We don't have the resource activity that we've seen in those other regions (Mayor of Bluegum).

Throughout the dichotomous framework discussed in the previous section of this chapter, political representatives frequently describe rural communities as conservative, with rural conservatism being underpinned by traditional ideals and values associated to religion, family, and morality. However, through the continuum framework, political representatives acknowledge that there are rural communities in Queensland which don't strictly align with the ideals of rural conservatism and are therefore understood to be changing or evolving. This acknowledgement was demonstrated during interviews with the representatives for the Jarrah and Bluegum regions. They said:

We've got one side a very religious community, but you've also got a changing community (Mayor of Jarrah);

I think it's changing. It's nowhere near as conservative as it was say twenty-five years ago. It was very conservative then (Mayor of Bluegum).

These statements imply that over time, rural communities have, according to representatives, shifted along the continuum to somewhere between what is considered 'truly rural' and 'truly urban' (Phillips 1998, 128). Again, this evident shift away from rural conservatism was mostly associated to the mining industry. The Mayor of Jarrah explains how the mining industry is contributing to a change in demographics in their region:

Our demographics are changing. Our population is getting younger because of the mining sector (Mayor of Jarrah).

The Mayor for the Bluegum region acknowledges similar changes in their region as a result of the mining industry and reinforces the impact of 'outsiders' entering the region and influencing change:

It's nowhere near as conservative as it was say twenty-five years ago, it was very conservative then. But we didn't have all the outsiders coming in and changing the community or adapting it slowly to modernised life (Mayor of Bluegum).

These findings demonstrate that political representatives acknowledge that there are diversities which exist between rural communities, however these differences are predominantly attributed to the mining industry. As will be examined in further detail in Chapter 8, political representatives continue to engage with the dichotomy framework by comparing mining with non-mining rural communities. Essentially, these representatives construct 'mining rurality' to be a representation of urban within the rural sphere.

### 6.3 The rural-urban parallel framework

In this study, the third framework used by political representatives to construct rural spaces and rurality is one which suggests there are no inherent collective differences between rural and urban settings, contexts, characteristics, or communities. Instead, through this framework, political representatives construct notions of rural and urban as essentially being the same or similar, or what this project terms as 'parallel'. It is through this framework that ideas associated with the rural imaginary, are challenged and disrupted. Within the parallel framework, political representatives explicitly argue against and question

the 'uniqueness' attributed to rural spaces and notions of rurality. Perspectives expressed through this framework suggest that all communities, regardless of location, size, or population characteristics, should be equally perceived, interpreted and legislated. However, this research demonstrates that political representatives only engage with the parallel framework in discussions about sex work when attempting to further their own (or their party's) political agenda, namely to further restrict the operation of legal sex work in Queensland.

When engaging with the parallel framework, political representatives simply suggest that all towns in Queensland, regardless of location, size, or population, are no different from each other. An example of this is demonstrated in the following quote from the Member for Gregory:

...what is the difference between a shire, a town or any other community with a larger or smaller population? I will just dwell on Toowoomba for a moment... it is no different from Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns or any other city in this state. It is no different from the greater Brisbane area, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast or any other area... (Mr Johnson, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1644-5).

In this statement, the Member for Gregory conflates the different categories of population sizing (e.g. shire, town, and community) with actual geographical locations (e.g. Bundaberg, Brisbane, Gold Coast) in an attempt to reinforce the inherent sameness of communities throughout Queensland. Essentially though, this representative is implying that the particular reasons why sex work is either acceptable or unacceptable in a particular jurisdiction is not contingent on

population or geographic size. This is interesting considering how prior to this statement made in parliament in 2001, Mr Johnson frequently demonstrates a strong engagement with rural conservatism and the rural-dichotomy framework during his speeches. He describes the constituents of the rural Gregory electorate as having specific religious, moral and family values that will be threatened by the existence of sex work. During 1992 for example, Mr Johnson expressed his opposition to legislative proposals allowing for the legal operation of sex work throughout the state by stating:

Throughout the regional cities... prostitution will be rife...where people are trying to raise their families, to look after their kids and to bring them up in a good Christian, democratic society, they will have to put up with the scum of our society in brothels right next door... (Mr Johnson, Gregory MP, Queensland Parliament 1992b, 977).

The trend of political representatives disregarding their own previous statements and affirmations about the importance of rurality and rural conservatism was demonstrated amongst other MPs in parliament. By engaging in the rural-urban parallel and advocating for all towns in Queensland to be treated equally with regard to sex legislation, rural MPs pledge their support for legislative amendments to allow all local government authorities the ability to ban brothel development, rather than only towns with populations under the specified threshold. Examples of this include:

...The same rights should be available to communities which have more than 25,000 people as are available to those which have fewer than 25,000 people... (Mr Michael

James Horan, Toowoomba South MP, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1665);

...all local governments, regardless of their population numbers, should have the same right of refusal of brothels in their local government areas. I failed to see the reasoning behind the inclusion of this clause when the Bill was debated and I still cannot... (Mr Turner, Thuringowa MP, Queensland Parliament 2000a, 3338);

...It is with unbelievable arrogance that this Government states that a town with a population of 24,999 can decide for itself whether or not brothels can be established in their community but a community of 25,001 cannot decide for themselves... (Ms Dorothy Ruth Pratt, Nanango MP, Queensland Parliament 2000a, 3342).

Political representatives who were interviewed for this project indicated similar views regarding the extension of the brothel exemption to include towns of all sizes. For example:

...I think the principles used to justify the 25,000 can equally and validly be used for bigger populations as well... (Walnut MP).

These findings demonstrate political representatives' willingness to dismiss the ideas and conceptualisations of rural and rurality as being unique and different to urban, but only in the context of furthering their agenda to expand the brothel exemption provision to apply throughout all of Queensland.

## 6.4 Conclusion

From an analysis of Hansard data and interview transcripts collected for this research, it is clear that political representatives engage with and construct rural spaces and rurality through three different frameworks – the dichotomy, the continuum, and the parallel. The next chapter will outline how political representatives position sex work in relation to these constructed ideas and understandings of rural spaces and rurality.

## Chapter 7 – Sex work

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### 7.0 Introduction

The purpose of the following two chapters is to examine how Queensland political representatives from rural electorates have positioned sex work in relation to the constructed ideas and understandings of rural spaces and rurality as discussed in the literature review. This will include an analysis of how rural representatives are able to use the concept of the rural imaginary to justify seemingly contradictory positions toward sex work as both threatening and inappropriate, as well as acceptable and necessary for communities in rural settings. This chapter thus discusses how the rural imaginary offers rural politicians and other elected representatives permission to use Christian conservative viewpoints to challenge the commercial sex industry in a manner not available to urban politicians. Such a concept also offers rural politicians and elected officials the confidence to assert these viewpoints as representative of a unified community viewpoint, again a position not available to urban politicians.

However, in spite of the role the rural imaginary plays in rural opposition to the commercial sex industry, sex work has long been identified as a topical issue within political discourse. The first section of this chapter thus engages with political resistance to sex work generally and outlines its links with research more generally which is focused on the harm caused by sex work to communities, women and children. Following this, the chapter will demonstrate how political representatives invoke the rural imaginary, what it means to them and how it is

used to challenge the (in)appropriateness of the sex industry in their community. This is achieved in a number of ways.

Firstly, political representatives identify and position sex work as a specific threat to their idealised notion of what rural signifies, which is based on a Christian conservative world view which prioritises the traditional heterosexual monogamous family unit as the lynchpin to a functioning, unified community. Within such a framework, sex work is positioned as secular, immoral and disconnected, threatening to and inappropriate for rural settings. In this way, sex work is positioned as in opposition to the rural imaginary and more in tune with urban communities who are negatively contrasted with rural communities and positioned as more able to accommodate the challenges of public commercial sex. The data does identify urban politicians making use of these arguments in political debates but they are in the minority. However, as will be discussed, this may be based on the fact that the rural imaginary gives rural politicians permission to proffer traditional Christian conservative resistance to commercial public sex in a manner that is not available to urban politicians.

However, as will become clearer through this discussion, many of the 'rural-specific' objections to sex work highlighted by political representatives align with attitudes presented in existing literature on sex work in *urban* contexts. This includes objections to sex work based on factors of public nuisance, safety, crime and health. Such urban opposition to sex work from rural politicians appears to undermine the notion of rural specific challenges to sex work based within a traditional religious conservatism. Nevertheless, political

representatives in rural regions differentiated their concerns from urban communities through the related issues of privacy and transparency, thus using the ideology of a united community - central to the rural imaginary - as the key factor that amplifies any urban concerns about sex work in rural settings.

Similarly, when rural political representatives offered some levels of tolerance or acceptance of sex work in rural settings, they emphasised a preference for discreet forms not only to minimise harm but also to protect the privacy of those involved. In the same way, rural political representatives, while maintaining their opposition to sex work in rural settings also acknowledged that commercial sex work may be a 'necessary evil' in some rural communities, specifically those subject to large scale mining who experience transient populations of unaccompanied men. In these contexts, rural communities protect themselves and their values by offering a group of women to service the sexual needs of these disconnected outsiders, these urban others, who threaten the rural imaginary of a united, family centred, monogamous citizen.

Overall, this chapter explores the range of ways in which the rural imaginary is invoked by rural politicians and how such a concept is used to resist commercial sex work in rural communities. In the rural imaginary, sex work is positioned as the destabilising influence, the disruptor to family centred values of love and monogamy. However, while traditional religious conservative traditions might be the instigator for opposition, rural politicians are not adverse to identifying a range of risks that sex work poses to rural communities, many of which are not specific to rural settings. This is demonstrated in empirical

evidence from existing literature and by political representatives of urban electorates in this study. Additionally, many rural political representatives identify examples where sex work is a requirement for rural communities, indicating that there are particular borderlines established for a tolerance of such activity with rural settings. These conflicting findings suggest that the threat that sex work poses to rural settings is predominantly driven by anxieties about the transformation of traditional rural conservative spaces to modern urban spaces. Essentially, this transformation of space is perceived to result in a diminished or lost rural imaginary that is attributed to rural settings by political representatives. The next chapter will examine this transformation of space and related issues in more detail. To begin, the following section will outline key findings from the analysed Hansard records and interview transcripts which illustrate how political representatives in this study have constructed sex work as a 'problem' and therefore, as an activity which threatens rural spaces and rurality.

### 7.1 Sex work as a problem

In this study, sex work is consistently identified and perceived by political representatives as a significant problem in society and one which is linked to issues of public nuisance, safety, crime, and health. This understanding was particularly evident in parliamentary debates about sex work legislation, with such attitudes being expressed by representatives of both rural and urban electorates. During a parliamentary sitting in 1992 for example, the urban politician the Honourable Neil Turner declared that:

Prostitution is a problem. It has always been a problem, and it will continue to be a problem in the future (Honourable Neil John Turner, Nicklin MP, Queensland Parliament 1992b, 959).

Noosa MP and urban politician Bruce Davis echoed that position, invoking the old adage that:

Prostitution is one of the older professions in the world. It has never been more of a problem in our society than it is today (Mr Bruce William Davidson, Noosa MP, Queensland Parliament 1992b, 970);

Other urban Members of Parliament implied that there were other problems associated with, or inherently connected to, sex work:

Prostitution is a complex and perplexing problem, for it is not one problem but a portfolio of problems that may be listed by various speakers in this debate (Mr Felon, Greenslopes MP, Queensland Parliament 1992b, 957);

This attitude was succinctly summed up by rural Member of Parliament for Toowoomba South:

...more prostitution, more problems... (Mr Michael James Horan, Toowoomba South MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5693).

First and foremost, sex work was declared to be a problem not just for those involved in the industry, but for the entire populace, with rural MP Mr Pearce stating:

Prostitution does exist and it is a problem for the community... (Mr Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5740).

In broad terms, political representatives in this research argue that sex work is a problem as it is an activity which is inherently 'bad', 'disgusting', and/or 'evil'. These emotive descriptions of sex work are particularly evident in the parliamentary debates analysed for this research. The severity of the problem of prostitution ranged in description from one rural MP declaring it to be 'one of society's ills' (Mr Pitt, Mulgrave MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5722), to other rural MPs describing it as one of the most significant evils to be faced by Australia:

Prostitution has not been outlawed by the Queensland Parliament since our Government came to power. In fact, it specifically provides that prostitution per se is not illegal. The legislation makes that very clear. What it does outlaw, however, is organised prostitution and street prostitution – two of the greatest evils that this country and other countries have seen (Mr Braddy, Rockhampton MP, Queensland Parliament 1995, 90).

Others described prostitution in condemnatory terms as 'repugnant' or 'disgusting'. The MP for the rural electorate of Maryborough said:

First, let me set the scene by saying that I find prostitution in general absolutely repugnant (Mr Foley, Maryborough MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2347).

The rural MP for Fitzroy echoed these sentiments:

I understand and sympathise with the views of those who say that prostitution is morally repugnant. I agree wholeheartedly with them (Mr Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5739);

These condemnations of prostitution as a social ill, as an evil, as disgusting or repugnant are very general in their nature, whereas other rural MPs implied more tangible reasons behind such a labelling of the industry:

How can Government possibly justify condoning and encouraging such a dangerous, disgusting industry when there is so much at risk and at stake? (Mr Black, Whitsundays MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5746).

In addition to using emotive descriptors when discussing the topic of sex work in parliamentary debates, political representatives at a state level also identify the activity as a problem because of how they consider it to be degrading for the individuals involved. For example, several rural MPs said:

Whether it be heterosexually or homosexually based, it is my view that prostitution is an activity which is degrading to participants, both the prostitute and the client... (Mr Pitt, Mulgrave MP, Queensland Parliament 1992a, 892);

Prostitution is a degrading and perverse practice (Mr Horan, Toowoomba South, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5703);

I find prostitution abhorrent, demeaning to our society and degrading... (Mr Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5739);

Prostitution is... a degrading and dehumanising lifestyle... (Mrs Cunningham, Gladstone MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5816).

Political representatives also identify sex work as a problematic activity due to how it is linked with illicit drugs, crime, and the spread of disease. For example, in 1992, the MP for the rural electorate of Gregory declared “...drugs and prostitution no doubt go hand in hand” (Queensland Parliament 1992a, 978). Years later, this sentiment was echoed in parliament by another MP of a rural electorate who stated:

Brothels are great shields for drug dealers, as they can pose as clients and offer drugs as payment without fear of being disturbed (Mr Kenneth Turner, Thurwingowa MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5741).

The representative of the urban electorate of Moggill, Dr David Watson, similarly identified concerns about the alleged link between sex work, drugs, crime and the spread of disease, by suggesting that legalising sex work would increase the risks for the individuals involved. He said:

The Premier’s brothels may be safer than illegal brothels and streetwalking, but his model will inevitably drive a large slice of the industry even deeper underground. As a result, the risks in the illicit sex trade will be even greater for both prostitutes and their clients. The risk of violence will be greater, the risk of disease will be greater, the risk of drugs will be greater and the risk of exploitation will be greater (Dr David Watson, Moggill MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5709)

These particular perspectives about sex work are not surprising, with existing literature reinforcing how sex work is commonly viewed in society as a social and moral problem, often being linked to an array of other social issues, such as violence, drugs, and crime (Scoular et al., 2007; Weitzer 2006; Harcourt, Egger

and Donovan, 2005; Gibbs Van Brunschot, 2003; Scott, 2011; Scoular, 2004; Weitzer, 2010b). Sex work is considered to represent a form of social evil and an activity which incites moral revulsion amongst members of society (Agustin 2005, 618; Weitzer 2005a; Davis 1937, 744). Those who engage in sex work are also subject to negative social attitudes, with participants (i.e. predominantly sex workers) constructed as motifs of degeneracy, contagion, and anti-social behaviour (Hubbard 1998; O'Neill et al 2008, 76; Scott 2011, 54). These ideas easily permeate into the boundaries of political discourse, with those in opposition to the legal operation of sex work often drawing on such emotive conceptualisations to further their agenda, or moral crusade, against such activity (Weitzer, 2006).

As identified previously in this thesis, the vast majority of existing literature on social and political attitudes towards sex work is situated within urban contexts. As such, it is necessary to go beyond sweeping generalisations of sex work as degrading, or disgusting, or problematic, and examine specifically how sex work is positioned in relation to the constructed ideas and understandings of rural spaces and rurality. As will become clearer over the following sections of this chapter, political representatives predominantly engage with the rural-urban dichotomy. As a result, sex work is positioned in contrast to the ideals and characteristics perpetuated through the rural imaginary and associated with the secularism, disconnection and plurality of the urban sphere.

## 7.2 Sex work as threatening to rural values

As discussed in the previous chapter, the rural-urban dichotomy is the most dominant framework used by Queensland political representatives in this study when discussing the implications of sex work legislation. Sex work is constructed as problematic in rural settings due to such activity being deemed a threat to the constructed ideals and characteristics of rural conservatism.

### 7.2.1 Sex work as against conservatism

In this study, sex work is positioned in contrast to rurality because of how political representatives deem it as an activity which conflicts with notions of conservatism, an ideology idealised through the rural imaginary. This perspective was frequently expressed by representatives interviewed for this project. An example of this is presented in the following quote from the representative of the Teak region, who at the time of the interview, represented two Queensland towns which had been granted an exemption from licensed brothel development. He explains:

I think there is a generally held reserve in conservative communities about prostitution per se... But I think a general reflection of conservative community attitudes, which I believe a lot of our smaller communities are, is that it's not something they want to see as a part of the make-up of their community (Mayor of Teak).

Similarly, when the representative for the region of Cottonwood was questioned in their interview about their community's views of sex work, they responded with the following:

Well, I don't think it [sex work] would be very well accepted in the bush, no (Mayor of Cottonwood).

Political representatives instead often associate sex work strictly with urban settings. For example, the representative for the Maple region said:

There's a healthy arm of prostitution in most city areas... just look at the Gold Coast! The 'glitter strip' or whatever they call it... (Councillor of Maple).

In this statement, the Councillor has pointed to the Gold Coast (a more densely populated area of southern Queensland) as emblematic of a city area in which sex work is assumed to be flourishing.

But how exactly is sex work seen to conflict with rural conservatism and why is such activity considered to be inappropriate for the 'make-up' of a rural conservative community? The findings from this project indicate that predominantly, political representatives perceive sex work as an activity that is against the religious, moral and family values which are idealised in rural conservatism. These include strong religious (predominantly Christian) values, traditional notions of morality depicting notions of 'good' and 'bad' sex, and finally, heteronormative family structures founded on stereotypical gender norms.

### 7.2.2 Sex work as 'un-Christian'

Religion is identified as an important aspect of rural conservatism, with political representatives reinforcing the role of religious doctrine and institutions

as influential. In contrast, communities in urban settings are constructed by representatives as more secular in their values and beliefs (Peach, 2003; Mitchell and Weatherly, 2000). Urban communities are thus bound together by impersonal contractual relationships rather than cohesive mutual obligations. Stemming from this dichotomous construction of rural and urban settings, political representatives reinforce sex work as a distinctly urban phenomenon whilst continuing to emphasise how such activity is inappropriate for rural communities.

Throughout the parliamentary debates analysed, political representatives engage with the rural-urban dichotomy framework when declaring that legislative proposals for legal sex work in Queensland conflict with religious values upheld through rural conservatism. These perspectives were expressed by representatives of rural electorates before and after the Prostitution Act (1999) had been implemented throughout the state, indicating this has been a consistent concern for rural MPs throughout this time period. For example, in 1992, the MP for the rural electorate of Gregory argued that legalising sole operator sex workers was against both religious and moral values:

The legislation is a further invasion of the Christian and moral values that we, at least on this side of the House, stand by and fight for (Mr Johnson, Gregory MP, Queensland Parliament 1992a, 977).

This perspective was similarly raised in parliament over a decade later after sole operator sex workers and licensed brothels had been operating legally in

Queensland. The representative of the rural Tablelands electorate, Ms Lee Long, argued that such legislative measures were devaluing people's Christian values:

People believe that our Christian values are being devalued by legalising this industry and that more effort should be put into cracking down on the illegal industry by the police of this state. (Ms Lee Long, Tablelands MP, Queensland Parliament 2006a, 2765).

Additionally, representatives of rural electorates in opposition to legislative proposals for sex work often invoked religious language when discussing the consequences of legalising prostitution. For example, the representative of the rural electorate of Burdekin warned:

If this Bill is passed, it will open a Pandora's Box to an age of sin and depravity not witnessed before in Queensland (Mr Knuth, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5815).

The declaration of sex work as evil and sinful within religious rhetoric is not unusual, where the act itself is deemed a form of sexual deviance and in breach of 'God's laws' (Weitzer and Ditmore 2010, 332; Scott 2011, 59). In this study, though, political representatives engaging with the rural-urban dichotomy equate the 'anti-religious' legislation with being quintessentially 'un-Australian', with the rural MP for Lockyer stating:

I consider the legislation, as a whole, to be immoral, anti-Christian and, last but not least, unAustralian (Mr Flynn, Lockyer MP, Queensland Parliament 2001c, 3675)

Through this quote, Mr Flynn is essentially arguing that any legislation allowing for the legal operation of sex work stands in complete contrast to what it means

to be Australian. At the forefront of national Australian identity is iconic or stereotypical images and representations of rural Australia or 'the bush', depicting picturesque scenery, and 'true-blue' hard working Aussies (Bourke and Lockie, 2001; Bell, 2005). This characterisation of rural Australia as central to national identity is a key component of the rural imaginary. Positioning sex work as in conflict with this imagined identity enforces its disruptive potential to rural space.

Objections to sex work and related legislation based on religion was also raised during interviews, where several political representatives indicated that the commercial sale of sex simply did not align with the religious values of rural conservative communities. This was evident with representatives for towns with and without brothel exemptions in place. For example, the MP for Walnut, an electorate with no brothel exemptions in place, declared that:

Prostitution is something that is contrary to my faith. A lot of people in this community would feel the same way (Walnut MP – no exemptions).

The Mayor of Beech, an area with three exemptions, stated:

Well, that activity isn't exactly in line with the Bible and I'm sure it's condemned by the Church (Mayor of Beech – three exemptions).

The understanding that sex work is an activity which is disapproved by the church was also raised during parliamentary discussions amongst representatives who opposed the legislative proposals for such activity. Objections to sex work

extended beyond personal religious belief, and reflected condemnation from an institutional level. For example:

Some church leaders and members of a number of religious groups have damned the Government for these reforms. I understand their fears (Mr Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5739).

The vocal objection of church groups signified the political positioning of the church as an important entity in the debate:

Many churches and church people have written to me – whether they be Baptist, Anglican, Catholic or Pentecostal. They are all united against this proposed legislation – the illicit sale of human beings by whore mongers who do not care whose life is destroyed as long as they grow rich in profit (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5815).

The rural imaginary identifies the Church as an extremely valued and influential social institution. As a consequence, if the institution itself is seen to not approve of a particular activity, it is not surprising that political representatives align their views accordingly. Existing research demonstrates the importance of religious beliefs, values and institutions in reinforcing social norms in society, with attitudes towards sex work thus being linked to ideas of biblical morality (Cao and Maguire, 2013). These ideas about sex work expressed by political representatives in this study align with a historical condemnation of sex work as contrary to the values and ideals of religious doctrine. According to religious perspectives, sex should be reserved for marriage where there is a

lifelong covenant between a man and woman (Weitzer and Ditmore 2010, 332). The commercial sale of sex is therefore considered to be a violation of 'holy' matrimony (Brock 2000, 249).

The commercial exchange of sex between a worker and a client is a threat to the institution of marriage as it breaks the link between sex, love and reproduction (Weitzer 2010b, 70; Weitzer and Ditmore 2010, 332). The romantic association of heterosexual love with the countryside is central to the rural idyll. Within this portrayal relationships between couples are simple and wholesome (Little 2007, 853). In such a context, where a high importance is placed on the sanctity of marriage and the purpose of (marital) sex for procreation, sex work presents a threat.

Despite political representatives of rural settings suggesting that sex work conflicts with religious values upheld through the rural imaginary, religious-based objections to sex work and related legislation were also highlighted in parliament by representatives of urban electorates. For example, the representative of the urban electorate of Caboolture argued that legislation allowing for brothels to legally operate in Queensland were against Christian values. He stated:

One Nation [a minority political party] strongly opposes the legislation before the House as it is clearly evident that the Government's principles underlying the Prostitution Bill 1999 are unworkable and against moral Christian and family values (Mr William Patrick Feldman, Caboolture MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5717).

This same brothel legislation was identified by the representative of the urban Burleigh electorate, Mrs Gamin, as upsetting church groups. She expressed:

Church and family groups are dismayed and upset by the new laws (Mrs Gamin, Burleigh MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5728).

Existing research suggests there is a strong influence of religious views and values on political and community attitudes towards sex work in urban contexts (Kingston, 2013; Jonsson and Jakobsson, 2017; Brooks-Gordon, 2006; Weitzer, 2009a). This indicates that religious beliefs and values are certainly influential in the creation and implementation of sex work legislation, but this is not premised on or specific to whether policymakers involved in the process are representative of rural or urban jurisdictions. Furthermore, these findings indicate that sex work does not necessarily present more of a threat or risk to the religious beliefs and values of rural communities compared to urban communities. Rather, this perceived threat or risk of sex work to the religious ideals of rural conservative communities appears exaggerated by political representatives' engagement with rural imaginary, where characteristics of the rural conservative ideology (such as religion) resonate with them and given them more permission to articulate opposition based on such ideals

Interestingly, and in contrast, these religious values and ideals of rural conservatism have also been influential in political representatives demonstrating their support for the legalisation of sex work. Political representatives in this study demonstrate their willingness to support legislative measures to regulate the commercial sex industry as a result of their religious

beliefs and values. In the following statement from Mr Pitt, the representative of Mulgrave, a rural electorate containing both exempt and non-exempt towns, religion is identified as the reason why political representatives should be supporting the legalisation of sex work:

I rise to speak in support of the Prostitution Bill. As with many other Queenslanders, my religious beliefs play a key role in my life, and therefore I understand the moral arguments against this Bill only too well. Having said that, my Christian upbringing also makes me well aware not just of the problems within our communities but also of our obligations to do what we can to improve the lives of those who get caught up in the ills of society. Prostitution is one of society's ills. Yes, I am concerned that prostitution is a growing problem. I believe the existence of prostitution is deplorable. However, I refuse to pass selective moral judgement on others (Mr Pitt, Mulgrave MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5722).

This quote is another clear indication of religion strongly resonating with a representative of a rural electorate and such views influencing their attitudes towards sex work and related policy. In contrast to previous statements outlined, though, this representative identifies their religious values as being the reason for their support of legislative measures to address and regulate sex work. The aim of regulatory approaches towards sex work focus on harm minimisation in an attempt to reduce or avoid potential harms of the industry (Brent and Hausbeck 2005, 273; Crofts and Summerfield 2008, 212; Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 141), and this is, according to Mr Pitt, the 'Christian' thing to do. Through this contrasting perspective, sex work is not being constructed as a specific threat to

rural conservatism, but as an activity which presents a risk to the whole of society.

It is important to note that the representatives speaking for, or against, the legalisation of sex work within the Parliamentary debates may have been adhering more strongly to political ideology or party loyalty in a context where the Labor Party representatives were largely supportive of the Bill, and the Liberal and National Representatives were not. This may also go some way to explaining the elements of the rural-urban dichotomy emerging in the political debate over sex work. The Labor Party of Australia is traditionally more successful in winning seats in urban areas, while the Liberal Party, and especially the National Party of Australia, are more successful in winning seats in rural, or regional, areas. Opposition to legalisation of sex work on party lines may therefore have been more likely to come from representatives of rural areas. However, the fact that religion was invoked by representatives arguing both sides of the debate, and in both rural and urban electorates, indicates that there were competing constructions of sex work, community values, and the 'Christian' thing to do in this debate.

### 7.2.3 Sex work as 'immoral'

Another way in which political representatives identify sex work as an activity that threatens and/or conflicts with the ideals of rural conservatism is the construction of sex work as an immoral activity. Morality is a key component of rural conservatism which is highly influenced by religious values and traditional understandings of family, gender and marriage. The standard of

morality as perpetuated through rural conservatism is constructed as superior to the moral standards and values that exist in urban communities. It is because of this that representatives align sex work with immorality and associate both with urban settings.

During parliamentary debates, political representatives for rural electorates often refer to morality as the basis for their opposition to sex work. Mrs Cunningham, the representative of the rural Gladstone electorate, describes sex work as being both “demeaning and demoralising” (Mrs Cunningham, Gladstone MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2349), whilst Mrs Pratt, suggests sex work is both dubious and unacceptable:

A member of the world’s oldest profession was once known as a “prostitute” and is now known as a “sex worker”. Militant feminists and the politically correct have given this description to women and men, girls and boys who are selling their bodies in an endeavour to give some acceptability and respectability to the practicing of what at the very best could be called a dubious occupation. I do not regard prostitution as acceptable (Mrs Pratt, rural MP for Barambah, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5825).

During parliamentary debates, state representatives also express similar moral concerns about and objections to sex work on behalf of their constituents. Some connect their view of sex work as immoral to their own religious beliefs:

There are many people in my electorate who have religious views and others who have a moral view against prostitution... they are opposed to the legislation as a matter of principle... (Mr Nelson, rural MP for Tablelands, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5733).

Others did not specify religion as a factor, but nevertheless declare morality to be a key feature of the community, and a key element of the community's asserted objection to sex work:

This is an issue that the people of Toowoomba feel strongly about. They feel strongly about it from a moral point of view... They see that as bad for the overall morality of the city and community and a further lessening of standards (Mr Horan, rural MP for Toowoomba South, Queensland Parliament 2010b, 2595).

Moral objections to sex work are also evident amongst local government authorities in rural communities. During interviews, representatives often indicate factors of morality are common reasons as to why members of rural conservative communities object to sex work and its existence in such locations. For example:

Morality would be the main issue... it's the image of prostitution that nobody wants to get involved with... (Councillor of Canarium).

This statement demonstrates that both morality, and the appearance of morality, are equally important and raises an important question for many rural political representatives about the appropriateness of sex work as a rural occupation and industry:

There's the moral issue of whether you think it's the right way to go, if you think that's an appropriate industry to have in your town. As I said, I don't think our community would say that 'Yes it is' (Mayor of Teak).

From this snapshot of Hansard and interview data presented, representatives of state and local government commonly construct sex work as an immoral activity, particularly in comparison to the moral standards and values attributed to their communities. It is clear that political representatives construct sex work as an immoral or 'bad' form of sex because it conflicts with 'good' and moral heteronormative rural sexualities (Pini, Mayes and Boyer, 2013; Little and Panelli, 2007; Little, 2007; Little and Panelli, 2003). Through the rural-urban dichotomy framework, representatives explicitly make distinctions between sex which is good ('rural' marital sex) versus sex which is bad ('urban' commercial sex).

#### *7.2.3.1 Good sex (rural) versus bad sex (urban)*

The commercial exchange of sex is perceived to conflict with the sanctity of monogamous, procreative sex between a married heterosexual couple (Hayes, Carpenter and Dwyer 2012, 93). Sex work therefore threatens these heteronormative moral standards about sex and marriage that are underpinned by religious doctrine and reinforced through the rural conservative ideology. Within this framework, 'good' or 'moral' sex occurs only between a married heterosexual couple who are in love and engage in sex for the purposes of procreation. Any form of sexual activity, expression or desires outside of this are therefore deemed immoral or 'bad' and associated with urban sexualities (Hubbard, 1999). This fits neatly with representations of rural relationships more broadly, and contrasts with representations of urban relationships previously

discussed. Sex work thus comes to exemplify modern secular urban relationships, which are negatively contrasted with traditional, religious rural relationships.

During an interview conducted for this project, the representative of the rural Walnut electorate made an attempt to demonstrate the difference between meaningful, loving intimacy and sex (i.e. good/moral sex) versus the physical and unemotional exchange of sex between a sex worker and client (i.e. bad/immoral sex). By referring to their own marriage in this statement, they also reinforce how sex in marriage is, to them, the most significant and sacred form of sex:

I believe that when you have sexual contact with a person, there's a real umm [sic], integration of who you are with that person. I've been married for thirty-eight years this year and I can't imagine being with anyone else... But I think that connection that you give when you give all of yourself to somebody, when you do that repeatedly as a prostitute, that does something to who you are as well, you know... I'm not naïve, I do understand the pleasure that sex is. Though, I'm not sure what's the pleasure with seeing someone for half an hour, just the physical pleasure is all that it is for that situation... what is the point? (Walnut MP).

This construction of sex work as 'bad' and immoral due to the absence of love and marriage is also evident during parliamentary debates about sex work legislation. The representative of the rural electorate of Nanango, for example, reinforces the idea that sex work is not a good, proper, or moral form of sex because it lacks the 'required' emotion of love between the people engaging in the act. She argues:

When people sell themselves for whatever reason, they are demeaning themselves by allowing their bodies to be used as chattels. There is no love in the cold, commercial

coupling of a prostitute and customer (Mrs Pratt, Nanango MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5826).

The 'commercial and contractual' element of the sex act in sex work is contrasted with a 'loving' and mutually shared sex act which occurs in marriage. This sentiment about sex work lacking emotion due to the commodification of the act and therefore being a 'bad' form of sex was also raised by other representatives during parliamentary debates about sex work legislation, including the Burdekin MP who said:

...by legalising brothels, society is perpetuating the concept of gender servitude whereby sex can be traded for money and the prostitute becomes a commodity – another piece of merchandise to be bought (Mrs Menkens, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2343).

Lockyer MP Mr Willian Flynn also decried the lack of love or affection in sex work, declaring:

I believe the majority of Queenslanders do not wish to give way to the forces of abuse and evil. Yes, abuse; prostitution is not born out of love or affection... (Mr Flynn, Lockyer MP, Queensland Parliament 2001c, 3676).

Through this second statement, Mr Flynn reinforces the idea that sex is only acceptable and moral if it consists of love and affection. Any act of sex which does not include such features is therefore, according to this representative, akin to a form of abuse. Several other representatives of rural electorates similarly reinforced their objection to sex work by describing such activity as form of abuse.

The MP for Maryborough describes legalised prostitution as 'legalised sexual abuse' (Mr Foley, Maryborough MP, Queensland Parliament 2006, 2763), while Independent MP for Gladstone Liz Cunningham characterises sex work as 'the most dehumanising and degrading abuse of women and young men that we have ever legislated for (Mrs Cunningham, Gladstone MP, Queensland Parliament 2006, 2765). Whitsundays MP Alfred Black describes sex work as abusive because of the asserted impact on family, society, and sex workers:

Prostitution is blatant exploitation and abuse and it will do nothing but contribute to the increasing decay of the family and of society and further decay of the lives of sex industry workers (Mr Black, Whitsundays MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5746).

The MP for the rural electorate of Burdekin, Mr Jeffrey Knuth, instead took issue with the commercial nature of sex work, and the commodification of 'human flesh'. He declared:

... we must consider the morals and ethics of what we are considering in this Chamber – that is, the dreadful sale of human flesh. That is right, and I use that phrase because that is all it is – profiteering from the abuse of young women. (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5814).

While these representatives hail from rural electorates, representatives of urban electorates also made similar comments about sex work being a form of abuse and denigration, particularly against women and children. Rob Borbidge describes sex work as 'the serial abuse and debasement of women and children (Hon R. E. Borbidge, Surfers Paradise MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5711), while the

Southport MP Mr Veivers called the Bill to legalise sex work a 'formal, legalised denigration of all women (Mr Veivers, Southport MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5823).

The identification of sex work as being synonymous with sexual abuse is not a unique interpretation, particularly by those who oppose the practice of selling sex as a commercial trade. Analyses of sex work in existing literature through the radical feminist, abolitionist, or what more recently has been termed the oppression paradigm (Weitzer 2012a, 10), reject the idea that sex workers have any choice, agency or empowerment when engaging in this form of activity. Instead, sex work is identified as a form of abuse, dominance and violence which is perpetuated by the client to the sex worker (Jeffreys 1997, 2009; Dworkin, 1993; Barry, 1995). This power imbalance between the client and sex worker is identified in parliament by representatives of rural and urban electorates as a reason why this activity should not be legalised. This perspective was reflected in the statement by the representative of the rural electorate of Callide, Mrs Dianne McCauley:

Prostitution is not a matter only of sex. It is a matter of power of one individual over another and as such, I find it abhorrent, as most people would (Queensland Parliament 1992b, 963).

With a similar reference made by Ms Power, the representative for the urban electorate of Mansfield:

...it is nonsense to suggest that prostitution does not have its victims. In many senses, we are all the victims of prostitution, in that it represents the down side of human

history, based as it is on the domination of women by men  
(Queensland Parliament 1992b, 966)

This particular concern about sex work is certainly not unique to rural settings, either in the literature or in the data analysed for this project. However, these problematisations of sex work are often represented as being oppositional to rural values, specifically rural conservatism and thus more damaging to the rural community. The rural imaginary is thus providing rural politicians the authority to assert these views as being rural-specific. Sex work as an act of male sexual domination over women, or an activity which perpetuates an immoral form of sex is characterised as particularly threatening to rural communities where 'family values' are implied to be a key feature of rural life.

This positioning of sex work as oppositional to rural morals where 'good' sex is within marriage, and 'bad' sex is commercial, is also reflected in how political representatives speak about and refer to the individuals who participate in such activity. Political representatives construct sex workers and clients as deviant and immoral individuals who are, of course, always positioned as 'other' to the representatives themselves, their friends, family and community members. Predominantly, representatives in this study question the character and morals of the individuals who engage in sex work and implicitly associate such behaviour with people who live outside of rural conservative communities. These ideas will be explored further in the next chapter.

#### *7.2.3.1.1 No demand for 'immoral' sex in rural communities*

Because of the way in which sex work is constructed within a frame of rural conservatism, that is, as an immoral form of sex outside the appropriate realms of love, marriage, and intimacy, representatives in this study often suggest that there is no demand for sex work, particularly brothels, in rural communities. Political representatives demonstrate a reluctance or difficulty to conceive the possibility of sex work within rural settings. This perspective was particularly evident toward sex work being offered through brothels, with the representative of the rural electorate of Toowoomba South declaring there is no demand amongst his constituents for such establishments within the region:

I know of no members of this House who have received approaches from local people or local community groups seeking a brothel in their area. There is no community demand for brothels... (Mr Horan, Queensland Parliament 2001a, 886).

The lack of demand for brothels in rural towns was also highlighted at a local government level during interviews. The Mayor of Teak explained that there is “no community appetite” for brothels in the town they represent which was a reason for why the council applied for exempt status. This perspective was similarly suggested by the Mayor of Bluegum who explained there is a “lack of request for these type of establishments” in their region.

The understanding that there is no demand for brothels in rural towns was also reinforced by representatives of urban electorates, who indicated their understanding and support of the inclusion of the brothel exemption provision

for small towns. The representative for the urban electorate of Kawana, Mr Cummins, indicated his support for the brothel exemption provision for small rural towns by declaring that there is no need for such establishments:

The simple reason for allowing communities with fewer than 25,000 people to have the power through the local councils to say no is that we realise small communities may not want or have the need for brothels... (Mr Cummins, Kawana MP, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1660).

While there is widely expressed acknowledgement amongst political representatives of the growing prevalence of commercial sex advertisements in local papers of rural communities, such representatives continue to disassociate demand for commercial sex from permanent residents of rural towns and instead link such activity to non-resident mine workers. For example, during a parliamentary sitting in 2010 where representatives were debating amendments to legislation regarding advertisement regulations for sex work services, a number of rural representatives highlighted concerns about the existence of such advertisements in their local paper. Mrs Pratt, the MP of Nanango, indicated such advertisements are interpreted humorously, whilst also causing offence:

My local paper is only a half a dozen pages long and sex workers advertise in it. Most people in our town laugh at the ads. However, while we read them as if they were the comedy section, they can be quite offensive (Mrs Pratt, Nanango MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2355).

During interviews conducted for this study, local government representatives also indicated how they have noticed the increasing prevalence of sex work advertisements in local newspapers, particularly representatives whose regions

experienced large-scale mining and transient populations. The Councillor for the town of Maple explained how this trend is evident in local and regional newspaper publications:

There's been an increase in our local paper and in the regional paper... up to 10 ads in the local and perhaps 25 in the other! (Councillor of Maple).

The local government representative for the rural mining region of Bluegum also indicated that the prevalence of sex workers advertisements had increased in their local paper and provided an example of the types of text offered in such advertising:

There's some ads for working girls... busty and blonde I think is one description... but it's getting more common with the mining boom out here... (Mayor of Bluegum).

Despite these increases in sex worker advertisements in local papers, political representatives continue to assert there is no local demand for commercial sex in rural communities, and that such demand for sex work services is directly related with the mining industry. The local government representative for the Bluegum region suggested that non-resident populations were driving the demand for commercial sex in the area. He said:

I think the fly-in, fly-out workers are the main users... But it's amplified once you get the fly-in, fly-out boys because they're separated from their families and looking for a bit of leisure time (Mayor of Bluegum).

The perceived link between commercial sex and mining populations was also emphasised by interviewees who represented non-mining regions. The local government representative for Teak said:

No, we have a number of people who are engaged in the resources sector, both coal seam gas and mining. The activity isn't actually occurring in our region. We don't have the resource activity that we've seen in those other regions. So the issues are probably different... Let's face it, I think traditionally the resource sector has been largely centred at the male population. That's changing, I think as we see work practices change, there are far more females involved in the whole thing but I could envisage the fact that with largely exploding populations, predominantly male and they still are, they may have desires to visit the provision of those paid sexual services (Mayor of Teak).

In this study, representatives make a clear link between sex work and non-resident transient mining populations. The identification of demand for sex work in rural mining towns is constructed as being 'urban' itself, such that demand is created and preserved by the FIFO/DIDO mining 'outsider' population.

#### *7.2.3.2 Sex work and the (im)moral message*

Through the rural-urban dichotomy, state and local government representatives in this study also identify how sex work presents a threat to, or conflicts with, rural conservative communities because of the 'moral message' that such activity specifically sends to young people within the community. This moral message refers to indications about appropriate behaviours, sexual relations, and employment for people in rural communities.

During a parliamentary sitting in 2010, the rural MP for the Toowoomba South electorate indicated that the people of Toowoomba are against brothels in the region not only because it would lower the standards of morality but because it would indicate to men and boys that such behaviour is appropriate. He suggests this is particularly problematic because it would lead to an increase in the number of males who engage in such activity:

...they know that the expansion of the brothel industry means an expansion in the number of men and boys who would be attracted to use those facilities. They see that as bad for the overall morality of the city and community and a further lessening of standards...People talk about, worry about and say that this lessening of standards is leading to more crime and more problems and what do we do about it. Here is an opportunity to do something about it and maintain some standards rather than having this laissez-faire attitude of letting standards slip further (Mr Horan, Toowoomba South MP, Queensland Parliament 2010b, 2595).

Other political representatives in this study indicate similar perceptions about sex work lowering the moral standards of a rural community, but highlight specific concerns about the message it sends to young people. During the interview with the local government representative for the Teak region, the Mayor explained why his community have reservations about legalised forms of sex work occurring within the region. He said:

I think they [the community] have concerns about what it would indicate to younger people in the community about the appropriateness or otherwise of that as a career choice or as an activity to engage in and all those sorts of things (Mayor of Teak).

During parliament, the rural representative of the Whitsundays region, Mr Black, highlighted a similar concern about the legalisation of sex work and the impact on young people. By identifying the link between morality and the law, he suggests that by legalising sex work, young people will become misguided in thinking that the sex industry offers a viable career for them:

Surely it is obvious that the legalisation of this industry not only sends a message of condoning this behaviour to the community and to our children but also encourages the breakdown of the family unit and the further moral decay of society... the law is an educator and many people mistakenly believe that whatever is legal is also moral. The message this legislation sends to the community is a message that prostitution is okay, that it is a legitimate profession and business. Is that the type of message we want to send to our children? Do we want our children or the next generation to view prostitution as a viable career option? I certainly do not. I feel sorry for future generations who will emerge into a world with no moral leadership and a belief that anything goes if it is within the law. (Mr Black, Whitsundays MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5744-5);

Political representatives of urban electorates also express concerns about the moral impact of sex work on children, suggesting that their exposure to such activity would result in 'moral danger':

We do not want our children growing up next door to prostitutes and the sorts of people who are their clients... There are serious consequences involved in making prostitution a business to be conducted from suburban residences. If a prostitute works from home, then her children will be exposed to moral danger (Mr Allan Grice, Broadwater MP, Queensland Parliament 1992a, 894-5).

Attitudes about the moral impacts of sex work on children are also echoed in existing literature. Children as seen as 'innocent' and 'pure' (Matthews 2008, 17), and their exposure to sex work considered to lead to an untimely introduction to (deviant) sexual matters (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 46). Particularly if a child is occupying the same residence as a sex worker who operates from their home, the child is deemed to be 'at risk' of moral and physical danger (Hubbard and Prior 2013, 146). Despite the parallels between these concerns about sex work across rural and urban settings, political representatives in this study emphasise how children's risk of exposure to the immoralities of sex work are exacerbated in rural settings. First, due to a higher standard of morality which is said to exist in rural communities. Second, because the existence or visibility of sex work is more difficult for children to avoid in rural settings. The issues of visibility, proximity and exposure will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

#### 7.2.4 Sex work as threatening to the family

In this study, political representatives also identify sex work as an activity conflicting with rural conservatism as it poses a threat to the notion of family. The rural imaginary idealises heteronormative family ideals, structures, and values, whilst presenting rural communities as family-orientated and family-friendly. Additionally, political representatives rely on the rural imaginary to depict rural communities as large families who support each other, particularly in times of crises. These characteristics are of course contrasted to communities in urban settings which are constructed by political representatives in this study as individualistic, disconnected, and unsafe.

Political representatives in this study therefore identify sex work as posing a threat to the institution of the family as reinforced through rural conservatism, and as threatening the family values expressed through this ideology. Sex work is also identified as presenting a threat to family-friendly spaces in rural communities, posing a threat to the heteronormative family structures and contributing to family breakdown. As will become clearer through the following discussion, concerns about the impact of sex work and related legislation on families, family values, and family-friendly spaces are not specific to rural settings. Rather, the rural imaginary provides rural representatives with the permission to voice these concerns and identified threats of sex work as uniquely detrimental to rural families.

Throughout the parliamentary debates, objections to such legislative proposals from representatives of rural electorates often centred on family values and family-related concerns. These representatives refer to legislative proposals for sex work as ‘anti-family’ and ‘against family values’. The MP for Toowoomba South suggested that a vote in opposition to proposals to legalise sex work would be a reflection of the family values in rural electorates. He said:

We represent decent people who strongly oppose prostitution. It would be nice to think that some people in this Parliament have the courage and conviction to stand up for those people. We should not be trampling over the views of those people and not taking any notice of them. Ultimately, standing up for the views of those people means that we represent them and vote for them... everybody in this House has a responsibility to represent the people in the electorate to the best of our endeavours and in the best way that we can to reflect those community and family

values that are held in our electorate (Mr Horan, Toowoomba South MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5694).

The MP for the rural electorate of Burdekin similarly advocated for others to vote in opposition to proposals for legalised sex work because of how such legislation is 'anti-family' and poses a threat to children. He said:

Before this Government could pass such anti-family legislation, such as legalised prostitution, I would like each member to consider the following, listening to their consciences: if it were their daughter or son being recruited into this lifestyle, would the member be so keen to support this Bill? (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5815).

The rural MP for Nanango expressed similar views about how legalised sex work threatens the moral family lifestyle of rural communities:

...It is pushing values onto people. It is discriminating against a moral family lifestyle in favour of people who choose what many call an immoral lifestyle... (Ms Pratt, Nanango MP, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1646).

Local government representatives who were interviewed for this study also identified that family values epitomised in rural communities represent a conflict with sex work. They said:

I think people in small towns are very family-orientated and I suppose sex work is seen to conflict with the ideals of family life (Councillor of Canarium);

We don't want that [sex work] in our town because it's like we're a big family and it's not what you want in your family, so you don't want it in your town (Councillor of Laurel).

These findings illustrate that state and local levels of government both express similar concerns about the threat of sex work to rural families and rural family values. As outlined in the previous chapter, the rural imaginary presents the notion of family within a strict heteronormative framework, where family ideals and structures revolve around the concept of the nuclear family, consisting of a married heterosexual couple who organise and live their lives around the bearing and raising of children (Edgell and Docka 2007, 27). This understanding of the family union is also underpinned by religion, where marriage for the purposes of procreation is considered the norm (Brock 2000, 249). Sex work therefore challenges both the structure of the family and the family values perpetuated through rural conservatism, as it is an activity that involves the commercial exchange for sex between a worker and a client, rather than an intimate act of love between married spouses for the purposes of having children. Because of this, political representatives also identify sex work to be the catalyst for family breakdown.

#### *7.2.4.1 Sex work as cause for family breakdown*

The perception of sex work posing a threat to marriages and contributing to the breakdown of families is acknowledged by representatives at local and state levels of government. However, further analysis of these findings demonstrate that they associate this issue to urban settings and residents of urban areas,

including FIFO miners who travel to rural towns and engage in sex work whilst away from their families.

During parliamentary debates, MPs frequently argue that legalised sex work should not be supported because of how it leads to a breakdown of the family unit. The MP for Gladstone suggested that sex work is “destructive to the family” (Ms Cunningham Gladstone MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5816), with the representative of the Whitsundays electorate offering a similar view:

The Prostitution Bill before us should in no way be supported. This Bill will only create further social and family breakdown and will not reduce the illegal element of the sex industry. Surely it is obvious that the legalisation of this industry not only sends a message of condoning this behaviour to the community and to our children but also encourages the breakdown of the family unit and the further moral decay of society (Mr Alfred Black, Whitsundays MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5744).

Political representatives suggest that family breakdown results from the sexual temptation presented to men by commercial sex, with wives, girlfriends and children of these men therefore becoming the victims of the commercial transaction. The MP for the Burdekin electorate suggested that licensed brothels should not be supported because of how they would ‘lure’ men into engaging in such activity, resulting in their wives and children ‘suffering’. He said:

...I would like each member to consider the following... How many wives will suffer because of husbands being lured into these dens on iniquity? How many children will suffer because of parental break ups relating to prostitution? (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5815).

Unsurprisingly, concerns about sex work leading to a breakdown in families and marriages are also highlighted by representatives of urban electorates. The representative for the Moggill electorate for example argued that sex work legislation is a 'recipe' for family breakdown. He said:

It will be open slather on husbands, boyfriends and anyone else who has more money than sense. This policy is a recipe for family breakdown and human misery (Dr David Hopetoun Watson, Moggill MP, Queensland Parliament 1999b, 4716).

These views align with findings presented in existing literature on sex work and related policy. As a commercial transaction of sexual services, sex work offers a somewhat easy avenue for individuals to be disloyal to their spouses, therefore threatening the monogamous foundation of the family (Cao and Maguire 2013, 189). Political representatives in this study acknowledge how sex work is a temptation, particularly for men, which can lead to dire outcomes for the family unit. As expressed by the representative of the Maple region:

The thing that saddens me the most is family breakdown. These women [sex workers] don't care about it, they just want their money and will do anything to get it from men, including married men, who are more vulnerable to these types of things because let's face it, they're men! (Councillor of Maple).

However, the men who are 'vulnerable' to the temptation of commercial sex are not the moral, conservative men of rural communities. Political representatives instead associate such men to urban settings or as 'outsiders' from rural

communities. The MP for the Kokoti electorate described how FIFO mine workers often engage in sex work whilst away from their families and such behaviour leads to a breakdown in the family unit. He said:

Yep, family breakdown...You know, you get these blokes who move away from home and working out here for two weeks. They'll think they will, you know, get a bit souped up, then the next minute their hormones are running wild and they think 'oh well I've got to express my desires'. If there's a young woman there that's going to address their needs, well if they're a weak person and don't value their morals and what have you, they'll fall into that trap. And that's the start of the fragmentation of a family unit because if they wander once, they'll wander twice or three times (Kokoti MP).

This representative describes the urban 'outsider' as a FIFO worker who engages in commercial sex. Such men are positioned as 'weak' individuals who don't 'value' their morals, thus making an implicit comparison to rural men who have self-control and uphold their morals and values. Through this statement, the MP for Kokoti continues to simultaneously engage in the various dichotomies of rural vs. urban, morality vs. immorality, good sex vs. bad sex, and connected vs. disconnected families indicative of the rural urban divide.

### 7.3 Sex work as 'necessary evil' for rural communities

Throughout this study, political representatives also engage with the rural-urban continuum to position sex work as an activity which is tolerated and/or required for some rural communities. These perspectives are premised on sex work deemed as a 'necessary evil' which improves the safety for the community

of women who are protected from the sexual appetites of men. Political representatives thus suggest that the existence of sex work in rural communities could prevent acts of sexual harassment and violence towards female community residents. This is particularly reinforced as important for rural communities that are associated with the mining industry.

Despite previous remarks about the problems associated with sex work, the MP for the rural electorate of Fitzroy, Mr Pearce, acknowledged that the regulation of the sex industry is in fact a 'necessary evil'. He said:

The regulation of the sex industry is a necessary evil. Ignoring the sex industry and all of its problems, as I am sure that the Opposition would have us do, will not solve the problems that exist now (Mr Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5739).

Reasons why political representatives suggested that the government regulation of the sex industry was necessary was often premised on the aim of protecting communities and reducing crime. The MP for the Bundaberg electorate, the Honourable Juanita Cunningham, argued:

Control of prostitution is necessary for health and safety reasons, and our communities need protection from the potential for corruption, drug dealing and organised crime that is perceived to be associated with prostitution (Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1647).

The understanding that regulating the sex industry was important for ensuring the health and safety of those involved and the wider community was also raised during interviews, with the local government representative of Jarrah explaining:

...we have a duty of care for our communities too, and the worker themselves, to make sure that umm, they're safely looked after, health reasons wise and the general community who do and do not utilise those services are looked after. There's a bit of both (Mayor of Jarrah).

The preference for harm-minimisation approaches towards sex work were also expressed by representatives for urban electorates, with arguments made on behalf of sex workers, clients, and members of the wider community. Urban MPs stated:

...it is far better to tightly regulate prostitution than to prohibit it. It is far more responsible to make the sex industry as safe and as free of violence and organised crime as possible than to deploy police on fruitless raids on sex workers and to have the activity rearing its head continually (Ms Karen Lee Struthers, Archerfield MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5712);

They [prostitutes] are human beings. They deserve the protection of the law. They are not animals. Prostitutes have the same fundamental rights to personal safety as does the rest of the community, and any legislative regime should contain safeguards to ensure that their safety is not compromised (Mr John Michael English, Redlands MP, Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1662);

Ignoring prostitution has proven ineffectual and it encourages the corruption problems of the seventies and eighties (Hon Phillip Gerard Reeves, Mansfield MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5729).

Minimising the harms of sex work through regulatory approaches align with existing research on legalising the sex industry. Advocates for this approach

acknowledge that sex work is an ‘unstoppable’ social exchange; therefore, legalisation is considered the most appropriate approach due to its capacity to reduce or avoid potential harms of the industry (Brent and Hausbeck 2005, 273; Crofts and Summerfield 2008, 212). Through this framework, governments often allow for the legal operation of commercial sex in some situations whilst prohibiting it in others, thus essentially trying to manage the industry rather than abolish it (McCarthy et al. 2012, 262). The tolerance of sex work in rural settings however is particularly emphasised in the context of mining, where rural towns are experiencing large influxes of predominantly male transient populations.

The local government representative for the rural region of Cottonwood expressed the view that sex workers could provide a necessary service to the FIFO men housed in mining camps and could potentially prevent a rape from occurring in the community. She explained:

Whilst it’s probably not desirable by the largest percent of the community, umm I think there probably are places where it serves a purpose. Maybe it might prevent someone from being raped, or some sexual assault out of sheer frustration of a large mining camp, where usually they’re all males, locked in a very confined space away from any female companionship and from their families and I understand that at times there would be sexual desire to be with a woman (Mayor of Cottonwood).

The local government representative of the Canarium mining region highlighted a similar perspective in their interview about sex work being necessary in rural

mining communities to prevent sexual violence against female members of the community. He stated:

Do you get your young girls attacked in the street? Do you get your women attacked in the street? Do you have this, well do you leave an element out there which is not a good element. Sure, I don't want to be posted on the front page saying I support a brothel and I believe in one here, having said that, there's another side of the population. Has anyone considered them and the consequences of that? (Councillor of Canarium).

The Councillor of the agricultural town of Laurel made a similar justification for tolerating sex work in a rural town by using their own daughter's safety as an example. She explained:

But I actually don't have a problem with that [sole operators in motels], I think that's fine, because I'd much rather men be going there for sex than loitering around my daughter coming out of the pub after having too much to drink and taking advantage of her. Just go and pay for it if that's what you want, in a safe environment (Councillor of Laurel).

Underpinning these perspectives are assumptions about men having an uncontrollable biological need for sex (Carpenter 2000, 19) which is seen to become exacerbated in FIFO mining environments (Lozeva and Marinova 2010, 10; Carrington, McIntosh and Scott, 2010). Political representatives therefore demonstrate a level of tolerance or acceptance of sex work occurring in rural spaces to ensure the safety and protection of permanent residents from these outsiders. In these contexts, rural communities protect themselves and their

values by offering a group of women to service the sexual needs of these disconnected urban outsiders.

## 7.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the ways in which political representatives position sex work in relation to the constructed ideas and understandings of rural and rurality. The findings demonstrate that political representatives simultaneously engage in the dichotomy, continuum and parallel frameworks when discussing sex work and related legislation. Through the dichotomy framework, sex work is positioned in contrast to the ideals and characteristics of rurality and associated to the metropolis. Political representatives argue that sex work threatens the values, morals and make-up of rural communities and associate the activity to urban centres. An examination of the data demonstrates that political representatives' attitudes towards sex work are inherently similar across rural and urban settings, highlighting that such views are instead parallel. Though, rural representatives rely on the rural imaginary to perpetuate their objections to sex work as being rural-specific, with representatives of urban areas not afforded the same access to such ideas. Interestingly, this research has also identified examples of representatives presenting contradictory opinions where they demonstrate a level of tolerance for the occurrence of sex work within rural settings to address the sexual needs of the urban outsiders associated to the mining industry. Through these perceptions, political representatives continue to position sex work as an urban activity that is only acceptable in rural settings if it

means protecting rural communities from the urban outsiders who invade safe rural spaces.

## Chapter 8 - Space

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### 8.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, this thesis examined how political representatives in this study position sex work in relation to rural settings and notions of rurality through their engagement with the dichotomy, continuum, and parallel frameworks. As outlined in the discussion, political representatives predominantly construct sex work as a problem for and a threat to rural settings and rurality through their engagement with the rural-urban dichotomy framework. Through this framework, sex work is identified as an activity which threatens the morals and values of rural conservatism and conflicts with the ideals and practices of 'close-knit' and family-orientated rural communities. It is through this framework that political representatives demonstrate a heavy reliance on the rural imaginary to perpetuate the notion of rural as being distinct and unique to the notion of urban.

Whilst there is evidence throughout the data presented of political discourse engaging with the rural-urban parallel to identify attitudes towards sex work which echo across rural and urban settings, this research identifies that political representatives tend to draw on the rural imaginary and dichotomous constructions of rurality to demonstrate that concerns or impacts of sex work are amplified, or exacerbated, in rural settings. It is for this reason that a new dimension of analysis is required.

The purpose of this chapter is to therefore continue to analyse how political representatives in this study position sex work in relation to rural settings and notions of rurality, but to conduct this analysis in the context of space and spatiality. In doing so, this chapter will bring together the three elements of rurality, sex, and space, to highlight how the problematisation and rejection of sex work in rural settings is an exemplar of a moral geography tailored to rural conservatism.

This chapter argues that notions of space and spatiality play an important role in the positioning of sex work as threatening to or inappropriate for rural communities. As will become clearer throughout the remainder of the chapter, findings from this research indicate that political attitudes depicting sex work as a problem for rural communities are indicative of a fear or anxiety about the transformation of rural space and traditional rurality. Whilst political representatives demonstrate brief levels of engagement with continuum and parallel frameworks in the context of space and spatiality, the rural-urban dichotomy continues to be the dominant framework for guiding their discussions about sex work and space. This is consistent with the findings presented in the previous two chapters, where the rural-urban dichotomy is most prevalent in political debate about sex work.

### [8.1 Rural-urban spatial dichotomy](#)

To begin, this chapter will firstly outline how sex work has been constructed through the rural-urban dichotomy in the context of space and spatiality. Two key sub-dichotomies will be explored through this framework

including sex work in private versus public space, and transparent (rural) communities versus anonymised (urban) communities.

#### 8.1.1 Private vs. public space

Looking at the rural-urban dichotomy framework in the context of space and spatiality, political representatives in this study construct sex work as a threat to rural communities based upon factors pertaining to what is considered appropriate, or belonging, in private versus public space. Underpinning the rural-urban dichotomy framework is rural conservatism which identifies moral, 'good' sex as occurring between a heterosexual married couple in the privacy of the home (Pini, Mayes and Boyer, 2013; Little and Panelli, 2007; Little, 2007; Little and Panelli, 2003; Hayes, Carpenter and Dwyer, 2012). Not only does commercial sex work conflict with this ideology by occurring outside the standards of traditional morality and monogamy, but it is representative of occurring outside of private space (i.e. outside of the family home). Sex work therefore represents a public form of sex and sexuality which exists outside the confines of appropriate sexual morality in rural conservatism.

The characterisation of sex work as an activity taking place in 'public spaces' is not limited to the dichotomy between the private sex within a marriage, and the public sex of a commercial encounter. Sex work is placed in the category of 'public' activity through a preoccupation with questions of visibility. The visibility of sex work is frequently highlighted as a problem for rural areas, demonstrating a preoccupation with the space in which sex was occurring. Despite the dominant stereotypical understanding and imagining of sex workers

publicly soliciting in the street wearing provocative clothing (Dalla 2000, 344), street sex work accounts for only a minimal portion of the industry (Porter and Bonilla 2010, 163; Hubbard and Prior 2012, 142). Sex work therefore rarely occurs in public view or public spaces, but instead is more likely to take place in brothels, paid accommodation premises (such as motels), or houses (either the sex worker's or the client's) (Weitzer 2009, 218-9; Weitzer 2012a, 23; Hausbeck and Brents 2010, 272; Sanders and Campbell 2008, 51). These locations for sex work are more discreet and hidden (Weitzer 2012, 23; Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 36), particularly in Queensland where there are strict legislative restrictions on the visibility on sex work premises and sole operator advertising (Sullivan 2010). Nevertheless, political representatives in this study often use examples of more literally visible forms of sex work to reinforce why such activity is inappropriate for rural communities.

During interviews, several local government representatives demonstrated a level of tolerance for more discreet forms of sex work, reinforcing that a street sex worker in public view within a rural community would be offensive and inappropriate. The local government representative for the rural region of Teak expressed:

If you can do that sort of occupation, I guess you take advantage of that opportunity. If there was no problems with it and she was being discreet, well I wouldn't like to think she was standing out on the street baring all and being offensive (Mayor of Teak).

The problematic element identified here is not necessarily the threat of sex work to notions of family, or traditional morality, but rather the visibility of the sex

work itself. The local government representative of the Bluegum region identified similar concerns about publicly visible representations of sex work being inappropriate for rural communities. Visibility, in this instance however, wasn't evidenced only by a sex worker standing on a street corner, but also through other publicly visible indicators that sex work was occurring. In the previous chapter, the Mayor of Bluegum expressed an acknowledgement of an increase in sex work advertisements in the local paper in his region and continued to reinforce that this was the only visible aspect of sex work he had noticed in the town. He explains how any instances of sex work being more visible would not be appropriate:

...as long as it happens discreetly, it doesn't affect me as Mayor. Yeah, there aren't people waving it in your face with flashing neon signs or anything like that... it's not like we see people standing on a street corner. Definitely not like that (Mayor of Bluegum).

The local government representative for the rural region of Laurel similarly indicated that their constituents have become more accepting or tolerant of the sex industry, but again, this representative reinforced that publicly visible instances of sex work such as street sex workers in 'fish-net stockings' are not acceptable for small towns. She explains:

I think things have changed and I think people are more accepting. But I mean they don't want women in fish-net stockings on the corner soliciting, but I think you're never going to get that in a small town (Councillor of Laurel).

The suggestion that this particular representation of sex work would 'never occur' in a small town mirrors the attitude expressed in parliament by Mr Knuth during the 1999 debates on sex work legislation, who explained how a 'prostitute' had

been 'pushed out' of town by community members (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5816). The rejection and removal of a sex worker, who is characterised as representing an immoral and deviant 'urban' sexuality, is a clear example of how sex workers are deemed to be 'out of place' (O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 57-8). Sex workers are often considered to be representative of 'public disorder' (Scott 2011, 65) and as people who engage in an activity which should be separated from mainstream society (Laing and Cook 2014, 512). Thus, instances of sex workers occupying and being visible in a rural space conflicts with the constructed ideals of rural conservatism, an ideology perpetuating a specific moral geography for rural space underpinned by heteronormative understandings of good and bad sex (Little and Panelli, 2007; Pini, Mayes and Boyer, 2013; Little, 2007).

This concern about the visibility of sex work in rural spaces also extends to premises where sex work occurs, moving beyond the concerns about street sex work, to reflect a concern about the visibility of sex work regardless of where it occurs. In Queensland rural towns, this is most commonly in accommodation venues such as motels due to a lack of licensed brothels in such locations. In these instances, even though sex work is occurring behind closed doors in private motel rooms, the prevalence of such activity in these venues is seen to impact on the reputation and viability of the (often) family business providing the accommodation. The local government representative for the rural region of Teak for example explained how owners of accommodation venues would not be very accepting of such activity within their business:

I think it would be fair to say that most businesses, most accommodation businesses would not be happy thinking that was going on in room 4 with the 'working girls' (Mayor of Teak).

Reasons as to why political representatives suggest that owners of accommodation venues in rural communities would not be very accepting of sex work at their premises, despite being legal, is due to the stigma associated to sex work and how such stigma is assumed to affect the image of the (family) business. In interviews for this research, political representatives often referred to the case in the mining town of Moranbah, where a sex worker was refused accommodation at the Drovers Rest Motel, then filed a lawsuit against the motel owners for discrimination. Representatives in this study used this as an example of why accommodation businesses in rural towns do not want to allow sex workers to operate from their rooms. They argued that their business would be tainted as a result of sex work. The local government representative for the rural region of Jarrah highlighted this issue of stigma and the reputation that a business may acquire from it:

... what you don't want to happen is what happened in that town where it went to court, where a hotel was renting a room out and got labelled with it... they lost business because no one wanted to stay there because that's a brothel. No it's not. It's a sex worker working from one room... but, the stigma stays (Mayor of Jarrah).

This particular understanding of the prevalence of sex work in accommodation establishments in rural towns is identified as particularly concerning by the

representative for the rural region of Maple, who suggests that those businesses would change from being 'family-friendly' to a venue with a tarnished reputation.

She explains:

As far as I know, there is only one motel that actually takes them [sex workers]. Yeah, and everybody knows which motel it is, you know. So I think that would indicate to me that other motel owners are not prepared to sacrifice the family trade to have, you know because once a motel gets known as 'that's where all the girls are', families aren't going to stay there. It sounds like the motel owner is being a prude, but in fact, her running her business out of his business, is affecting his business! You know, so where you're going to do this is not about freedom and liberality, it's about fairness. It is about justice. Why is he forced, you know? If I was running a seven-eleven or if I was running a pub, I do have the right to refuse to serve people. If I have a kid who I think is a constant shoplifter, I do have the right to say I'm not serving you, you're not to come into the shop anymore (Councillor of Maple).

From the perspective of these interviewees, the presence of sex workers in rural spaces contributes to altering of the nature of the space they occupy. It is not uncommon for spaces and establishments associated with sex work to be labelled and stigmatised with disorderly and criminogenic status (Crofts, Hubbard and Prior 2013, 62; Crofts 2010, 160). However, representatives in this study draw on the rural-urban dichotomy framework to emphasise how this is particularly problematic for rural settings. As outlined throughout the thesis, rural spaces are characterised by political representatives as organised, safe, and family-friendly, with businesses operating within rural spaces equated with the same characteristics. Thus, political representatives consider the presence of sex work

in rural spaces to negatively impact on these spatial characteristics. To potentially avoid this outcome, the local government representative of Cottonwood suggested that accommodation providers could easily implement strategies to prevent sex workers from operating out of their venues. She explained:

Yes, I'm sure they [owner of accommodation venue] would have a problem with it. Probably it wouldn't do their business' reputation any good. But honestly, if you're like that, I think you would be able to find a good enough reason to stop it. Really, I don't think that's an excuse. Like you know, accidentally losing the keys or saying you had no accommodation available, that everything is booked. I'm sure if you felt that strongly about it... If I was in that situation, I would not have them there because you might not be able to discriminate against them because of what they're doing, but you could use other means (Mayor of Cottonwood).

This statement reflects the type of discrimination that sex workers frequently face, and their exclusion from particular types of spaces. In this context, sex workers are seen as anathema to rural spaces, and thus their exclusion is seen as justified. In contrast to these views, however, several representatives demonstrate an engagement with the parallel framework to suggest that sex workers operating out of rural accommodation premises should not be of any concern, as long as such activity is discreet. Such views are consistent with findings in existing literature which suggest that due to indoor forms of sex work being more discreet, and thus invisible, such activity causes little to no public nuisance and disturbances in surrounding communities (Hubbard and Prior 2012, 155; Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 133). The local government representative for the rural region of Canarium for example indicated that owners

of accommodation businesses would be less likely to refuse accommodation to a sex worker if their occupancy numbers were low and that sex workers could ensure an adequate level of discretion with engaging in such activity. He explains:

In this day and age where occupancy is down, would that person object? That's the question I ask. He would object if it became known that 'oh, you can go to this joint every Friday night because the girls are there working from there'. That creates a problem. But if that was discreet and quiet, I don't think there'd be any issues. The motel has got to make money, just like the sex workers. It's a perceived standard that creates a problem (Councillor of Canarium).

The Councillor for the Laurel region indicated a similar perspective about the acceptability of sex workers operating from accommodation premises in town, provided that such activity would be discreet and not cause any nuisance to other occupants. She referred to her friend's motel in town as an example:

I'm friends with someone who owns a motel in town, and they used to have girls who would rent rooms and the linen would need to be changed every hour, that sort of thing... Yeah, my friend who owned the motel actually said they didn't mind the girls using the rooms for that. There was a front entrance and back entrance to the motel, so they'd give the girls the room near the back entrance so cars could come in and out easily without distracting other guests (Councillor of Laurel).

Both of these quotes indicate that the problematic element of sex work is not necessarily the sex work itself, but the public nature of it. The implication is that if the work is undertaken privately and discretely, then sex work may be acceptable in rural areas. In contrast to other statements that position sex work as always bad if it occurs outside the context of committed love, or marriage, this

implies that good and bad sex is differentiated according to whether the act is public or private.

For one government representative, this guarantee of discretion wasn't even explicitly declared. The representative for the rural region of Bluegum similarly suggested that motel owners in their region would be accepting of sex workers operating out of their premises because they are essentially no different to any other guest. He explained:

I've never had a complaint from any of the motels. I think that they're happy, as long as they've got a high occupancy, they're generally happy. They get the sheets get cleaned every day, so same as everyone else (Mayor of Bluegum).

What becomes clear through these findings is that in the context of sex work specifically, political representatives demonstrate an engagement with the dichotomy and parallel frameworks by offering reasons for why they either object to, or tolerate sex work in rural accommodation premises. However, by analysing these findings in the context of space and spatiality, it is clear that political representatives' views only really engage with the dichotomy framework. Essentially, the concerns raised about these premises acquiring a 'tainted reputation' from the presence of commercial sex reinforces representatives' fears about the transformation of rural space. Accommodation premises in rural communities are seen to represent 'family-friendly' spaces, with the establishments themselves being representative of family-owned and run businesses. Thus, a rural accommodation premises acquiring the reputation of a 'whore house' (i.e. an establishment which is associated to the metropolis),

suddenly becomes unrepresentative of rural space. Even despite some representatives indicating a level of tolerance for sex work within these contexts, they strongly caution that discretion is key to avoiding a blurring of the divide between private and public space.

The concern about the impingement of immoral and deviant representations of sexuality on public space in rural communities extends to establishments that aren't necessarily specific to the commercial sale of sex, but are linked to the sex industry or adult entertainment industry. The stigma associated to premises such as topless bars, adult shops, and even nude hairdressing salons are identified as contributing to parts of rural towns becoming 'sleazy' parts of town. As explained by the local government representative for the rural region of Jarrah:

But on the other hand, there was an adult establishment placed in the prime part of the town, a massive big complex right opposite Lifeline. Lot of objections, everything else, now they have a nude hairdresser. They cut hair with no clothes on. But what's happened is, that whole side of town is now the sleaze side of town where it never was before, and the sports club is straight opposite of it. All of a sudden, the older people who were coming to play the pokies aren't going there anymore... so only the young people turn up there and their business is dropping and it's having an effect... well, this isn't a brothel. It's a licensed topless, I don't know... but the stigma goes with it (Mayor of Jarrah).

It is not uncommon for these representations of sexuality to be socially and politically opposed, particularly when they are publicly visible. Premises where nudity is presented as 'adult entertainment' for example are often presumed to be associated with multiple forms of vice and criminality whilst offering

representations of 'scary' and deviant sexualities (Hubbard and Colosi, 2013; Hubbard, 1999; Pini, Mayes and Boyer, 2013; Hennelly, 2010). It is for these reasons that sex premises in urban settings are excluded from public spaces that are allocated to heteronormative family practices (Hubbard and Sanders, 2003). Thus, whilst visibility is a key issue paralleled across rural and urban settings for sex premises and representations of sexuality, political representatives in this study continue to engage in the dichotomy framework to promote issues of visibility and discretion as presenting unique challenges for rural communities specifically.

As outlined previously in this thesis, rural conservative communities are perceived to be close-knit and transparent, meaning that rural spaces lack privacy and anonymity. Essentially, the dominant view reinforced by political representatives is that discretion is basically impossible in rural communities.

### 8.1.2 Transparent vs. private communities

Some representatives in this study indicate a level of tolerance for discreet and invisible forms of sex work in rural communities. However, this degree of tolerance is undermined by arguments by political representatives declaring that it is almost impossible for any level of discretion to occur in rural settings due to such areas being transparent. In this construction, where the only form of tolerable sex work is discrete, and discretion is assumed to be impossible, then sex work in rural communities cannot be tolerated or accepted. The following section will outline findings from this research which demonstrate political representatives' continued engagement with the rural-urban spatial dichotomy to

highlight how sex work presents an issue for rural communities due to issues surrounding anonymity, discretion, proximity and exposure.

As outlined previously in Chapter 5 of this thesis, rural communities are constructed by political representatives as being 'close-knit', where "everybody knows each other's business" (Mayor of Bluegum) because there are "eyes and ears everywhere in small communities" (Mayor of Cottonwood). Through this construction, rural communities are portrayed as lacking privacy, which means the level of 'required' discretion for the provision of sex work in licensed brothels or sole operators in rural towns is presumed to be almost impossible. The MP for the Walnut electorate explained in their interview how there is difficulty for community members to seek out sex work from sole operators and in brothels without being 'found out':

...not everyone would go to a legal brothel because of the risk in being found out. Found out because it's there and if you're seen going in, you're not going in to read the paper and you're not going in to have a cup of tea with a friend. Whereas a single operator in a house is much more discreet. But I think in smaller communities, it's much more difficult for that discreetness to occur. I think that's probably why it [sex work] is not sustainable in small communities (Walnut MP).

In this statement, a single operator is presented as the most discrete form of sex work, but even that is seen as still somewhat transparent in small towns. This understanding of there being no privacy, or anonymity, in small rural towns was also identified by the local government representative for the rural region of Laurel:

But yeah no I think most people don't want a brothel next door to them, or to know that a sex worker is operating next door. So I guess if it's in the main street, then it's away from homes. But then you could be walking down that street and go 'oh hey there's Freddy, look where he's going' and it wouldn't be anonymous at all (Councillor of Laurel).

Here the concern about sex work relates both to knowledge of the existence of a sex work operator or sex work premises, and the identity of sex work clients. The Councillor of Laurel is arguing that discrete sex work is impossible in any location because the purpose of the premises will always be known, and the clients visiting the premises are too easily identified.

The issue identified about rural communities lacking anonymity was not only attributed to people frequenting a brothel, but also visiting other types of establishments that are, according to representatives, symbolic of immorality and deviance. The representative for the rural region of Beech for example, explained how he has avoided going into the adult store in town out of fear of it becoming known around the community:

There used to be three adult shops in town, now there is one... I wouldn't go into one locally because someone would tell someone else (Mayor of Beech).

The understanding that members of rural communities would actively avoid spaces associated with commercial sex and adult entertainment out of fear of being 'found out' offers an interesting perspective in the context of this research. In the previous chapter, some representatives suggested that men in rural communities simply wouldn't seek out the services of a sex worker due to having

higher moral standards and adherences to family values than men in urban communities. Therefore, representatives portray the view that there simply 'isn't demand' and therefore no requirement for any form of commercial sex or adult entertainment in rural communities. However, through an analysis of these factors in the context of space, it is suggested that political representatives' objections to such premises centre on an anxiety about the 'discovery' of rural community residents in actively visiting such venues. Sex work is thus assumed to be counter to rural communities in two different ways. Whether the lack of demand for sex work in rural communities is caused by high moral standards or fear of discovery, sex work is cast as out of place in rural communities.

#### *8.1.2.1 Proximity*

Visibility and transparency were not the only cause of concern for political representatives. The spatial location of sex work premises was also a point of contention, and declared to be of particular importance in rural communities. Licensed brothels in Queensland are required to be located away from sensitive locations (such as schools, residential areas and churches) and therefore are often established in industrial areas. When participants were reminded of this during interview, they reinforced how industrial areas in rural communities (if they exist at all) are still in close proximity to the main parts of town. Therefore, they suggest it would be almost impossible to avoid licensed brothels in rural settings. When asked about whether they have industrial locations in the Laurel region, the representative for this town expressed:

Well, we do, but they are still close to main parts of town. I mean, you wouldn't want one [a brothel] located right next to a day care centre. I mean, small towns would probably choose never to have them because it would just be a joke with placing them somewhere appropriate (Councillor of Laurel).

The concern about residents being in close proximity to commercial sex premises was expressed by other interview participants in this study. The MP for the Kokoti electorate made comparisons between rural towns and capital cities by suggesting that "It's more exposed when you have it in these smaller towns, it's not so exposed in a place like Brisbane." Concerns about the issue of proximity within rural communities were not restricted to brothels. Representatives expressed similar attitudes towards other activities seen to represent immoral or deviant forms of sexuality, such as topless bars. The local government representative for the rural region of Beech, for example, explained how there was concern expressed by many members of their community about the establishment of an adult entertainment premises in town and its proximity to schools and other public venues frequented by community members:

Yeah, I think that was the case here. The concern we had was that the building was there, the school is like two hundred metres away, there's a public hall down here which is the Council's Town Hall where public events are held, and this place [adult entertainment venue] is just around the corner, a hundred metres away. So that was the concern that was expressed by community members and the church (Mayor of Beech).

Even though topless bars are not legally permitted to offer sexual services to customers in Queensland, representatives often implied there is a link between the two. The local government representative for the rural region of Bluegum

suggested that “it’s possible there are add-on services offered at the topless bar in town”, whilst the state representative of the Walnut electorate was certain that commercial sex is offered through those establishments. She expressed:

I know of one pub, it was the only pub that had an adult entertainment licence and he used to fly the ladies in, the strippers in for that. I’m not naïve, a lot of the people who are strippers are prostitutes, not all, but a lot are. I do know that there were prostitutes that were flying in, spending a week or so and flying back. I do a lot of flying, and you know, you connect the dots pretty well (Walnut MP).

The state representative for the Kokoti electorate demonstrated a similar objection to establishments which are visible representations of deviance and immoral sexualities by equating tattoo parlours and adults shops as offensive. He expressed:

I find tattoo parlours and adult shops offensive. I think the way they are, they’re in people’s faces... these adult sex shops, I know there’s a few of those in town. You don’t have to be blind Freddy to see them. They spring up, well I don’t know how many are here, three or four? (MP for Kokoti)

The implication of these statements is that when adult entertainment venues open in a small town, everyone is aware, they are difficult to avoid seeing, but there is an impression that most members of the rural community would try to avoid them. The Mayor of Jarrah described this effect, in a quote earlier in this chapter, as creating a ‘sleaze side of town’, due to the establishment of a topless hairdresser. The Mayor said:

But what’s happened is that whole side of town is now the sleaze side of town where it never was before, and the sports club straight opposite... All of a sudden the older

people who were coming to play the pokies aren't going there anymore (Mayor of Jarrah).

In rural towns, there is likely to be only one social club (for example sports club, bowls club, Returned Services League club) which is typically the social hub of the town. The implication from the Mayor of Jarrah is that the establishment of an 'adult' business can essentially render entire sections of the town as impossible for upstanding moral citizens to visit. The impact is felt more keenly in rural areas, because of the concentrated, restricted, nature of the space itself, where there are fewer options for social gathering.

Another concern linked to the existence of sex work in transparent communities relates to issues of proximity, particularly in the context of the risk presented to children. The Councillor of Maple indicated this concern was in relation to motels allowing sex workers to operate:

...that is the other thing. If you're there with your family... you're next door to a working girl, all you get all night long is men going in and out of that door! You can't sleep, you know you'll say well, I'm never going to stay at that motel again (Councillor of Maple).

But this representative also highlighted the concern about the proximity of adult entertainment premises in town and how children are forcibly exposed to public forms of sexuality. She said:

When I have to take my kids to school here, I was having to take them past these huge building size banners of naked women for the local girly strip show, and they would say to me 'ohh, what's that Mum?' It annoys me because that choice of when I'm going to have that conversation with

them is taken away from me, you know. And it's alright when I'm living in Brisbane I can be as hypocritical as I like about this and say 'yeah everyone go for it', because I can choose to stay in my nice little upper-middle-class world of Red Hill and never move out of my comfort zone, you know what I mean? You don't get that choice in a small community. So I think that for me, I get very anxious that people sit in George Street [the location of the executive state government in the urban centre of Brisbane] and say well, the same rule can apply to everyone and they don't have the understanding of what it's like to live in a small place where you can't avoid it. You know, you actually can't. You'll be taking your children past that twice a day you know. Well, I get cross because every time this comes up, people think it's a matter of prudery. It's not. It's that if you live in the city, you can have your cake and eat it too. If you live here, it's in your face and as it was, we already felt quite put upon (Councillor of Maple).

This statement reinforces this representative's strong engagement with the rural-urban dichotomy in justifying their opposition to visible representations of (deviant) sexualities. Not only is the promotional banner for the 'local girly strip show' a publicly visible symbol of deviant 'urban' sexualities, but its presence within a rural community is, according to her, unavoidable.

The dichotomous framework is clearly evident in spatial understandings of sex work in rural communities. A persistent concern of political representatives in rural areas is with the visibility of sex work, as reflected in a number of different ways. Sex work is rendered visible in rural communities through literal representations, either as the sex worker in fishnet stockings on the street corner, through advertisements in the paper, or through adult sex shops. While some interviewees indicate degrees of tolerance or acceptance of sex work if it remains discrete, it is assumed that sex work cannot be undertaken discretely due to the

lack of anonymity in transparent rural communities, and thus sex work is always visible. The asserted 'close-knit' nature of rural communities, not only in a community sense, but in a town planning sense, means that a licensed brothel would automatically be proximate to everything, and thus sex work is again assumed to be always visible. Rural communities as proximate, close-knit, transparent spaces are constructed as essentially public spaces, where private acts are not possible. The visibility, or public aspect, of sex work in rural spaces is considered concerning, or threatening, due to the incursion of sex work into spaces occupied by children and families, as well as the ability of sex work to allegedly transform those spaces.

## 8.2 Transformation

One of the key findings from conducting a spatial analysis of the collected interview data is that the local and state government representatives demonstrate significant levels of concern or anxiety about the physical transformation of the rural landscape. Processes of modernisation and globalisation influence many positive changes in rural settings, however it is the resulting 'loss of the rural essence' of the countryside that causes anxiety for residents of rural spaces (Woods 2011, 43; Maidment 2012, 9). This is particularly evident amongst political representatives in this study who demonstrate a strong reliance on the rural imaginary. Whilst political representatives' concerns are predominantly associated to the socio-demographic changes occurring in rural towns as a result of the mining industry, representatives also demonstrate

concerns about how the physical changes are representative of shifts in cultural and ideological characteristics of rurality. The following section will present and examine findings from the data which demonstrate political representatives' concerns about the transformation of space, firstly through comparing views about mining versus non-mining rural towns, then by examining views regarding traditional versus mining rurality. From this examination, it will become clear as to how political representatives identify sex work as the symbol for this transformation of rural space.

### 8.2.1 Mining vs. non-mining

As briefly touched on in Chapter 5, through the rural-urban continuum framework, political representatives in this study acknowledge how rural communities are changing and evolving as a result of the mining industry. Those areas containing large-scale mining projects are witnessing extensive physical changes in towns, such as the establishment of mining camps either integrated within or positioned on the outskirts of towns to house the large FIFO/DIDO mine worker populations.

The representative for Jarrah explained in their interview how the local council region they represented at the time was going through quite significant physical changes as a result of several mining projects. He said:

Yes, about 38. There's 18 towns, about 8 heavily affected. They're all impacted. There are enormous growth rates. This one, 650 private hotel-style, \$50 million project, just been downstairs talking about it. We approved one the other day, 23 stages, \$80 million. 1022 rooms. Massive developments that are occurring and with that comes

wealth. And the mining sector have wealth, have money in their pockets (Mayor of Jarrah).

As a result of this large increase in transient populations from mining developments, the local government representative for Jarrah explained how there was evident physical change with retail shops opening in town. He said:

You've got to remember that twenty five percent of the gas industry out here, of those ten thousand, are women...But with the 25% women, there's three beautician shops in town, we don't even have traffic lights there! (Mayor of Jarrah).

The physical space in purpose-built mining towns have even been identified as evolving and changing rapidly as a result of contemporary industry practices. The local government representative for the Canarium region described how mining camps have shifted from being on the mine site, to being integrated into the town itself. As such, this industry-led initiative changed the physical landscape of the town, but also shifted the way that community members and mine workers interact. They explained:

See, when I refer to camps, well in the early days each mine had its own single men's quarters, that was a camp but it was based at the mines. It was out of the town, it had nothing to do with the town and that's how it functioned. When you refer to camps these days, they're basically the ones that are built up in the town. At present, we have four camps in town... In the mining industry, the changes have not been good. Over the last eight years, they've not been good for the communities, they've not been good for families, there's a lot of issues there (Councillor of Canarium).

The integration of mining camps into rural towns as opposed to workers being housed on mining sites away from the town is identified by this representative as problematic for rural communities. The suggestion is that they would prefer the mine workers to be separated from the town itself, reflecting a desire to preserve rural space from the influence of urban outsiders who have come to work in the mines.

This view aligns with existing studies on the impacts of ‘fly-over’ effects of mining on surrounding communities (Storey, 2001), where FIFO/DIDO work practices contribute to the loss of local benefits in mining towns (Measham et al. 2013, 189; Rolfe and Kinnear 2013, 126). Additionally, the presence of FIFO/DIDO visitors to these locations impose significant burdens on local services and amenities (such as water, sewerage, hospitals, emergency services and roads) (Carrington and Pereira 2011, 13; Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 340; Measham et al. 2013, 187; Hajkowicz, Heyenga and Moffat 2011, 33; Rolfe and Kinnear 2013, 127; Perry and Rowe 2015, 145). In addition to attributing the changing landscape of rural towns to the mining industry, political representatives also consider the mining industry to be influencing a cultural and symbolic change to the notion of rural, or as what this research identifies as ‘traditional’ (non-mining) rurality. The following section will examine this transformation from traditional to mining rurality.

### 8.2.2 Traditional rurality vs. mining rurality

Political representatives acknowledge the physical changes in rural space as a result of large scale mining practices, however, their concerns appear to

centre on the cultural and symbolic transformation of rural conservative communities. This transformation is linked to the influx of 'outsiders' coming into rural towns who are perceived as not upholding the same values and morals as long-term members of rural communities. Representatives in this study commonly identify mine workers, particularly the FIFO/DIDO workers, as being 'out of place' and 'not belonging' to rural communities. These people have been labelled as 'outsiders' (Mayor of Bluegum), 'reflective shirt blokes' (Walnut MP), and 'cosmopolitan people' (Councillor of Canarium). The comparison between long term residents and the outsiders is demonstrated in the following quote from the local government representative of the Walnut electorate who explains the differing levels of 'friendliness' between rural residents and these urban 'outsiders'. She said:

...with all these new people. What a lot of people said to me was 'I go shopping now and I don't know anyone. I used to know everyone at the shops, now I know nobody.' Sometimes if people come here from bigger centres, that friendliness isn't something they're used to. Older people, retired people, well me too, be used to going into the shops and saying hello and everyone go hello back. Well there's a lot of people who now are head down, shop, then go. They don't interact... (Walnut MP).

This perception is in direct contrast to the construction of rural communities as close-knit, where everyone knows everyone else. The influx of unknown newcomers is thus changing the space, to become more anonymised, and less transparent. Not only are outsiders linked to the change in the level of 'friendliness' in rural towns, but they are also identified as not contributing back

to communities. As outlined earlier in the thesis, rural conservative communities are constructed as close-knit, supportive of each other, and all working together for the same end goal (Tönnies, 1957[1887]; Aldous 1972, 1195). However, the transient populations coming to these communities as part of the FIFO/DIDO mining workforce are identified by representatives as not contributing anything back to communities and instead being a burden on them. The local government representative for the rural region of Canarium explained how this was impacting many local resources:

The FIFO people give nothing back to the community. If there's a fire, we have to provide the fire service, if there's a problem on the mine site, we have to supply the police. If someone is injured on the mine site, it affects our hospitals and doctors. Water, we have to supply them with water (Councillor for Canarium).

In this statement, the Councillor clearly sees the 'FIFO people' as not part of the community itself. They are not only labelled as a separate group, but seen as not a part of the community unless they can contribute something to it. The local government representative of the rural region of Maple expressed a similar perspective about the unfair burden of the mining industry on local communities.

She said:

I got to a point where I used to say, if I hear one more politician say spread the wealth of the mining boom, I'm going to poke myself in the eye!! Because we're the ones that were paying all of the costs and we weren't, until this government got in and introduced royalties to the regions, we were not getting a penny back! (Councillor of Maple).

Whilst FIFO/DIDO mine workers are perceived as influencing change in rural communities, political representatives also identify them as presenting significant risks to the community. This relates to the construction of FIFO/DIDO mine workers as outsiders who do not have the same values and morals as members of rural conservative communities. The local government representative for the Bluegum region explained how he would certainly accept some FIFO/DIDO mine workers to settle in their town, but indicated that the majority of them that he has encountered have demonstrated questionable traits in comparison to rural residents. He said:

I'll be honest, some of fly-in, fly-out workers, I'd love to have them settled in my town. The ones with the good families, really talented guys, they'd work well in my council, they'd work well in my town. But fifty percent of the guys I sit behind in airplanes and hear their conversations, I don't want them anywhere near my kids or family. Honestly, just the language and the way they talk about what they get up to on the weekends. It doesn't necessarily attract the best of people. It attracts the broad cross section of the community, and to be honest, as the Mayor, I only want the top proportion in my community (Mayor of Bluegum).

The workers who have come into rural communities as part of the mining boom are thus described as failing to meet the moral standards of rural communities. Their presence transforms the space by bringing a 'cross-section' of the community, making it less homogenous in terms of the asserted values of rural people. The state representative of the Walnut electorate similarly warned about the character of FIFO/DIDO workers by referring to an example of a violent crime

which had been committed by a 'reflective shirt bloke' and had impacted on the feeling of safety within the community. She said:

I think the most profound, and this is a one off so that's got to be borne in mind, umm, we had a young woman that was brutally murdered. She was sexually assaulted and murdered by a reflective shirt bloke who came in. So that's the worst case scenario. But certainly I think young women felt a little bit more uneasy about moving around the town (Walnut MP).

These views assert a distinct dichotomy between traditional rural residents and the FIFO/DIDO mining 'outsiders' and highlight political representatives' anxieties about the transformation of rural spaces as a result. Members of rural communities experiencing large-scale mining activity often demonstrate a clear 'us and them' mentality between themselves and the transient mining populations, resulting in a loss of identity and an overall sense of community within and between the two populations (Measham et al. 2013, 189; Petkova and Marinova 2015, 23; Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 160). Within these towns, roads are occupied by unfamiliar vehicles, landscapes are overwhelmed with industrial machinery, and public spaces are full of 'outsiders' who are contrasted against the traditional characteristics of people who live in the area (Everingham, Devenin and Collins 2015; Petkova et al. 2009, 222). With the long shift work practices of mining and mine workers generally traveling to locations outside of local mining towns during their off-weeks, FIFO/DIDO miners are seen as unable to adequately contribute to and participate in community organisations and groups (Petkova et al. 2009, 222). Therefore, these workers have no

meaningful attachment to the surrounding community and present a threat to sustainable community development (Carrington, Hogg and McIntosh 2011, 340; Petkova and Marinova 2015, 22).

Through these ideas and perceptions, FIFO/DIDO workers are portrayed as antisocial and deviant 'urban others' who don't belong in rural communities (Scott, Carrington and McIntosh 2011, 159). Political representatives thus consider the presence of non-resident mining populations in their towns as being symbolic of an invasion of urban-centric behaviours and activities into safe, family-friendly rural spaces. The occupation of rural space by these outsiders thus transforms the rural space. This is particularly evident when examining the intersections between concerns about sex work, and concerns about the influx of FIFO/DIDO populations.

#### *8.2.2.1 Sex work and mining*

As outlined in the previous chapter, political representatives in this study identify non-resident mining populations as creating and preserving the demand for commercial sex in rural spaces. Through this understanding, the presence of sex workers in rural mining towns is the direct result of the mining industry, where sex workers and FIFO/DIDO mining populations are both seen as the 'urban others' intruding on rural space.

During an interview with the local government representative of the Maple region, the participant expressed frustration with sex workers expanding their presence in rural mining towns to target FIFO workers. She said:

See I actually felt when, well we're actually going through a downturn now, but while the mining boom was at its peak, I felt quite angry because I felt that sex workers were coming in to take advantage of our town because FIFO workers were here. I felt like saying, they fly-in girls, they also fly-out. Wouldn't it be far more discreet for them to do it on their two weeks off, rather than their two weeks on? When they're here, they're supposed to be here to work you know and I really cannot see how they can use the mining boom to justify the need to expand your presence in these towns (Councillor of Maple).

This statement reflects a clear linkage of the presence of sex workers with the presence of FIFO/DIDO workers. The two parties, sex worker, and mine worker, are seen as inherently connected. The variable factor in the relationship is whether the sex work takes place in rural towns during the 'on' weeks, or in the urban home towns of the miners during their 'off' weeks. The clear preference is that the sex work should be constrained to the urban environment.

But what is it exactly about the presence of sex workers and transient mining populations that is problematic for rural communities? From an examination of the data, it is clear that their presence in rural communities is considered to be symbolic of deviance and sin associated to the metropolis and they therefore threaten the conservative, moral and monogamous citizens of rural communities. Sex workers and FIFO mining populations are both subject to the same 'othering' process by political representatives.

As briefly mentioned in the previous chapter, representatives in this study question the character and morals of the individuals who engage in sex work and

implicitly associate such behaviour with people who live outside of rural conservative communities. An example of this perspective is demonstrated in the following statement from the representative of the rural electorate of Nanango, who labels sex workers and clients as 'seedy' types of individuals:

I believe that if you are in an occupation that you are not proud to tell your family about, it casts a shadow over it, which really put it into the light in which it exists. It is a dark and often very seedy occupation that involves dark and seedy people. Perhaps that is a TV portrayal of it, but I do not really think that pimps and people of that ilk can be seen as anything more (Mrs Pratt, Nanango MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2355).

This positioning of sex work as oppositional to rural morals where 'good' sex is within marriage, and 'bad' sex is commercial, is also reflected in how political representatives speak about and refer to the individuals who participate in such activity. Political representatives construct sex workers and clients as deviant and immoral individuals who are, of course, always positioned as 'other' to the representatives themselves, their friends, family and community members.

Through this statement, Mrs Pratt also reinforces the significance of family to rural conservative ideals by stating how sex workers would be reluctant to share the details of their occupation with their family out of shame or stigma. Thus, she implies that any occupation not suitable to discuss with family members is one which conflicts with the family-friendly characteristics of rural conservative communities. This perception of sex workers engaging in a secretive type of occupation was also raised during interviews. The representative of the

Walnut electorate for example expresses concern about the impact of this level of secrecy on sex workers' family members:

Some of the people who work in that industry are parents as well and that's a whole new area of deceit because most of the family, well the children don't know what Mum does. In fact, a lot of prostitutes you hear about, it's very secretive. So they've got this other life that they've got to be deceptive about. What does that do to their mind and their heart and their spirit? (Walnut MP).

These negative depictions of sex work participants by political representatives is further exacerbated when the focus shifts to either the sex workers or the clients individually. Through the rural-urban dichotomy, political representatives construct sex workers and clients as 'other' to the decent, moral members of rural conservative communities. They are constructed as out of place in the rural space.

During early discussions of sex work legislation in parliament in 1992 for example, the representative of the rural electorate of Crows Nest alluded to the fact that introducing legislation which included protection provisions for sex workers could pose risks to other more 'important' members of the community. He stated:

A prostitute has only to swear a complaint against a person. This sort of provision could affect all sorts of eminently upstanding members of society or pillars of the community such as the Minister himself (Mr Cooper, Crows Nest MP, Queensland Parliament 1992a, 871).

This reinforcement of the comparative difference between a sex worker and upstanding members of rural conservative communities continued later in parliamentary debates, with the representative of the rural electorate of Burdekin

describing the reaction of his constituents to the sex worker in town. He explained:

Many years ago a prostitute did come to the Lower Burdekin. The people of the Burdekin pushed her out of that town. That is how harshly the people of Burdekin view prostitution (Mr Knuth, Burdekin MP, Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5816).

Through these statements, representatives are reinforcing the perceived divide between the morally good members of rural conservative communities and sex workers. The language used by Mr Knuth, declaring that the people 'pushed her out of that town', demonstrates a very physical rejection of something perceived as threatening to rural communities, in this instance, a sex worker. This threat could only be responded to by removing it from the space it had invaded, the rural community. This is a very clear example of the othering and the dichotomy created between rural communities and sex work.

The stigmatisation and othering of sex workers is however not specific to rural areas. Female sex workers are often depicted through the social imagination as symbolising sin, immorality and disease (Koken, Bimbi and Parsons 2010, 222). As a result, they are continuously ostracised and excluded from urban communities because of how they are perceived to be 'out of place' (O'Neill et al. 2008, 82; O'Neill and Campbell 2006, 57-8). Sex workers are depicted as a social threat to urban communities and are therefore subject to harassment, intimidation and violence from community groups and law enforcement (Sanders 2004b, 1705). The process of othering and ostracising sex workers from communities occurs everywhere, but Mr Knuth (Burdekin MP) indicates that the

removal of a sex worker from his region was the result of the unique unity between rural community members.

Queensland political representatives also portray sex workers as victims of abuse who have been forced to participate in the sex industry, or who feel pressured to participate in the industry due to reasons out of their control. These include economic reasons, coercion, or due to drug and/or alcohol addiction. For example, during interviews conducted for this research, the participants were asked why they think people participate in the sex industry as sex workers. The representative of the Walnut electorate said 'Nobody would just choose to be a prostitute for fun! They do it for economic reasons or they do it because they've been coerced into it' (Walnut MP). Similarly, the local government representative of the rural region of Maple said:

Most of them come from broken homes and are into drugs and what not. Prostitution is, I suppose, a quick way for those people to get cash (Councillor of Maple).

These views are also reflected in parliamentary debates:

They may be short of money or drug addicted or have a range of other problems. There are all sorts of reasons they tragically get entrapped into the business of prostitution (Mr Horan, Toowoomba South MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5703).

Other examples of political representatives in this study negatively constructing sex workers as immoral and bad include engaging in the common narrative of sex workers being victims of abuse who are often drug dependent and require 'saving by the Church'. For example, Mr Knuth, the representative of the Burdekin

electorate, drew on this narrative of the victimised sex worker to justify his opposition to brothel legislation:

While I realise I am probably just wasting my breath talking to members opposite, I do so on behalf of my constituents who are overwhelmingly against this curse that will be befall our State. How a person, let alone a political party, can support a young girl being lured into the life of indecent abuse is beyond me. Having witnessed the pain, the hurt and the abuse suffered by these women who have had their lives renewed through Christian churches, their testimonies bear witness to the hell that they have had to endure. No doubt, many members opposite have been sent literature relating ex-prostitutes' stories – stories of shame, sadness and abuse. Many have become drug addicted to hide the shame and hurt inside in order to try to escape reality. (Queensland Parliament 1999e, 5814).

These quotes reflect a very common understanding of sex workers as forced into sex work through desperation, or entering sex work due to some past trauma in their lives. This is a common myth perpetuated through social and political discourse, where sex workers' entry into the sex industry is presumed to be premised on their experiences of prior victimisation through physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse (Matthews 2008, 65; Sanders 2004b, 1708; Weitzer 2012a, 13). These mythologies of motivations to enter and stay in the sex industry also expand to assumptions about sex workers' drug and alcohol addictions and experiences of coercion and violence from pimps (May and Hunter 2006, 169; Sanders 2006, 104-5; Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 39). This characterisation doesn't seem to reflect a particular perspective of sex work as threatening to rural communities. However, political representatives also

questioned the decency, femininity, and morality of sex workers, which is not surprising considering rural conservatism idealises traditional feminine gender roles (Little 2007, 851; Little and Panelli 2003, 281; Little 1987, 335).

During the interview with the local government representative for the Cottonwood region, they explained the stigma associated for women who engage in sex work:

I think over the years, prostitution has had a very tainted reputation and you'd be painted as a 'scarlet woman.' I think there's a hangover from those days I'd say, it's just you know, to be a prostitute is something that is just not acceptable for most people in the bush. It's just been hammered into you for as long back as you can remember (Mayor of Cottonwood).

This understanding that specific stigma is attached to sex workers was also identified by the local government representative of the Jarrah region who explained in his interview that 'strange women' in rural conservative communities were easily identifiable and therefore didn't fit in to the community.

He said:

...as a seven year old kid, every time I saw a strange woman, you'd ask the question. And this was seven years old. So, you thought 'she's strange, she must be working in the back.' Because this was a rural community, you know everybody there. If there's a strange woman, oh it must be a sex worker (Mayor of Jarrah).

In addition to suggesting that women sex workers have tainted status which conflicts with rural conservative community ideals, representatives also suggest

that by engaging in the sex industry, those women are not respected and valued like moral women in the community are. For example:

I find it very distressing that any woman feels that she has to partake in this kind of activity. I do not think you can put your own values on anybody else, but it has always been my belief that a woman has only herself. It is the most valuable thing she has, and I do not mean parts of her body. She is the most valuable thing she has. If, as women in this place, we do not uphold the value of a woman as an individual, how can we expect the men who abuse women to respect them? (Mrs Dorothy Ruth Pratt, Nanango MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2355).

This quote reflects the belief that the sexual behaviour of a woman is key to the behaviour of a woman, and that sex for money is unacceptable behaviour. During the interview with the representative of the Kokoti electorate, the participant touched on the issue of women sex workers not receiving the same respect as women who aren't sex workers.

I've got young granddaughters and I would like for them to become upstanding women in the community. I think there is nothing more beautiful than a woman who is respected, you know what I mean? It's just the way I've been brought up... and people don't respect women who don't respect themselves. Prostitutes clearly don't respect themselves if they conduct themselves that way, in that filth... I know sex is not filth, I know that. But they treat it like some automated function instead of the beautiful thing that it is... (Kokoti MP).

The distinction being made here by the Kokoti MP of sex workers versus respected women really reinforces the dichotomous interpretation of what is deemed good and bad forms of sex and presentations of sexuality in rural versus urban settings. But as indicated in existing sex work literature, regardless of

where sex workers engage in sex work, they are subjected to negative stigma and marginalisation (Sander 2004a, 1705; Sallmaan 2010, 147). The sinful 'whore' identity of women sex workers are compared to good and proper non-sex worker women, who's femininity is pure and sacred (Sanders, O'Neill and Pitcher 2009, 1; Scott 2011, 59). This stereotypical imagery of the female sex workers dominates social understandings and perpetuations of sex work, but such ideas are amplified through rural conservatism. The image of female sex workers conflicts with the pure, feminine and domesticated rural construct of women as perpetuated through the rural imaginary (Little, 1987). It is through these ideas about good (rural) women versus bad (urban) female sex workers that political representatives continue to reinforce sex workers as being 'out of place' in rural communities.

In this study, political representatives also identify clients of sex work as deviant and immoral individuals. They label clients as 'dirty johns' with high running sex drives who prey on female sex workers. For example, the representative for the Maryborough electorate, Mr Foley, identifies clients of sex work as the reason for why the sex industry continues to proliferate. He states:

What we have is a situation where dirty Johns want younger and younger girls. I blame it on the men. We can belt the women all we like for it but if there were not the dirty Johns wanting young and kinkier sex all the time then the demand would not be there and the industry would not be created as it is (Mr Foley, Maryborough MP, Queensland Parliament 2010a, 2348).

It is not uncommon for clients of sex work to be identified as the driving force behind the existence of the sex industry. Those who align their views with the oppression paradigm (Weitzer 2012a, 10) identify male clients of sex work as violent misogynists who purchase women's bodies for their own sexual gratification (Barry, 1995; Jeffreys, 1997). This construction of sex work clients is not unique to rural settings. But again, political representatives further emphasise the level of deviance and immorality of clients of sex work by comparing such individuals to the decent, moral upstanding men of rural conservative communities.

The representative for the Lockyer electorate, Mr Flynn, who is a man himself, identifies men as the most common users of sex workers, but positions himself away from them by questioning their intelligence. He says:

I seriously doubt the wisdom of some who would knowingly participate in a trade that traditionally seems to attract the less adequate members of society, and that would appear to be men. (Mr Flynn (Lockyer) Queensland Parliament 2001b, 1530).

Ms Lee Long, the MP for the Tablelands electorate also makes a clear distinction between men who solicit services from sex workers in brothels and men who she knows personally, such as her spouse, her relatives and her friends. She said:

...who is it who uses this facility so much? It certainly is not my husband, brother, uncle or friend. It has to be somebody else's, the dirty dogs (Tablelands MP, Queensland Parliament 2001c, 3685)

Through this statement, Ms Lee Long reinforces the perception that the men or 'dirty dogs' who buy sex are certainly not the men from her family or community. This characterisation of clients of sex work as distinct to respectable men in rural communities highlights the extent to which sex work is seen as foreign, and inappropriate in rural settings. Ms Long further criticises the client of sex work, stating:

The mind boggles at the thought of all these men anxiously pacing the waiting rooms until it is their turn. One wonders about their wives and families at home and the money spent on prostitutes and not on food for the table or for the kids' education or for health and so on. After all, sex workers do not come cheap (Ms Lee Long, Tablelands MP, Queensland Parliament 2006, 2765).

Male representatives in this study also engage in this othering of clients of sex work by comparing these individuals to themselves. For example:

Unlike the many thousands of men who are the clients of Queensland prostitutes, I am personally offended by the idea that women are prepared to sell their bodies for an income (Mr James Pearce, Fitzroy MP, Queensland Parliament 1999d, 5739).

Importantly, this quote demonstrates that the representative is offended by the women selling sex, not necessarily the men who buy it, but nevertheless he sets himself apart from sex work clients. Mr Flynn is more explicitly critical of male clients of sex work:

...prostitution is not born out of love or affection, merely a desire by some men to use women as mere receptacle for their lust (Mr Flynn, Lockyer MP, Queensland Parliament 2001c, 3676).

Through this statement, Mr Flynn also reinforces the construction of sex work as immoral and a bad form of sex by identifying how it is only 'some men' who engage in this type of activity (i.e. those who don't align their values and morals within the confines of rural conservatism). The 'us and them' mentality is common within the rural-dichotomy framework (Valentine, 1997; Bell, 2006; Somerville, Smith and McElwee, 2015), particularly in the context of sex work where those who participate in such activity are often subject to stigma and othering by the majority.

The characterisation of sex work, and those who participate in it as either buyer or seller, indicates two important, yet somewhat contradictory, points about the characterisation of sex work in relation to rural communities. On the one hand, if sex work is allowed to occur in these rural communities, it would be seen as a reflection on the community at large. In this construction, sex work is positioned as a reflection of the values of the community, and considered to be a negative reflection inconsistent with community values. On the other hand, sex work is seen not as a reflection of rural communities, but as a foreign threat to them. In this construction, those who engage in sex work would be considered to be morally degenerate, and therefore perhaps existing apart from the more morally righteous community in which they are plying their immoral trade. Sex work is thus positioned as an affront to the values of the community, rather than a reflection of community values.

### 8.3 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how political representatives in this study position sex work in relation to rural settings and notions of rurality, in the context of space and spatiality. In doing so, this chapter has brought together the three elements of rurality, sex, and space, to highlight how the problematisation and rejection of sex work in rural settings is an exemplar of a moral geography tailored to rural conservatism. Political representatives in this study identify several spatial concerns regarding the existence of sex work in rural spaces. They argue that discretion and anonymity is 'impossible' in rural settings, therefore sex work is an activity that cannot be hidden in such spaces.

However, they contradict themselves by offering some levels of tolerance or acceptance of sex work in rural settings. They acknowledge that commercial sex work may be a 'necessary evil' in some rural communities, specifically those subject to large scale mining who experience transient populations of unaccompanied men. In these contexts, rural communities protect themselves and their values by tolerating the existence of a group of women to service the sexual needs of urban 'others' who threaten the rural imaginary of a united, family centred, monogamous citizen.

The impact of the mining boom on rural communities has demonstrated the degree of concern with the transformation of space, not just in terms of the physical environment, but also of the social and cultural influences brought to the space by urban outsiders. This chapter highlights the ways in which FIFO/DIDO workers are constructed as urban outsiders, bringing negative influences to rural

spaces, taking rural resources, and giving nothing back. Sex work associated with the mining boom is held up as an example of the ways in which these urban outsiders differ from members of the rural community. This is particularly clear in the othering of both sex worker and sex work client by political representatives. Sex work, sex workers, and sex work clients are viewed as symptomatic of increasing urban influxes to rural areas, but ultimately as out of place in rural spaces.

## Chapter 9 - Conclusion

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### 9.1 Introduction

The decision by law-makers in the Australian state of Queensland to establish the brothel exemption provision, thus applying legislation differently in rural and urban communities, demonstrates a position that spaces should be governed differently, and specifically that sex work is out of place in rural spaces. This thesis has examined the political attitudes that underpin that position, both in relation to how rural spaces are constructed, and how sex work within rural spaces is viewed. This chapter will now provide a summary of the main findings from the research. It will begin by revisiting the main objectives of the research project, followed by an outline of how each of the research questions have been answered. Finally, the chapter will offer recommendations, and consider implications for future research, policy and law.

### 9.2 Summary of thesis

The thesis has conducted an empirical examination of political constructions of sex work, rurality, and space, to gain an understanding of the impetus behind the initial creation and continued inclusion of the brothel exemption provision with Queensland sex work legislation. Through this examination, this research project has identified that political representatives of rural regions demonstrate a strong engagement with and reliance on the rural imaginary in their discussions about sex work and related legislation in Queensland. They draw on the ideas and conceptualisations of rurality as

perpetuated through the rural imaginary to justify their contradictory attitudes towards sex work as being inappropriate for rural spaces, yet also necessary for some rural spaces invaded by urban outsiders as a result of the mining industry. On closer examination of the research findings it is clear that objections to sex work by representatives of rural regions are premised on anxieties about how the presence of commercial sex in rural settings symbolises a transformation or urbanisation of rural space. Political representatives consider this transformation to result in a loss of rurality as perpetuated through the rural imaginary, that is, a loss of conservative Christian values and morals unique to rural communities.

As outlined at the beginning of the thesis, the main objectives of this research project were to:

- Identify how the rural imaginary has influenced regulatory approaches to sex work in rural spaces in Queensland;
- Determine whether current attitudes of political representatives regarding sex work in rural spaces align or conflict with the brothel exemption provision.

To achieve this, the project was guided by the following research questions:

### **Research Question 1**

How is the rural imaginary constructed in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia?

### **Research Question 2**

How do notions of space play out in discussions of sex work in rural settings?

- c. In existing literature?
- d. In the data collected for this project?

### **Research Question 3**

How does political discourse pertaining to sex work in Queensland engage with the rural imaginary?

- c. How is the rural imaginary perpetuated/idealised?
- d. How is the rural imaginary challenged/disrupted?

**Research Question 1** was answered in Chapter 3 where the discussion examined historical, theoretical and conceptual literature which engages with and contributes to understandings and interpretations of rural spaces, rurality, and thus, the rural imaginary. By reviewing key writings on the rural-urban dichotomy, the rural-urban continuum, and examinations of rural space as culturally and symbolically significant, the chapter identified how current understandings and interpretations of what rural ‘means’ and ‘symbolises’ in the context of contemporary Australian society are highly influenced by English and European constructions of the idyllic, green and harmonious countrysides. In addition, Australian rurality draws on iconic representations of ‘the bush’ and the ‘Aussie battler’ to portray rural communities as cohesive and homogenous populations of individuals, united in their adherence to particular values, morals, and ‘ways of life’.

**Research Question 2** was concerned with examining how notions of space and spatiality play out in existing literature on sex work and in the data collected for this project. The first aspect of this question was answered in Chapter 4 which reviewed existing literature relating to the spatial contours and regulation of sex work. This chapter firstly outlined the small body of research focusing on sex work in rural contexts specifically, then turned to spatial examinations of sex work in urban settings. The discussion identified two key paradigms in which the spatial contexts of sex work are analysed including *types of sex work* and *regulatory approaches*.

Through the first paradigm, the chapter highlighted how different physical spaces where sex work exists, such as indoor and outdoor spaces, are subject to differing levels of public attention and therefore, differing approaches to spatial regulation. Street sex work and commercial sex work establishments for example are often most objected to by surrounding communities due to being highly visible and being representative of immorality and social decay. Thus, spatial regulatory approaches towards such activity generally aim to protect and shield local communities from such vice through rules and restrictions on where and if such activity can occur.

Through the second paradigm, the chapter focused on the spatial regulation of the industry driven by political and moral agendas. These different approaches outlined include criminalisation, legalisation and decriminalisation, along with moral regulation through moral geographies. Overall, this discussion identified how public space is governed and regulated according to

heteronormative discourses that identify sex work as an immoral activity which communities need to be protected from. Therefore, sex work is often restricted to spaces outside of zones that are allocated to and representative of heterosexual nuclear families.

The second part of **Research Question 2** was answered throughout the later chapters of the thesis where an examination of Hansard and interview data demonstrated how notions of space and spatiality are evident within political discussions about sex work in Queensland. Political representatives in this study argue that sex work presents unique spatial issues for rural communities, particularly in the context of visibility and proximity. They suggest that discretion and anonymity are 'impossible' in rural settings, therefore the visibility of commercial sex is exacerbated in rural communities. The inevitable visibility of sex work in rural contexts would therefore, according to representatives, result in communities being tarnished with deviance and sin whilst threatening the safety of permanent residents, namely women and children.

**Research Question 3** was answered throughout the later chapters of the thesis where findings from the collected data demonstrated how political discourse pertaining to sex work in Queensland engages with the rural imaginary. Namely, the findings chapters examined how political representatives simultaneously perpetuate, idealised, challenge and disrupt the rural imaginary in their discussions about sex work and related legislation.

Chapter 6 focused on how political representatives in this study construct rural spaces and rurality and identified three dominant frameworks they engage

with during their discussions about sex work: the rural-urban dichotomy, the rural-urban continuum, and the rural-urban parallel. The discussion highlighted how political representatives most commonly engage with the rural-urban dichotomy to present rural spaces as different and unique to urban spaces. Through this framework, rural spaces are portrayed as homogenous communities adherent to Christian conservative values and family-orientated lifestyles. In contrast, urban spaces are presented as diverse, secular and individualistic.

Chapter 7 followed on with an examination of how political representatives position sex work in relation to the ideas and conceptualisation of rural spaces and rurality as per the three frameworks identified in the previous chapter. The findings demonstrate that political representatives simultaneously engage in the dichotomy, continuum and parallel frameworks when discussing sex work and related legislation. They predominantly engage with the dichotomy framework to position sex work in contrast to the ideals and characteristics of rurality and instead associate such activity to the metropolis. Political representatives argue that sex work threatens the values, morals and make-up of rural communities and associate the activity to urban centres. However, on closer examination of these findings, the chapter highlighted how political representatives' attitudes towards sex work are actually quite similar across rural and urban settings, suggesting that their views are instead parallel. Though, rural representatives rely on the rural imaginary to perpetuate their objections to sex work as being rural-specific, with representatives of urban areas not afforded the same access to such ideas.

Chapter 7 also identified examples of representatives presenting contradictory opinions about sex work, where they demonstrate a level of tolerance for the occurrence of sex work within rural settings to address the sexual needs of the urban outsiders associated to the mining industry. Through these perceptions, political representatives continue to position sex work as an urban activity that is only acceptable in rural settings if it means protecting rural communities from the urban outsiders who invade safe rural spaces. Though, representatives emphasise the preference for the 'necessary' sex work to be hidden and discreet to ensure such activity does not aid in the transformation of the rural landscape to spaces of sin and vice.

Finally, Chapter 8 brought together the three elements of rurality, sex, and space and highlighted how the problematisation and rejection of sex work in rural settings is an exemplar of a moral geography tailored to rural conservatism. The chapter argued that notions of space and spatiality play an important role in the positioning of sex work as threatening to or inappropriate for rural communities. Findings presented in this chapter illustrated how political attitudes depicting sex work as a problem for rural communities instead reveal representatives' fear and anxiety about the transformation of rural space and traditional rurality.

Through an examination of the data, this thesis has identified that political representatives in Queensland continue to simultaneously perpetuate, idealise, challenge, and disrupt the rural imaginary in their discussions about sex work and related legislation. Through their support of the brothel exemption provision and the identification of the different 'rural-specific' objections to commercial sex,

representatives perpetuate and idealise an imagined rurality depicting rural spaces and communities as unique, homogenous and adherent to a conservative Christian morality underpinned by monogamous family ideals. These same representatives also disrupt and challenge the rural imaginary by indicating levels of tolerance and acceptance of sex work for rural spaces. However, through closer examination, it is clear that political representatives predominantly offer these attitudes in response to addressing the sexual demand presented by FIFO/DIDO mining populations.

### 9.3 Future directions for research and policy

Overall, this research project indicates that the continued inclusion of the brothel exemption provision in Queensland's sex work legislation may be unnecessary. It is a legislative measure offering an invisible form of 'protection' to rural spaces from the 'invasion' of state sanctioned sex work establishments. Political representatives demonstrate their support for such a measure as it symbolises their and their community's oppositional stance towards sex work and the sex industry more broadly. However, it is largely a symbolic measure in response to a rural imaginary.

There have been more than 200 towns which have received an exemption from licensed brothels in Queensland since the provision was implemented in 2000, thus it is not surprising that political representatives use this information to bolster their argument about sex work being inappropriate and unwanted in rural spaces. However, this research has identified that such perceptions about sex work in rural settings, along with the perceived 'protection' offered by the

brothel exemption provision, are part of a wider imaginary amongst political representatives. It is not the exemption provision preventing the establishment of brothels in rural towns (as the majority of exempt statuses became void during the legislative change in 2009). Political representatives interviewed for this research indicate either that discretion is essential for sex work in rural areas, suggesting that sole operators, as opposed to licensed brothels, are more likely to be working in towns eligible to apply for exemption. Another possible explanation for the lack of evident desire for the establishment of brothels by proprietors in rural towns may be problems with the licensing system itself. There is a clear disincentive to establish a licensed brothel in Queensland, particularly in a rural town with a smaller population and thus client base, due to the exorbitant associated start-up and maintenance fees specified by the Government.

This research has found that, while political representatives do invoke a rural imaginary in their opposition to sex work, there are also clear elements of acceptance and tolerance for sex work in certain spaces and contexts. This may mirror trends Australia-wide towards more liberalised laws relating to sex work, and demonstrate a greater degree of commonality between rural and urban attitudes towards sex work than is suggested by the existence of the brothel exemption provision in Queensland laws. It is therefore recommended for future research to be conducted in this area of inquiry.

This project has presented an insight into constructions of sex work, rurality and space from a political context, however it would be beneficial for this examination of attitudes towards sex work in both rural and urban communities.

Attitudes towards and experiences of sex work in rural areas in particular remains under-researched. Further study should move beyond political representatives' attitudes and examine the perspectives of rural communities more broadly in Queensland, as well as the perspectives of sex workers who conduct their work in rural spaces throughout the state and Australia. It is anticipated that such research could aid in a move to revise (and eventually remove) the strict legislative framework for sex work throughout Queensland.

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## Appendix 2 – Licensed brothels

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Licensed brothels in Queensland as of June 2016 (PLA 2016, 22-3).

	<u>Name of Brothel</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Date Opened</u>
<b><i>Brisbane City Council</i></b>			
1	88 Logan Rd, Woolloongabba	<i>88 on Logan</i>	13.06.03
2	1/32 Meadow Ave, Coopers Plains	<i>Asian Star on Meadow</i>	12.06.09
3	12 Nile St, Woolloongabba	<i>Cleo's on Nile</i>	22.10.05
4	83 Randolph St, Rocklea	<i>Happy Place 8</i>	15.05.09
5	120 Robinson Rd, Geebung	<i>Miso Honey</i>	02.05.02
6	180 Abbotsford Rd, Bowen Hills	<i>Montecito</i>	30.02.06
7	61 Spine St, Sumner Park	<i>Sky Angel</i>	28.07.11
8	175 Abbotsford Rd, Bowen Hills	<i>Platinum 175</i>	25.04.14
9	945 Fairfield Rd, Yeerongpilly	<i>The Viper Room</i>	17.05.02
10	476 Boundary Rd, Archerfield	<i>Yimi 476</i>	24.08.05
<b><i>Cairns Regional Council</i></b>			
11	11 Cava Cl, Bungalow	<i>Northern Belle</i>	29.12.06
<b><i>Gold Coast City Council</i></b>			
12	1/29 Expansion St, Molendinar	<i>Luvasian</i>	02.09.05
13	30 Jade Dr, Nerang	<i>Pentagon Grand</i>	12.04.02
14	13/38 Eastern Service Rd, Stapylton	<i>Pryana Rose</i>	26.09.13
15	12 Greg Chappell Dr, Burleigh Heads	<i>Secret Liaisons Gold Coast</i>	09.03.02 – 15.10.15 09.06.16
16	44 Upton St, Bundall	<i>Silks on Upton</i>	12.03.02
17	37 Upton St, Bundall	<i>Utopia in Paradise</i>	01.07.06
<b><i>Logan City Council</i></b>			
18	26 Magnesium Dr, Crestmead	<i>Club 26</i>	19.11.05
<b><i>Moreton Bay Regional Council</i></b>			
19	22 Brewer St, Clontarf	<i>Intimate Encounters</i>	20.08.03
<b><i>Sunshine Coast Regional Council</i></b>			
20	13 Cessna St, Marcoola	<i>Lush</i>	04.07.14
<b><i>Toowoomba Regional Council</i></b>			
21	1/14 Civil Court, Harlaxton	<i>Deviations</i>	12.09.09
<b><i>Townsville City Council</i></b>			
22	15 Carmel St, Garbutt	<i>Bluebirds on Carmel</i>	01.10.03 – 30.09.10 08.12.11

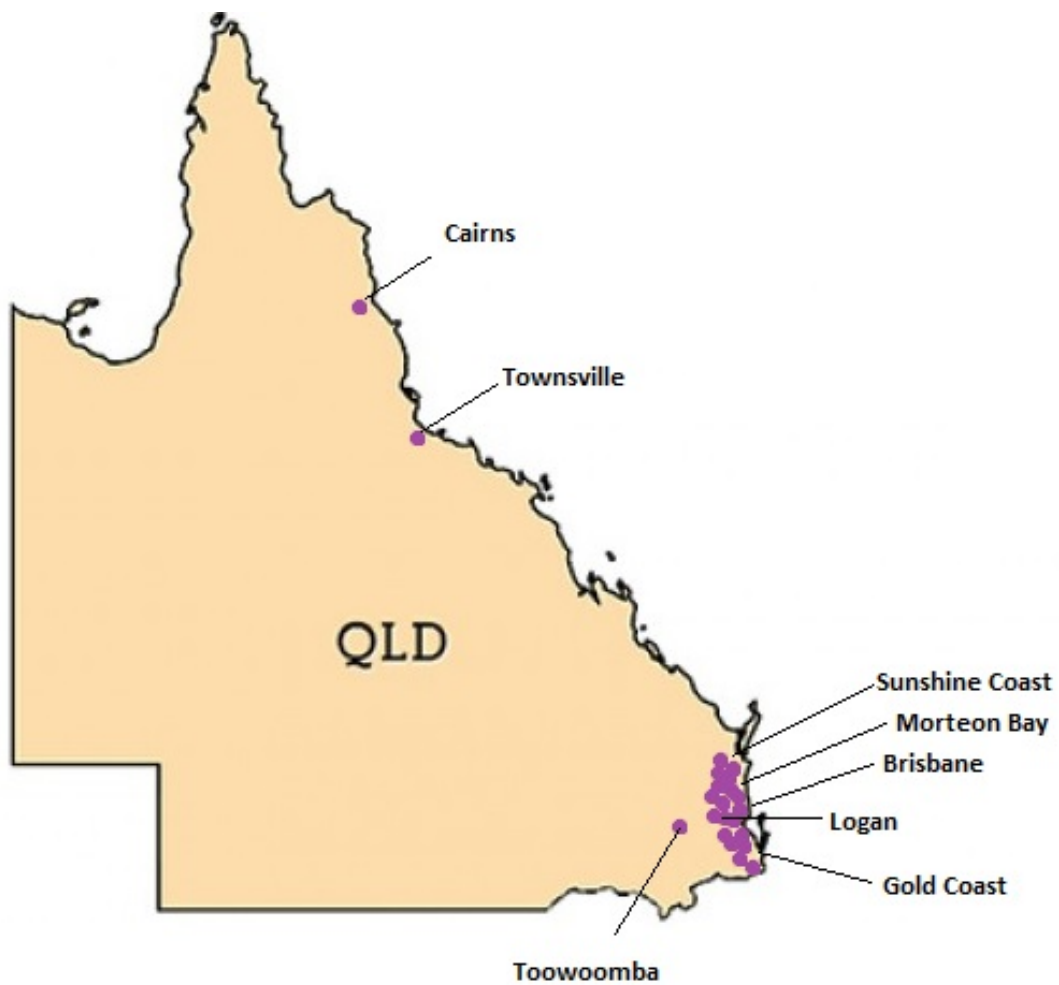
## Appendix 3 – Exempt towns

List of exempt towns in Queensland published in the PLA's 2009-2010 Annual Report (PLA 2010, 72).

Acland	Coolana	Harlin	Mooloolah	Tarampa
Allora	Coominya	Hebel	Moonie	Texas
Antigua	Cooya	Helidon	Moore	Thallon
Appletree Creek	Cooyar	Hivesville	Moranbah	Thargomindah
Aramac	Cordalba	Horton	Mossman	The Causeway
Aratula	Cotswold Hills	Hungerford	Mount Chalmers	The Caves
Atherton	Crawford	Inglewood	Mount Colliery	Theebine
Atkinson Dam	Curra	Innisfail	Mount Molloy	Tinnanbar
Aubigny	Daintree	Jondaryan	Mount Tarampa	Tiaro
Bajool	Dalby	Joskeleigh	Mount Tyson	Tieri
Bauple	Dalveen	Kabra	Mourilyan	Tinaroo
Bauple Estate	Dimbulah	Kairi	Mungindi	Tingoora
Beerburrum	Dirranbandi	Kalbar	Murgon	Tolga
Beerwah	Doolbi	Karara	Murphys Creek	Toobeah
Biddeston	Durong	Keppel Sands	Muttaborra	Toogoolawah
Biggenden	El Arish	Killarney	Nerimbera	Torrington
Bingil Bay	Emerald	Kingaroy	Newell	Vernor
Blackall	Emu Park	Kingsthorpe	Nobby	Walkamin
Bollon	Emu Vale	Kinka Beach	Noccundra	Wallangarra
Boonah	Esk	Kulpi	Oakey	Wangan
Booyal	Fernvale	Kumbia	Ogmore	Wangetti
Bouldercombe	Flinton	Kuranda	Patricks Estate	Warrill View
Bowenville	Flying Fish Point	Kurrimine Beach	Peachester	Warwick
Brightview	Forest Hill	Laidley	Peranga	Westbrook
Bungunyah	Gatton	Landsborough	Pittsworth	Westmar
Burdekin	Glamorgan Vale	Leyburn	Port Douglas	Westwood
Buxton	Glass House Mountains	Linville	Pratten	Windsor Park
Byfield	Glendale	Lowood	Prenzlau	Withcott
Cambooya	Gleenlee	Maclagan	Proston	Witta
Capella	Glenmorgan	Maleny	Quinalow	Wivenhoe Pocket
Cawarral	Glenvale	Mareeba	Silkwood	Wondai
Cecil Plains	Glenwood	Marlborough	Somerset Dam	Wonga Beach
Childers	Gogango	Marmor	South Johnstone	Woodgate
Chillagoe	Goombungee	Maryvale	Southbrook	Wooroolin
Chinchilla Shire	Goondiwindi	Meandarra	St George	Wyreema
Clarendon	Gowrie Junction	Memerambi	Stanthorpe	Yangan
Clermont	Gracemere	Meringandan West	Stanwell	Yarraman
Clifton	Grantham	Millmerran	Stanage Bay	Yelarbon
Colinton	Great Keppel Is	Minden	Talwood	Yeppoon
Conondale	Gunalda	Mission Beach	Tannymorel	Zilzie
Coolabunia	Gundiah	Mondure	Tara	

## Appendix 4 – Licensed brothel locations

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## Appendix 5 – Frankenberg's themes

	RURAL	URBAN (Less Rural)
(A)	<i>Community</i> Rural societies have a community nature; people are related in diverse ways and interact frequently. They have – or feel as if they have – interests in common.	<i>Association</i> Urbanised societies have an associative nature. Although there may be a greater number of possible relationships, they do not overlap. There is often comparative infrequency of interaction. People tend to feel they have needs, rather than interest, in common.
(B)	<i>Social fields involving few</i> In rural society a small number of people make up the total social field of an individual.	<i>Social fields involving many</i> The number of people met by an individual in urban society may be large.
(C)	<i>Multiple role relationships</i> People in rural society tend to play different roles to the same person, i.e. they have more numerous multiple role relationships.	<i>Overlapping role relationships</i> People in urban society tend to play different roles to different people, i.e. they tend to have less numerous multiple role relationships.
(D)	<i>Role conflict within a role set</i> The major, but not the only, source of role conflict in rural society arises out of the transparency of the conflicting expectations within a role set. This gives some of its characteristics redundant form to social activity in the countryside, where cohesive ritual and ceremonial develop which socialise this conflict.	<i>Role conflict in different role sets</i> In urban society the major source of conflict arises out of multiple roles in different role sets. A commonly cited extreme examples is the Italian Catholic communist.
(E)	<i>Simple economy</i> Most inhabitants in the ideal type of rural society tend to be engaged in one common activity – agriculture.	<i>Diverse economy</i> In urban society the population is engaged in many different productive activities.
(F)	<i>Little division of labour</i> In rural society there is a high percentage of overlapping jobs (generalisation), though this applies less to mechanised agricultural areas.	<i>Extreme differentiation and specialisation</i> In urban industrialised society few jobs overlap, though with automation re-generalisation is occurring.
(G)	<i>Mechanical solidarity</i> In rural society social solidarity tends to be based on uniformity of individuals.	<i>Organic solidarity</i> In urban society social solidarity stems from the diversity and complementarity which has developed with the division of labour.
(H)	<i>Complexity</i> Owing to the simplicity of the economy and the comparative lack of the division of labour, together with the multiplicity of role relationships, life in small-scale societies tends to be governed by links between individuals which cut across and reinforce each other.	<i>Complication</i> In larger scale societies, the intricacy of the economy and the division of labour plus the diversity of the role of relationships results in links between individuals cutting into and even running counter to each other.
(I)	<i>Ascribed status</i> For the individual in a rural society his family origin is the first factor fixing him in a social position, and every action in every sphere modifies his social standing. Status depends on <i>who</i> he is and determines how he is treated.	<i>Achieved status</i> This is also true in urban society, but later in life his occupational role tends to be the primary factor in fixing him in a social position. Status depends on <i>what</i> he is and determines with whom he associates.
(J)	<i>Status</i> Another way of stating (I) above is to say that people in a rural society are treated and expected to behave appropriately to their status, which is outside their control.	<i>Contract</i> People in an urban society are expected to do what they have agreed to do in a social position they are supposed to have chosen and worked to attain.
(K)	<i>Total status</i> In rural societies status spreads from situation to situation. A man's status is the same whatever activity he is engaged in.	<i>Partial status</i> A man's status may be high in some activities and low in others.
(L)	<i>Education from status</i> Again, in rural society a person's educational possibilities tend to be dependent on his status.	<i>Status from education</i> In urban society a person's social status tends to depend on his education
(M)	<i>Role embracement</i> People with an ascribed status in a stable rural community tend to accept their roles unquestionably and indeed enthusiastically.	<i>Role commitment</i> People in an urban community may be merely attached or just committed to roles. They may show this by discordant displays of role distance.
(N)	<i>Small mesh, or close-knit networks</i>	<i>Large mesh, or loose-knit, networks</i>

	Multiple roles in rural societies result in a dense texture of relationships	Particular role in urban societies result in loose texture of relationships.
(O)	<i>Locals</i> Rural society may be dominated by influential who seek to exercise local power in terms of local values.	<i>Cosmopolitans</i> Locals are still present but in urbanised society another, overlapping, set of influential is orientated towards the power and values of wider, large-scale society.
(P)	<i>Low density role texture</i>	<i>High density role texture</i>
(Q)	<i>Economic class – one division among many</i> In rural society the difference in economic class is one among many differences.	<i>Economic class – dominating social life through the cash nexus</i> In urban society economic class tends to determine all other differences.
(R)	<i>Latent function</i> In rural society social actions tend more often to have unintended consequences, unforeseen by the actors.	<i>Manifest function</i> In urbanised society things are more often (but by no means always) what they seem. Social action is often aimed what it appears to be aimed.

25 themes of rural & urban (less rural) – Adapted from Frankenberg (1966, 286-292)

## Appendix 6 – Brothel Fee Matrix

Effective 1 July 2017

Brothel Licence - New & Renewals						
		NUMBER OF ROOMS PER BROTHEL				
		1	2	3	4	5
No of Licensees	1	\$20,994	\$24,868	\$28,742	\$32,616	\$36,490
	2	\$28,424	\$32,298	\$36,172	\$40,046	\$43,920
	3	\$35,854	\$39,728	\$43,602	\$47,476	\$51,350
	4	\$43,284	\$47,158	\$51,032	\$54,906	\$58,780

Brothel Licence - Annual Return						
No of Licensees	NUMBER OF ROOMS PER BROTHEL					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	\$18,294	\$22,168	\$26,042	\$29,916	\$33,790
	2	\$23,024	\$26,898	\$30,772	\$34,646	\$38,520
	3	\$27,754	\$31,628	\$35,502	\$39,376	\$43,250
	4	\$32,484	\$36,358	\$40,232	\$44,106	\$47,980

Managers Certificate - New & Renewals
\$1,076.00

Managers Certificate - Annual Return
\$805.00

Managers Certificate - Variation
\$95.35

Managers Certificate - Replacement certificate
\$21.05

User Friendly Fees Matrix (PLA 2017)