

TRAFFICKED CHILD OR MOTHERLY SEX WORKER?: HOW MOTHERHOOD
SHAPES SEX TRAFFICKING POLITICS IN ARGENTINA

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ABSTRACT

One mother yearns for her daughter. The other earns for her daughter. These two motherly narratives have developed from two separate activist responses to sex trafficking in Argentina. Susana Trimarco purports the first narrative as the mother of sex trafficking victim Marita Verón while the Association of Female Argentine Sex Workers (AMMAR) endorses the second narrative as their explanation for why women participate in prostitution. Both invoke motherhood as a motivation for their protest and as a means to persuade others to their cause of securing protection for neglected prostitutes. Such motherly activism reflects early protests by the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo who utilized a cultural glorification of self-sacrificing motherhood called *marianismo* to demand information from the government regarding their missing children. AMMAR and Trimarco have created different narratives for women selling sex despite similar motherly rhetoric and motivation. Trimarco has framed the prostitutes as daughter-like victim while AMMAR has framed prostitutes as autonomous mothers. As a result, these activists demonstrate how one can invoke motherhood to either limit or expand the perception of selling sex as an autonomous choice.

INTRODUCTION

If one searches Cristina Kirschner on Facebook and looks at the Argentine president's post for Mother's Day one will discover a photo album of fourteen pictures. Each picture honors a different mother for her contributions to human rights. For two of these photos there is almost no need to reveal the names of the photographed. Those who live in Argentina will recognize the iconic mothers of protest depicted as Susana Trimarco and Madres of the Plaza de Mayo founder Hebe de Bonafini.¹ By including them in this Mother's Day Facebook post, President Kirschner exemplifies a critical interconnectivity between motherhood and activism within current Argentine politics. A history established by Bonafini and other Madres of the Plaza de Mayo has helped formulate a culture comfortable with mothers as agents of protest. Recent anti-sex trafficking activism reflects this comfort with widespread support for Susana Trimarco's story as the mother of the kidnapped Marita Verón. Adopting the tactics of earlier activism by the Madres of the Plaza del Mayo, Trimarco utilizes her role as a mother to reframe prostitutes ignored by state protection as trafficked daughters worthy of concern, a new generation of the 'disappeared.' The political ramifications of Trimarco's struggle helped contribute to increased attention to limiting trafficking in Argentina. By framing most prostitutes as kidnapped and abused daughters, the policies created favored a radical feminist perspective of prostitution. Defenders of the radical feminist perspective believe lawmakers should prohibit prostitution in order to limit sex trafficking. Opponents to the radical feminist perspective find value in the sex work industry. In Argentina, organizations like the Association of Female Argentine Sex Workers (AMMAR) have

¹ "El Mensaje de Cristina Kirchner por el Día de la Madre," *La Nación*, October 19, 2014, <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1736914-el-mensaje-de-cristina-kirchner-por-el-dia-de-la-madre>.

invoked the image of a second mother, one selling sexual services to provide for her family, as a means to challenge the conception of prostitutes as inherently victims. Calling for a distinction between trafficking and sex work these individuals believe that the framing of prostitutes as victims have denied voluntary sex workers their agency and has led to increased abuse by the police. For AMMAR motherhood serves as a rhetorical tool to claim agency for sex workers. While Trimarco's maternal rhetoric increased the perception that most female prostitutes are unwilling sex trafficking victims AMMAR's own maternal rhetoric suggest most female prostitutes choose to sell sex. Comparing Trimarco's appeals to motherhood with those of AMMAR demonstrates how invoking this motherly rhetoric can advance two very different answers to the question of whether most prostitution derives from a well informed autonomous choice by the prostitute.

Chapter 1. ACADEMIC RESPONSES TO A RENEWED ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING MOVEMENT

The trial of Marita Verón's traffickers in 2008 fanned preexisting attention to the problem of sex trafficking. This attention developed at the turn of the twenty first century. The international political sphere pushed for more attention to human trafficking worldwide leading to the categorizing of individuals as trafficked rather than as prostitutes or smuggled humans. Additionally, the 2001 financial crisis in Argentina increased the visibility of prostitutes, particularly of women that appeared to have been born in Argentina. With domestic prostitutes relabeled as sex trafficked victims, Argentine activists and policies have started to focus on both eliminating sex trafficking, and dealing with its implications. Scholars from a variety of fields have increasingly turned their attention to the issue of sex trafficking as the topic has become more prominent. This chapter first describes the phenomena of the newfound attention to sex trafficking, second demonstrates how the policies derived from this attention reflects radical feminist thought, third demonstrates how sex worker scholars have responded to these radical feminists, and finally illustrates how both of these perspectives conceive of prostitution as having a negative connotation. Such analysis serves a crucial function in illustrating the philosophical underpinnings of the two different activist camps in Argentina appealing to the image of the mother to change perception of individuals labeled as prostitutes.

The creation of a new conceptual category of human trafficking moved women labeled from one category into another. Jennifer Anne Mari Jones and Hana E. Brown

provides an example of such label changing by suggesting that until the mid 1990's legal systems conflated human trafficking with human smuggling.² While human smuggling involves moving persons with their consent across state borders illegally, human trafficking involves moving individuals without their consent across state borders illegally for the purpose of exploitation. Over time the legal definition of human trafficking has moved away from coercion serving as a necessary condition for trafficking. While Laura Agustín suggests that “category switching,” or the movement of an individual over time between different administrative categories and legal statuses, complicates data on migration, all of these authors point to the flexibility in reclassifying women into new categories, which has an impact on reporting and production of statistics that guide policy making.³

An international push to address human trafficking incentivized this reclassification worldwide. In the year 2000, the United States Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which stimulated worldwide attention towards sex trafficking. By releasing its annual Trafficking in Person (TIP) reports that evaluated how well world nations dealt with human trafficking the United States intended to influence nations' trafficking initiatives around the world. By tying particular ratings on the TIP report to United States foreign aid, many countries were incentivized to focus on human trafficking. Additionally, in 2000 the United Nations passed the Palermo

² Jennifer Anne Meri Jones and Hana E. Brown, “Contradictions and Complications: Trafficking Protections and Immigration Enforcement in Local Practice,” in *Human Trafficking Reconsidered: Rethinking the Problem, Envisioning New Solutions*, ed. Kimberly Kay Hoang and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2014), 81.

³ Laura María Agustín, *Sex at the Margins: Migration, Labour Markets and the Rescue Industry* (London: Zed Books, 2007), 17.

Protocol to coordinate international cooperation. Countries like Argentina signed onto this UN Protocol eventually formulating a legal framework that used the definition of trafficking established in the protocol, namely the capture, transport, or harboring of individuals for the purpose of exploitation.⁴ Individuals originally categorized as migrant workers, smuggled immigrants, and prostitutes began to be reclassified as victims of sex trafficking creating an appearance that sex trafficking served as a major, world-wide humanitarian problem.

Even within the human trafficking academic field some argue sex trafficking has been given implicit priority in attention. Alicia Peters suggests that even though TVPA gives equal weight under the law to victims of sex trafficking and other types of trafficking like labor trafficking and what is now called ‘modern day slavery,’ professionals draw on the distinction of sex and non-sex as a way to categorize victims and giving privileges to those in the sex category. Peters claims that law enforcement have played a pivotal role in perpetuating this privilege, especially in the United States. She quotes one law enforcement official in New York City who believes that cases in which women are migrating for work in prostitution are more important than the other cases.⁵

As much as the international movement against sex trafficking created the context for Argentina to develop new sex trafficking policies, domestic economic concerns also shaped activists’ interpretations of prostitution and sex trafficking. Desiring

⁴ Elena Reynaga, “La lucha contra la persecución del trabajo sexual como forma de lucha contra la trata,” in *Se trata de nosotras*, comp. Mariana Torres Cárdenas et al. (Lomas de Zamora: Sudestada, 2013), 79.

⁵ Alicia Peters, “Challenging the Sex/Labor Trafficking Dichotomy with Victim Experience,” in *Human Trafficking Reconsidered: Rethinking the Problem, Envisioning New Solutions*, ed. Kimberly Kay Hoang and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (New York: International Debate Education Association, 2014), 30-31.

to counteract hyperinflation inherited from the late seventies dictatorship, the Argentine government in the late 1980s enacted neoliberal economic policies to stabilize inflation.⁶ The immediate effects of neoliberal reform eliminated the problem of hyperinflation from the 1980s. The inflation rate declined steadily from the high inflation rate in 1989 to a low level in 1994. Economic growth came back to Argentina.

Yet such reforms came with a price. External impacts started to influence the Argentine economy in a greater fashion. Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler attribute this new growth to foreign investment rather than domestic investment.⁷ Argentina's foreign debt increased from 61.3 billion dollars to 139.3 billion dollars in 1998.⁸ By 1999 Argentina's gross foreign debt came to represent 32.3 percent of its Gross National Product.⁹

The creation of Mercado Común del Sur (MERCOSUR) in 1995 provides additional evidence of the increased influence by external economies on Argentina's economy. MERCOSUR promoted international market integration between South American nations. The impact drastically increased foreign trade especially between Latin America countries. Trade with Latin America (excluding Mexico) increased from 26 percent to 43 percent of total foreign trade in ten years. Inter-Mercosur trade increased five times.¹⁰ The changes of increased foreign trade and increased foreign debt suggest a

⁶ Alejandro Grimson and Gabriel Kessler, *On Argentina and the Southern Cone: Neoliberalism and National Imaginations* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 145.

⁷ Ibid., 71.

⁸ Miguel Teubal, "Rise and Collapse of Neoliberalism in Argentina: The Role of Economic Groups," *Journal of Developing Societies* 20, no. 3-4 (2004): 174, doi: 10.1177/0169796X04050957.

⁹ Grimson and Kessler, *On Argentina and the Southern Cone*, 71.

¹⁰ Ibid.

greater economic interdependence with other states' economies. These developments occurred around the same time that external economic crises had detrimental effects to Argentina's economy. Both the Mexican crisis in 1995 and the Asiatic crisis in 1998 caused capital flight from Argentina.¹¹ Grimson and Kessler reach the conclusion that such influences by foreign crisis contributed to the creation of the sharp recession beginning in 1998 and lasting until 2003.

The financial crisis appeared to increase participation in prostitution. Prostitutes on street corners noticed more competition and had to lower their prices. This increase in the number of prostitutes was attributed to the fact that more individuals were out of work or needed to supplement their low-paid work in other ways.¹² Additionally Jorgelina Sosa, the general secretary for AMMAR at the time, said that membership of her union, an organization that represents sex workers, increased from sixty in 1994 to seventeen hundred in 2004.¹³ With more prostitution, plus the international pressure to reclassify prostitutes as trafficking victims if they are exploited by another, combine to produce a situation with more potential for these prostitutes to fall into the category of victims of sex trafficking in Argentina (and elsewhere).

In addition to perceptually increasing the number of prostitutes, the financial crisis changed the perceived nature of some of these prostitutes themselves by suggesting foreign prostitutes were immigrating back to their country of origin. Grimson and Kessler note news reports in 2002 that immigrants were returning to their countries of origin. Politicians that ran on platforms of eliminating illegal immigration became silent on the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Jon Jeter, "Where the Street Seems the Only Way," *Washington Post* May 4, 2004.

¹³ Ibid.

issue.¹⁴ At the same time prostitution associated with migrant populations increased the visibility of domestic prostitutes. An *Economist* article reported on one person who took clients to upscale brothels in Buenos Aires who noticed a change in the expensive call girls. While before the financial crisis the call girls were all Brazilian, during the economic crisis many returned home. This person noticed Argentine women replaced these Brazilians.¹⁵

While immigration would eventually return to Argentina, attention towards domestic prostitution, especially as trafficked victims, started to grow. The United States Trafficking in Persons Report reflects the gradual shifts attention towards internal trafficking. While the 2004 TIP report expresses a growing concern about rural to urban trafficking, the initial 2004 TIP report up through the 2006 TIP report notes Argentina primarily as a destination country for sex workers. The 2007 TIP report labels Argentina as “source, transit and destination” for trafficking.¹⁶ This shift completed the turn of attention to internal trafficking. Sibila Camps reflects this view by suggesting that for the past fifteen years Argentina had not been a country of origin for sex trafficking but as a destination, particularly for Dominicans, Paraguayans, Bolivians, Peruvians, and Brazilians. She states stories of trafficked Argentines increased in the first years of the twenty-first century both domestically in Argentina and abroad in Spain.¹⁷ Thus both

¹⁴ Grimson and Kessler, *On Argentina and the Southern Cone*, 138.

¹⁵ “Prostitution Index,” Free Exchange, *The Economist*, March 7, 2007, http://www.economist.com/blogs/freeexchange/2007/03/prostitution_index.

¹⁶ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report* (Washington DC: Governmental Publishing Office, 2007), 54-55.

¹⁷ Sibila Camps, *La red: La trama oculta del caso Marita Verón*, (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2013), 236-39.

international attention to trafficking and increased attention to domestic sources of trafficking set the stage where Argentine anti-sex trafficking activists operate.

The policies embedded in the international attention to sex trafficking, namely the Palermo Protocol and the TVPA, influence sex trafficking policy around the world. These policies reflect a radical feminist perspective. The radical feminist perspective views prostitution as inherently oppressive since it requires viewing women as sexual objects. Additionally, radical feminists argue for the irrelevancy of consent when considering the morality of prostitution and the exploitation/objectification of women. Voluntary prostitution remains exploitative because patriarchy formulates the decision as a false choice.¹⁸ Scholar-activists like Kathleen Barry and Sheila Jeffreys expanded upon the radical feminist stance by applying its theoretical underpinnings to sex trafficking. Kathleen Barry makes little distinction between prostitution and sex trafficking. She claims the only difference between the two is that sex trafficking involves the crossing of international borders, finding ninety percent of street prostitution as controlled by pimps and exhibiting the same exploitative nature as its international counterpart.¹⁹ Sheila Jeffreys, in her work *The Industrial Vagina*, suggests that neoliberalism continued a history of subordinating women by commercializing the inherently exploitative practice of prostitution. Jeffreys engages in a discussion with those that view prostitution as

¹⁸ D. Kelly Weisberg, *Applications of Feminist Legal Theory to Women's Lives: Sex, Violence, Work, and Reproduction* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 193.

¹⁹ Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery: From Prostitution to Marriage The Landmark Study of All the Ways Women Are Sexually Enslaved* (New York: Avon Books, 1979), 7.

legitimate work by claiming that the term 'sex work' is merely a term used by neoliberals to justify exploitation that cannot be erased under a neoliberal economy.²⁰

Sex trafficking policies have tended to codify this radical feminist perspective. The Palermo Protocol resulted in the delegitimization of sex work as a potentially recognizable profession. According to the Protocol, prostitutes immigrating of their own free will could be categorized as trafficked and those who assisted them could be criminally liable. The 2012 modification to the national Argentina law that punished traffickers eliminated the requirement that trafficking must be nonconsensual, reflecting the existing international trend. Such a perspective suggests that even if prostitutes stated they willingly sold sex they could still be labeled as trafficking victims. This reflects the radical feminist perspective in that it advances the irrelevancy of the voluntary/involuntary distinction with regards to prostitution and fundamentally ignores a woman's ability to consent to sex work.

One criticism of these policies is their tendency to conflate sex trafficking, procuring, and sex work. Elena Reynaga recognizes this conflation and attempts to create distinctions between the three categories. She defines 'sex trafficking' through the Palermo Protocol as involving the "capture, transferal, and protection of sexual exploitation through violence, fraud, etc."²¹ The idea of 'procuring' is established as a practice of an individual economically exploiting another individual, which tends to be endemic to prostitution, both domestic and international. However the real interesting shift made in the definition is of 'sex worker.' Reynaga does not claim that sex work is

²⁰ Sheila Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 1.

²¹ Reynaga, "La lucha contra la persecución del trabajo sexual como forma de lucha contra la trata," 72.

strictly involuntary. She holds the position that sex work is as voluntary as an individual who works in low-paid construction work. It is rare that an individual's aspiration were to work at the low paying job, but due to immediate economic needs they take the job. Thus, she defines sex work as voluntary (as in not forced), yet undesirable and potentially exploitative. This allows her to incorporate the claim posited by AMMAR that many of the prostitutes sell sex as a means to pay for university and support their family.²² Reynaga thus falls under a camp of scholars that attempt to create a larger distinction between sex work and sex trafficking, believing that the story of the prostitute-always-as-exploited through non-voluntary work does not capture the complexity of the whole picture.

While sex worker activists like Elena Reynaga attempt to forge a middle ground that distinguishes between sex work and sex trafficking, other seek to fully reject the radical feminist analysis of prostitution that presumes all prostitution is exploitative and forced. This response has also culminated within the sex industry itself. Carol Leigh, the self-proclaimed creator of the term "sex work," exemplifies how discomfort with the radical feminists' portrayals of prostitution has fostered activism. She desired "to create an atmosphere of tolerance within and outside the women's movement for women working in the sex industry."²³ She started reading American feminist scholars like Betty Friedan in the 1970s. In the mid 1970s she participated in radical feminist activities such as Women Against Pornography march. Her involvement in this march left her feeling more solidarity with those who were depicted in the pornographic films than those

²² Ibid., 73.

²³ Carol Leigh, "Inventing Sex Work," in *Whores and Other Feminists*, ed. Jill Nagel (London: Routledge, 1997), 226.

rallying against it. She felt “protective of her naked sisters.” By the late 1970s Leigh recalled facing low self-esteem after a break up, a difficult financial situation, and fantasies of becoming a prostitute. One day she finally asked, “Why not?” and started to work at a massage parlor. Her entry into sex work caused her to discover a stark contrast between feminist accounts of prostitution and a different reality she and her coworkers participated in. The downtrodden oppressed women described by the feminists did not match the reality of the many strong, independent-minded sex workers she met. She made the realization that even among women’s groups the voices for those engaged in contractual exchange for sex for survival were not heard, and she made it her mission to create a space for where all women from all walks of life, even those currently classified as “bad” women, could tell their stories.²⁴

Writing in the early 1990s, Gail Peterson seconded Leigh’s belief that radical feminists do not capture the reality of the sex worker experience. She argues that the sex work industry perceive prostitution differently from those outside the industry. Pheterson suggests that prostitutes do not believe their role as inherently dishonorable, but rather make a distinction between a good prostitute and a bad prostitute. Some prostitutes define the good prostitute as one who does fair business, stays off drugs and alcohol while working, and warns other prostitutes about unreliable customers. While another prostitute is noted as defining a good prostitute as one who gets as much money as possible regardless of customer satisfaction. Overall for Pheterson the dichotomy

²⁴ Ibid., 227-228.

between a good prostitute and a bad prostitute “was not attached to sex-work per se, but a lack of competence and integrity in one’s work.”²⁵

Additionally Pheterson describes feminist and socialist movements as particularly hypocritical. On one hand the movements desire worker and women’s rights, yet on the other hand, many of these activists refuse to recognize prostitution as a form of labor and instead only frame it as a form of exploitation (ironically ignoring the fact that many forms of labor are inherently exploitative). She argues that prostitutes are not allowed to be an ally in their own liberation. They are framed either “as a casualty of the system or of a collaborator with the system.”²⁶ In other words, they either are exploited by patriarchy or contribute to patriarchy. Within this framework, prostitutes cannot use their status as sex workers to challenge patriarchy because radical feminists claim they are burdened by false consciousness.²⁷

Others have suggested that the radical feminist anti-sex trafficking initiatives have been particularly detrimental to prostitutes. Laura Agustín holds that the re-categorization of many women into the status of victims of trafficking does not account for their whole story. She suggests that migrant women who sell sex lose their worker status and become victims of sex trafficking. This results in erasure of the political question of improving the migrant work environment. Rather than discuss how to prevent exploitation within the sex industry, the question becomes how to remove the poor female trafficking victim from the sex industry. For Agustín, the discourses that emphasize help for the victim of sex trafficking without further investigating the full choices migrant women face forces

²⁵ Gail Pheterson, “The Whore Stigma: Female Dishonor and Male Unworthiness,” *Social Text*, no. 37 (Winter 1993): 47, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/466259>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

²⁷ Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery*, 12.

the prostitute in a state of exclusion.²⁸ Attempts to help through narratives of ‘rescue’ result in disciplinary actions placing the ‘rescued’ in locations where they could be “watched, controlled, and trained in obedience.”²⁹ Individuals who share Agustín’s critique focus on how sex trafficking discourses that frame the prostitute as a helpless victim serve to exclude those who sell sex, and how these narratives frequently produce policies that criminalize sex workers while building the power of the state.

Penelope Saunders expands upon Agustín’s argument by explaining that the application of anti-trafficking rhetoric has served critical in stifling sex worker rights initiatives. These programs include peer education, documentation of violence towards sex workers, and anti-discrimination campaigns.³⁰ Saunders claims that the clout of anti-trafficking campaigns has outweighed those of sex worker initiatives.³¹ Prostitution becomes equated with violence, in which the policy to banning prostitution practices becomes more appealing than providing a healthy work environment for prostitutes, all while ignoring, or silencing, the voices of sex workers themselves.

The prostitute has a long history of exclusion. In her well-known 1984 essay “Thinking Sex,” Gayle Rubin contends prostitutes represent a marginalized portion of society within both the United States and England. She asserts laws and social norms established in the nineteenth century served as the foundation for punitive policies towards prostitutes throughout the twentieth century. She stresses that many sex laws

²⁸ Agustín, *Sex at the Margins*, 192.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Penelope Saunders, “Traffic Violations: Determining the Meaning of Violence in Sexual Trafficking Versus Sex Work,” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 20, no. 3 (March 2005): 354, doi: 10.1177/0886260504272509.

³¹ Ibid., 352.

currently on the books derive from nineteenth century moral crusades.³² For Rubin this time period reflected a metamorphosis where prostitution changed from a temporary occupation to a more permanent status. Prostitutes who had been part of the general working class population became more isolated as part of an outcast group.³³ She claims that the sex industry was only able to operate within legal loopholes due to the criminalization and punitive measures by police. Rubin suggests that this forced sex workers to focus on staying out of jail rather than providing themselves better working conditions.³⁴ Thus, for Rubin, conceptualizing the prostitute as worthy of punishment rather than protection comes from historical trends reflected in both laws and social norms. Rubin utilizes examples from the United States and England.

Comparing and contrasting Rubin's work to Donna Guy's work on the history of prostitution in Argentina provides insight with regards to how applicable Rubin's theory is to Argentina. Guy and Rubin's analysis align in terms of the idea that prostitutes were relegated to a particular class of exclusion. Guy posits, "regulations forcing female prostitutes to live in particular lodgings and submit to medical examinations before they could work violated basic constitutional precepts."³⁵ However Guy's analysis over the change in policy over time does not completely align with Rubin's belief that prostitution policy stemmed from the nineteenth century. Guy found prostitution policy to be shaped

³² Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*, ed. Carole S. Vance (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984) reprinted in *Culture Society and Sexuality: A Reader* 2nd ed., ed. Richard Parker and Peter Aggleton, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 151.

³³ Ibid., 164.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Donna J. Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires: Prostitution, Family, and Nation in Argentina* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 2.

by “relations of gender and class to concepts of citizenship, and policies tended to change over time.”³⁶ For Guy, as the concept of class changed in Argentina, so did efforts to control prostitutes. The idea that efforts to control prostitution changed along with conceptions of class suggests a difference from Rubin’s assertion that policies necessarily stemmed from the past legislation given that a changing of categorizing class contributed to shifts in the types of policies controlling prostitution in Argentina. However, while the policies tended to change, the purpose of prostitution policies appears to have functioned the same way in Argentina. Whether prohibition or regulation of prostitution, the purpose of the policies and norms were to exert social control over women. Thus Rubin’s argument can still carry some weight given the fact that while the policies may have been vastly different, the underlying results changed little—both resulting in the stigmatization of prostitutes. Pheterson explains how prostitutes have been subject to punitive state action based on their status of sex workers. Examples include the punishment for advertising and soliciting sex publicly, renting a room for the purpose of running a sex business, accepting gifts from a prostitute and raising a child a context of prostitution being defined as unfit parenting.³⁷ Similarly, Rubin shows a particular connection to anti-obscenity laws and the stigmatization of prostitution. These types of statutes “make almost all sexual commerce illegal.”³⁸ Such statutes legally frowned upon the idea of money exchanging hands for sex. Rubin notes that many in the sex industry only work

³⁶ Ibid., 3.

³⁷ Pheterson, “The Whore Stigma,” 42-3.

³⁸ Rubin, “Thinking Sex,” 166.

within legal loopholes (or blind spots) and this vulnerability subjects them to a greater willingness to suffer from bad working conditions.³⁹

Anti-obsenity laws exist within Argentina as well. In 2011 President Cristina Kirschner made an executive order to prohibit all public listings of massage parlors and sexual services. The actual implementation of the law reflects the sex industry's attempt to operate outside the law. In Buenos Aires, illegal small advertisements for sex workers are frequently posted along the streets (See Figure 1).⁴⁰

Pheterson's analysis remains trenchant because it seeks to explain how society and government frame prostitutes as unworthy of protection. She contends that discursively, socially, and legally, prostitution is associated with dishonor (shame). For Pheterson, fields such as psychology and progressive activism have not been immune to this trend of associating prostitutes with dishonor. While she does not specifically talk about Argentina, many of the arguments she puts forth can apply to Argentina. For instance, Argentina's history of regulating prostitution resembles the types of policies that Pheterson indicts. Thus Pheterson serves as a good background to understand why the prostitute seeks to reframe their identity, to cast off "the whore stigma."

Regarding the terminology and discourses of prostitution, Pheterson claims the definition of prostitute presumes a loss of honor.⁴¹ She claims that the prostitute is literally defined as an individual selling her honor for an unworthy doing, particularly sexual intercourse. Carol Leigh also makes note of the vocabulary used to describe

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Jess Cotton, "The Marita Effect: Documenting Human Trafficking in Argentina," *Argentina Independent*, March 14, 2012, <http://www.argentinaindependent.com/currentaffairs/the-marita-effect-documenting-human-trafficking-in-argentina/>.

⁴¹ Pheterson, "The Whore Stigma," 42.

prostitutes and porn models contained centuries of slurs. She claims the word “prostitute” was already tarnished. The word acts as “euphemism, like lady of night.” The term “prostitute” originally did not refer to the business of selling sexual services rather it means to offer “publically.” She claimed that the term serves to veil the shameful activity.⁴² Even the words used to describe prostitution have a historical association with dishonor. Teri Goodson notes another impact of the discursive and social exclusion of sex workers. She claims the labeling of prostitutes as whores has made it appear as if their way of living is unacceptable and thus causes these individuals to be less likely to participate in the political sphere.⁴³ Thus the social exclusion merely amplifies the civic exclusion. A prostitute disempowered by society to speak for their rights becomes less likely to fight against law that negatively targets them.

For sex worker rights activists, the solution to allow for the empowerment of prostitutes came in the form of creating the term “sex work.” Leigh believed a new term needed to be used instead of “prostitution” or, the even more awkward and problematic, “sex use.”⁴⁴ Sex work came about out of changing the name of a workshop for prostitutes in 1979 or 1980. Initially entitled “Sex Use Industry,” Leigh became uncomfortable and embarrassed because she believed the title obscured her role as an actor by being described as someone used (linguistically transforming her into an object). She suggested “Sex Work Industry” as an alternative title at the beginning of the workshop, and the title stuck with her for the rest of her political activism.⁴⁵ The use of

⁴² Leigh, “Inventing Sex Work,” 229.

⁴³ Teri Goodson, “A Prostitute Joins NOW,” in *Whores and Other Feminists*, ed. Jill Nagel (London: Routledge, 1997), 249.

⁴⁴ Leigh, “Inventing Sex Work,” 229.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 230.

the term “sex work” thus discarded the associations with victimhood and shame that so bound the terms “prostitution” and “whore” and instead encouraged seeing prostitution as a form of labor.

The concern that the label of prostitute entails exclusion from social and political consideration worry more than just sex worker rights activists. Radical feminist Margaret A. Baldwin suggests when a woman is determined to be a prostitute she is an object of censure. For Baldwin this means that women who are subject to violence and wish legal redress must move away from their label as a prostitute.⁴⁶

Thus both the radical feminist perspective and the sex worker rights perspective find agreement that the label of prostitute comes with exclusion. While the radical feminist perspective believes the act of prostitution itself should be avoided, the sex workers rights perspective wishes to improve perceptions regarding the act of prostitution. A similar agreement of a label of a prostitute resulting in exclusion occurs within the debates about prostitution, trafficking, and motherhood in contemporary Argentina, with both Trimarco and AMMAR. Prostitutes exist as a portion of society devoid of protection in Argentina. Martin Sanguinetti, a lawyer in Buenos Aires with experience with cases involving murdered sex workers, claims, “ Nobody cares about them, they’re a marginal group. And that’s maybe a reason why these crimes are not solved.”⁴⁷ To push back against this marginalization, Trimarco moves away from categorizing the women as prostitutes and labels them as daughters and sex trafficking victims. AMMAR too moves away from the label of prostitute instead appealing to

⁴⁶ Weisberg, *Applications of Feminist Legal Theory*, 195.

⁴⁷ Deborah Bonello, “Argentina Sex Workers go Back to School,” *BBC News*, December 13, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/4510942.stm>.

prostitutes as mothers first. Both utilize motherhood as a means to re-categorize prostitutes as worthy of protection.

This thesis argues a glorification of motherhood derived in history of *marianismo* has served as both a rhetorical tool and a primary motivator for activists attempting to shape sex trafficking policy in Argentina. Chapter 2 demonstrates how Argentina's embracement of the cultural value of *marianismo* has led motherhood to serve as both a viable persuasive tactic and a nexus of perseverance for both the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo, and Susana Trimarco. Chapter 3 illustrates how the impacts of Trimarco's activism and the new found attention to sex trafficking has caused sex workers in AMMAR to speak out against recent sex trafficking policy changes with similar motherly motivation and rhetoric. This thesis then concludes with the limited utility of this motherly rhetoric despite its contribution in creating policies that have overall impacted Argentina's response to sex trafficking.

Such claims are warranted through analysis of journalistic accounts regarding the activism of both Susana Trimarco and AMMAR. These accounts were found online from international newspapers, Argentine national newspapers, books acquired from bookstores in Buenos Aires, and press releases from Argentine activist organizations. Conversations and observations during a summer internship with a Buenos Aires human rights organization specializing in finding missing children and victims of sex trafficking served as partial inspiration for the ideas presented throughout the thesis. Pictures I acquired through this trip serve as the visual aids presented in the research.

Chapter 2. TRIMARCO, MADRES, AND MOTHERHOOD

On a fateful day in April 2002 Marita Verón, age 23, was allegedly seen beaten and dragged by the hair into a car after leaving for a medical appointment. This day would be the last day that Susana Trimarco would see her child, and the first day that she would begin her activism. Frustrated with the incompetent investigation hindered by corrupt judges, corrupt police officers, and local mafia, Trimarco started her own search for her daughter Marita. Obtaining the names of pimps and madams from police files she gained entry to brothels by disguising herself as a madam looking to procure prostitutes. Her investigation led her all the way to Spain where it was believed that Verón had been transported. She has yet to find her missing daughter but her search has yielded other results. According to Trimarco, through her investigation many of the women in the brothels she interviewed begged Trimarco to take them with her. Trimarco and the Fundación María de los Ángeles, a prostitute rescue organization, would frequently oblige. Trimarco claims that she and this NGO she formed in 2007 would provide guardianship of 129 former sex slaves by 2014. This of course was not the only result of her search.

Through her investigation Trimarco accumulated evidence to prosecute thirteen suspected traffickers. The court case held in December 2012 outraged the Argentina public when all thirteen defendants were acquitted due to lack of evidence. The 600-page verdict conceded that a network of sex trafficking existed in Argentina yet concluded not enough evidence existed to prosecute the indicted. Protests broke out in the streets and even President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner called Trimarco to announce that she

would sponsor a reform bill to “democratize” Argentina’s judicial system. In December 2013 a higher court overturned the previous decision and the traffickers were sent to prison.⁴⁸

This story of Susana Trimarco and her search for her missing daughter Marita Verón pulls upon the legacy of the Madres de la Plaza del Mayo. These mothers bravely protested the Argentine military dictatorship that lasted throughout the 1970’s ending in 1983. During this military dictatorship hundreds of citizens started to disappear. Attempting to eliminate subversive elements they believed to be a threat to national security, the military junta kidnapped prostitutes, homosexuals, and political dissidents. Mothers and Grandmothers of the disappeared, in a desperate attempt to find anything about their missing children, began protesting the government at the Plaza del Mayo (see Figure 2). This square was initially a place of executions for the conquering Spaniards. Later on May 25, 1813, after torture was outlawed, the area became a place where the torture devices were burned. From that day forward the plaza became a magnet for protests and marches. The Madres added their own protest to the legacy in April 1977 when fourteen mothers congregated in the plaza demanding information about their missing children. While fallout from the Falkland Wars is primarily attributed to the fall of the dictatorship, the Madres became iconic symbols for social justice and human rights in Argentina.

Trimarco, too, has become an iconic symbol for social justice and human rights in Argentina, particular within the realm of trafficking victim rights. However the

⁴⁸ Jonathan Gilbert, “A Desperate Mother’s Search Leads to a Fight Against Sex Trafficking,” *New York Times*, May 23, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/24/world/americas/a-mothers-search-in-argentina-leads-to-a-fight-against-sex-trafficking.html?_r=0.

similarities do not stop there. Trimarco echoes both the motivation and the rhetorical tactics employed earlier by the Madres. Additionally, both Trimarco and the Madres contributed to significant changes in the political landscape. It is likely that the Madres demonstrated the viability of utilizing the rhetoric of motherhood as tool for political change. Trimarco later utilized this tool to assist in changing the politics surrounding sex trafficking and prostitution in Argentina.

The appeal to a motherhood as a reason for political action likely derives from *marianismo*. According to Evelyn Stevens, “Taking its cue from the worship of Mary, *marianismo* pictures its subjects as semi-divine, morally superior and stronger than men.”⁴⁹ She suggests this moral superiority comes from the ability to survive suffering inflicted by men. Thus, “women strive not to avoid suffering but to make known their suffering.”⁵⁰ Stevens claims that motherhood plays pivotal component of acquiring sainthood for these women. Childbirth serves as the epitome of self-sacrifice and suffering for these mothers. The pain of childbirth is the ultimate testament to a *marianismo* nature under which one suffers for the sake of others. *Marianismo* therefore glorifies the self-sacrificing mother to almost a saintly status.

Argentina elevated a particular woman through its valuation of *marianismo*. Although childless, Eva Perón elevated to Madonna status by positioning her husband’s constituents as her own children. J.M. Taylor contends that enthusiasm for Eva Perón “not only assumes a vaguely religious nature, but also takes the form of an irrational

⁴⁹ Evelyn P. Stevens, “Machismo and Marianismo,” *Society* 10, no. 6 (Sept-Oct 1973): 62, doi: 10.1007/BF02695282.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

mystic reverence for a saint or modonna.”⁵¹ Eva made political strides for women by channeling marianismo’s exaltation of the mother’s devotion to the family. Eva declared women needed political representation because they had a different worldview based of the love of the family.⁵² This served as a justification for women suffrage that she and her husband President Juan Perón passed on September 17, 1947. While some feminists saw suffrage as a means to defy traditional gender roles, Eva prioritized the preservation of women’s role as a homemaker. She criticized the feminist movement for attempting to become men rather than to reclaim womenhood.⁵³ For her the home served as the primary focus for the feminist movement. She claimed women “were born to make homes” and believes that mothers, rather than men or “masculine women”, serve as the only group capable of restoring Argentina’s moral values.⁵⁴ Even some of her political goals revolved around securing government assistance to preserve a mother’s ability care for her family with undivided attention. One of her ideal policies involved “fixing a small monthly allowance for every women who gets married.”⁵⁵ For Eva, this compensation would serve as means to save women “from the delinquency and prostitution which are the fruits of their economic slavery.”⁵⁶

⁵¹ J.M Taylor, *“Eva Perón: The Myths of a Woman”* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 1.

⁵² Colleen McCormack, “The Madres de Plaza de Mayo: Motherhood’s Search for Answers During The Dirty War in Argentina,” *Northwest Passages* 1, no.1 (2014): 115,
<http://pilotscholars.up.edu/nwpassages/vol1/iss1/7> <http://pilotscholars.up.edu/nwpassages/vol1/iss1/7>

⁵³ Eva Perón, *La razón de mi vida*, Juan Domingo Peron, 1953, trans. E. Cherry as *Evita by Evita: Eva Duarte Perón Tells Her Own Story* (London: Proteus Books, 1978), 180.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 184-186.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 186.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 187.

This last point serves as one of the shortfalls of *marianismo* as a rhetorical tool to integrate women into the public sphere. As Colleen McCormick suggests, by giving economic compensation to allow women to stay in the household, such a policy would do nothing to expand women's participation outside of the home.⁵⁷ By prioritizing the role of the home for women, traditional gender roles are glorified. Women can only access the male-dominated political realm if their presence somehow serves the family. While justifying the actions based on preserving the family might allow women to influence policy, it does not legitimize them as political actors. Despite having heavy influence with creating women's suffrage in Argentina and leading a political revolt to reestablish her husband's power, "Argentines have explicitly described Evita's leadership not as political, but as spiritual, moral or religious." So while "Eva Perón was arguably the most powerful woman in the world," her leadership did not perceptually leak into the public sphere.⁵⁸

Diane Taylor endorses this view that Eva's politics maintained women in the private sphere. Eva herself was framed as in the shadow of her husband to serve his needs. For Taylor it was the political actions of the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo that moved women into a visible public role in Argentina. These mothers embraced *marianismo* and the homemaker role allowing them to appear to follow the cultural norm that glorified motherhood. Taylor contends they "were very much the kind of women that Evita had appealed to in her speeches addressed to those who were 'born for the home,'

⁵⁷ McCormick, "The Madres de Plaza de Mayo," 116.

⁵⁸ J. M. Taylor, *Eva Perón: The Myths of a Woman*, 11.

those who accepted their “profession as women.”⁵⁹ Additionally, appeals to the Virgin Mary served instrumental in making their activism acceptable. For Taylor, the Madres “tried to overcome the limitations intrinsic to the role of motherhood by modeling themselves on the Virgin Mary.”⁶⁰ Taylor seems to suggest that the Madres utilized *marianismo* to move an invisible political status of women into a visible one.

Additionally, this utilization of *marianismo* shielded the women from violence. Valeria Fabj argues that “the apolitical nature of *marianismo* makes women appear less threatening to the government” and that “popular feelings about the role of motherhood made it difficult to justify the arrest of middle-aged women.”⁶¹ Marysa Navarro claims that a society that “glorified motherhood and exalted women as domestic beings” granted immunity to the mothers as defined as “subversives” and thus subjects of disappearances, especially during the first year of the Proceso.⁶² Navarro further suggests that these women knowingly utilized their social status as a shield when protesting. She claims that their decision to march alone points to this acknowledgment that their role as mothers allowed them to protest. She quotes the mothers as telling men to leave in order insure that the police will not dare to intervene.⁶³ Taylor also echoes this claim by stating that motherhood “offered them they believed, a certain protection against retribution – for a

⁵⁹ Diana Taylor *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War"* (Duke University Press, 1997), 197.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Valeria Fabj, “Motherhood as Political Voice: The Rhetoric of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo,” *Communication Studies* 44 (Spring 1993): 7.

⁶² Marysa Navarro, “The Personal Is Political: Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo,” in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin America Social Movements* 2nd ed., ed. Susan Eckstein (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 257.

⁶³ Ibid.

military that sustains itself on Christian and family values could hardly attack a group of defenseless mothers inquiring about their missing children”⁶⁴

The fathers of the disappeared recognized the proverbial shield of motherhood that provided these women the ability to protest. Santiago Mellibosvky, a father who marches every Thursday with the Madres for the last fifteen year, contends, “since the father was the family’s provider, he would be more of a ‘watchdog’ ... some fathers went too, but remained outside in order to witness, and testify if anything should happen. We knew that if we were to occupy the Plaza, they’d mow us down.”⁶⁵ It thus appears that *marianismo* not only shaped the mothers’ participation, but the father’s participation as well.

Additionally one must notice the appeal to the father as a watchdog for the family. This appeal directly reflects a *machismo* cultural belief. A component of this *machismo* culture entails a necessity for male family members to make female members completely submissive to them in exchange for protection.⁶⁶ For scholar Evelyn P. Stevens, *marianismo* has a symbiotic relationship with *machismo*. She claims, “At the core of machista behavior...there is the obstinate unshakable, obsessive purpose of proving by all available means that one is free with respect to the woman and that she is absolutely submissive to him.”⁶⁷ Weathering male infidelity and aggression derived from this *machismo* culture provides women the means to claim their moral superior nature over

⁶⁴ Taylor *Disappearing Acts*, 195.

⁶⁵ Marguerite Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 94.

⁶⁶ Stevens “Machismo and Marianismo,” 63.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

men. Through a clear delineation of gender roles, *marianismo* requires the abuses of *machismo*.

It appears that the male tendency for aggression derived in *machismo* has prevented men from having the willpower to participate in the protests against the regime as fervently as mothers. Santiago Mellibosvky said that fathers “haven’t held up. Many fathers have died, committed suicide. Fathers are pathetic, you see. The violence we feel towards the guilty ones we turn on ourselves. In Argentina, the guilty remain faceless. So when we look in the mirror, we want to draw blood.”⁶⁸ For Santiago, a male tendency to react with aggression, demonstrates why some males have killed themselves and pulled away from the public sphere.

These differences in gender roles brought about by *marianismo* and *machismo* has influenced activism against the Argentine dictatorship by creating higher visibility for mother activism than father activism. While the disappearance of a child generally resulted in both parents searching for information, Navarro notes that the fathers were quicker to accept that their child would not be found much more readily than the mothers. Mothers were much more willing than fathers to face off against the military junta if it meant more information on their child. Navarro notes that while the anguish of a missing child affected every family member, the mothers were unrivaled in their militancy in finding answers.⁶⁹

With the Trimarco case similar gender norms set the stage for less involvement from the male family members. When asked why he had not been as involved with the

⁶⁸ Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror*, 94.

⁶⁹ Navarro, “The Personal Is Political,” 256.

trial David Catalan, Marita Verón's partner, claimed he had to work in order to continue to provide for his family. Daniel Verón, Susana Trimarco's husband and the father of Marita Verón, also was devastated by disappearance of his child. He noted that only seeing his granddaughter brought him happiness in the world after the disappearance. Trimarco's husband played a crucial role of uncovering the association of the traffickers with his daughter, yet a premature death by a heart attack prevented him from furthering his investigation. By the time the limelight reach Trimarco, her husband was already dead.

Some may speculate that stress, and the turning suffering from his daughter's disappearance inward contributed to the cause of the heart attack. Scott C. Johnson from *Newsweek* reported on October 29, 2012 that "Daniel, who had fought so hard to find Marita, succumbed to depression and, eventually, to death. 'I don't want to live anymore,' he told Trimarco toward the end of his life. 'I don't want to live without Marita.'" Machismo values that position the father as the provider and fail to provide a release valve for these suffering fathers thus likely contributed to the lack of attention to father activism.

While *machismo* limited the appearance of father activism, *marianismo* elevated the appearance of mother activism. The cultural norm of *marianismo* served as a motivational force for mothers to do everything in their power to find their children. As Susan Eckstein states, "in Latin America where motherhood is glorified and women are exalted as domestic being —as reflected in Marianismo... women feel a particularly

strong sense of loss when their children ‘disappear.’”⁷⁰ Reflecting this view, Marysa Navarro claims, “the kidnappings were brutal assaults on women, against their role as mothers.”⁷¹ Losing their children mean their role as a mother had lost meaning. These mothers had dedicated so much attention in the growth by nursing them and educating them that they would do the impossible for their children. Navarro suggests that the relentlessness in pursuing their children was not “out of character, but a coherent expression of their socialization, of their acceptance of the dominant sexual divisions of labor.”⁷² Therefore, the fact that Hebe de Bonafini, the first president of the Madres, “was brought up to be a housewife” helped contribute to the relentless search and effective political protest of the Madres.⁷³

Trimarco similarly fervently persists in her political actions, reflecting the explanation on why the Madres persevered in their search for their missing children. Trimarco faced similar dangers to those the Madres encountered. While the Madres persisted in their relentless search for their children despite threats by the government, Trimarco persisted with her activism despite threats by gang members. Twice she has escaped from being run over, and once she even had her house set on fire by flaming rags drenched in kerosene. When asked why she perseveres she responded with, “The desperation of a mother blinds you. It makes you fearless.”⁷⁴ Trimarco thus appeals to her

⁷⁰ Susan Eckstein, “Power and Popular Protest in Latin America” in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin America Social Movements* 2nd ed., ed. Susan Eckstein (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 26.

⁷¹ Navarro, “The Personal Is Political,” 256.

⁷² Ibid., 256-7.

⁷³ Ibid., 253.

⁷⁴ Gilbert “A Desperate Mother’s Search Leads to a Fight Against Sex Trafficking.”

role as a mother to suggest why she does not back down despite threats to her safety and life.

For Trimarco, it is the motivation of a mother that led her to her other accomplishments including the punishment of traffickers and the rescuing of other types of victims. Trimarco frames the trial as a means to acquire justice for her daughter, and a possible avenue to find more information regarding her whereabouts. Trimarco elevates finding her daughter as her primary objective. With regards to the trial of the traffickers she even stated, “We are not here to see who wins, but to find my daughter.”⁷⁵ Trimarco expressed she “is convinced that they know what happened with my daughter” and that she was waiting to scream, “Where is Marita” to the traffickers.⁷⁶ Thus suggesting that Trimarco viewed putting the traffickers on trial as means to find more information about her daughter, rather than assessing the trial as a way to call for greater punishments of sex traffickers more broadly.

The result of the trial did not end with her finding her daughter. When the retrial resulted in the punishment of the traffickers, Trimarco stated, “I did not find Marita, but here justice was served.”⁷⁷ While Trimarco did not meet her primary objective, she saw the trial as having a positive result. This positive result entailed finding justice for her daughter. Trimarco claims that the punishment served as “a little peace for [her]

⁷⁵ “Trimarco: “ Acá no estamos para ver quién gana, sino para encontrar a mi hija,” *La Nación*, February 15, 2012, <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1448915-susana-trimarco-relatara-su-calvario-tras-la-desaparicion-de-su-hija>.

⁷⁶ “Susana Trimarco, tras el fallo: ‘A Marita no la encontré pero acá se hizo justicia,’” *La Nación*, April 8, 2014. <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1679154-susana-trimarco-tras-el-fallo-a-marita-no-la-encontre-pero-aca-se-hizo-justicia>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

daughter.”⁷⁸ Such a belief suggests Trimarco considers the trafficker’s punishment as a means to respect her daughter’s memory. Thus the primary motivation for the trial that brought widespread attention to sex trafficking in Argentina derived from desires rooted in motherly concern. Concern for her daughter also influenced another component of her activism that she is known for, namely the rescue of exploited prostitutes in brothels. Trimarco stated she “left to find Marita and encountered them. Each one is a distinct motivation to move forward with the search.”⁷⁹ Rescuing the girls is how Trimarco eases the pain of not having her daughter. Thus the organization that Trimarco founded to protect victims of sex trafficking, and the subsequent government grants for such initiatives, derives from a search for her daughter.⁸⁰

Both Trimarco and the Madres’ activism appealed to *marianismo* in order to rehumanize their children. During the dictatorship, young people in Buenos Aires were the main population to disappear. The prostitutes, homosexuals, and political activists that disappeared during the dictatorship were labeled as subversive by the government. Those who disappeared became dehumanized. Mathilde Mellibosvky, a mother of a disappeared child responding to a question regarding words she no longer uses in which she states “Parsley. That’s what they called our children. Parsley is so abundant here, so cheap, greengrocers traditionally give it away. No, I always tell them, no. I won’t say it, I won’t have it. That’s how they thought of our children—cheap little leaves made for

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Fabiana Scherer, “Vamos a encontrarla,” *La Nación*, October 7, 2012, <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1514738-vamos-a-encontrarla>.

⁸⁰ “El gobierno le cedió a Susana Trimarco un inmueble de cuatro hectáreas en Tucumán,” *La Nación*, October 9, 2014, <http://www.lanacion.com.ar/1734319-el-gobierno-le-cedio-a-susana-trimarco-un-inmuble-de-cuatro-hectareas-en-tucuman>.

throwing away.”⁸¹ Such an example demonstrates two key notions. First, it demonstrates how those who disappeared were dehumanized by the dictatorship, and second, it demonstrates the resistance of the mothers to accept this dehumanization of their children. Instead these women attempted to remind the government of the human nature of the disappeared. The Madres provided a counter narrative that framed these disappeared as sons and daughters. The Madres recast individuals labeled as harmful to the state as critical to the family.

The Madres’ attempt to reframe their children as worthy of state protection consisted of reminding both themselves and the state of the memory of the disappeared child. Karen A. Foss and Kathy L. Domenici argue that the mothers utilized the memory of their children to haunt the state for answers with regards to their disappearances.⁸² The headscarves the mothers wore and the silhouettes of their children became synecdoches of the Madres movement as a whole. The headscarves originally used to differentiate the mothers from the crowd were originally diapers from their missing child. These diapers would usually have the name of the disappeared embroidered on the diaper. Even just the outlines of these headscarves became associated with the Madres. These diapers suggest these are not just missing persons, but someone’s missing child. Such symbolism demonstrates how motherhood developed as tool to reframe subversive individuals.

Additionally, the mothers carried pictures of their children to protests to give a face to those who disappeared. Santiago Mellibovsky who conceived of the idea of hanging up pictures of faces of the disappeared in the House of the Madres of the Plaza

⁸¹ Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror*, 49.

⁸² Karen A. Foss and Kathy L. Domenici, “Haunting Argentina: Synecdoche in the Protests of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87, no. 3 (August 2001): 240.

de Mayo (located near Congress) demonstrates the power these images hold. “Dates and names are like things that float way from me; before I know it, they’re over the horizon. Images are different. Once I’ve seen it, a face or an image is with me forever.”⁸³ Images of the disappeared have a power over dates and names through their ability to stay ingrained with the individual. Even for those protesting, such as Mellibovsky, the pictures serve the purpose of preserving a memory of an individual forgotten by the state.⁸⁴ This practice spread to other provinces and cities. An hour away in the capital of the Buenos Aires Province, La Plata, the national University’s School of Architecture and Urban Planning held a competition for the design of the first public memorial for the disappeared, with the winners announced November 3, 1994. According to one of the competition coordinators, Daniel Betti, the walls surrounding the winning art installation were covered with photographs of the disappeared carefully labeled with dates and names. For Betti the purpose of the pictures was to “represent [the disappeared] as specific, fully identified human beings. To take them out of the mythical realm of *desaparecidos*, and plant them firmly in reality, within the embrace of human history.”⁸⁵ These pictures thus serve to humanize disappeared individuals previously neglected by the state. This practice has caught on and we see other similar memorials in places like Córdoba (Figure 3).

By reframing those who worked in brothels as innocent daughters, Trimarco applied this *Madre* counternarrative to her call for the protection of sex trafficking victims. Trimarco’s story of her kidnapped child sold into sex slavery followed the well-

⁸³ Feitlowitz, *A Lexicon of Terror*, 94.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 179-80.

established narrative that many of those involved in sex work are not doing so willingly. Soledad Valejos, in her biography of Trimarco, demonstrates how Trimarco's activism involved reconceptualizing those involved in prostitution. One individual whom could not understand why Trimarco would fight so valiantly for the women in brothels defended their viewpoint by saying "son putas," or they are whores. In other words, the very nature of them being involved in prostitution means they do not deserve our concern. Trimarco challenged this viewpoint by saying, "no son putas, son chicas que fueron victimas," or in English, "They are not whores, they are girls that were victims."⁸⁶ Trimarco's position and activism thus revolves around redefining the prostitute undeserving of state protection (socially and politically excluded) as victims in need of help.

Trimarco's campaign to reconceptualize her daughter (and women like her) as deserving of state protection intersects with the appearance of corruption within Argentina with regards to sex trafficking. In 2007 a brothel in Chubut province was found to pay bribes to municipal officials. The corruption and collusion of local and provincial governments were found by the State Department of the United States in 2007.⁸⁷ The 2007 TIP report by the State Department of the United States suggested that an "overtaxed criminal justice system also slows down the government's efforts to prosecute human traffickers." The TIP report also published credible accounts of local law enforcement intimidated or offered bribes to witnesses to change their testimony in

⁸⁶ Soledad Vallejos, *Trimarco: La mujer que lucha por todas las mujeres* (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, 2013), Kindle edition, chap. 5.

⁸⁷ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, (June 2007), 54-55

one particular trafficking case.⁸⁸ In the context of the Marita Verón trial the traffickers were seen in a picture with the ex-president causing suspicion of further corruption at high levels of the Argentine government.⁸⁹ Such charges of corruption highlight a government failure to give protection those trafficked within brothels. Thus further demonstrating a need for Trimarco to garner sympathy for her daughter.

Trimarco utilized the memory of Marita Verón as a motivator for political reform in a similar fashion to how Foss and Domenici suggest the Madres utilized the memory of their missing children as a rhetorical tool to influence government policy and hold the government accountable for lapses in justice. While the Madres carried pictures and silhouettes of their missing children, Trimarco is frequently pictured carrying a headshot of her missing daughter.⁹⁰ On the extremely hot day of the announcement of the original trial's verdict the public outside the courthouse chanted upon seeing Trimarco "Se siente, Se siente! Marita está presente!"⁹¹ This loosely translates to, "Feel it, feel it! Marita is present!" Marita's spiritual presence was invoked as a motivator to continue the fight for justice given to sex trafficking victims. This is similar to how Foss and Domenici claim the Madres invoked the spirit of the Dirty War disappeared as a reminder to both themselves and the government as to why they so fervently protested. Thus political actions taken by Trimarco in her search for her daughter expands upon a precedent set by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Camps, *La Red*, 100.

⁹⁰ Gilbert "A Desperate Mother's Search Leads to a Fight Against Sex Trafficking;" "El gobierno le cedió a Susana Trimarco un inmueble de cuatro hectáreas en Tucumán."

⁹¹ Camps, *La Red*, 453.

Both the Madres and Trimarco garnered significant public attention that created the appearance that their reframing of the disappeared was successful. While most scholars attribute the fall of the dictatorship to fallout from the Falkland War, the persistence of the protests established the mothers as figureheads in human rights activism in Argentina. Additionally their activism and reframing of disappeared persons as a human rights concern lead to international attention to disappeared persons. Rita Arditti claims that many attributes the 2006 adoption of the Convention of Enforced Disappearances as heavily influenced by both the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo.⁹² This international convention attempted to formulate prevention and investigation strategies regarding missing persons. Thus on the international level the missing persons were increasingly viewed as worthy of state and international protection.

The public attention given to the Verón trial and the political connections acquired by Trimarco have assisted in creating the sociopolitical climate where outcast and deviant prostitutes are being recast as victims and daughters. The initial 2008 trial that failed to indict the thirteen traffickers garnered widespread attention. Individuals both locally and abroad followed the trial through a blog written by Silvio Rodríguez. At the international level, non-Argentine news sources such as the *New York Times* and the BBC published stories following the trial. The trial results themselves spread like wildfire through social media. A section of Silvio Rodríguez's blog was dedicated to the trial and called into question the results. This blog became heavily shared along social media along with the Twitter hashtag #JusticiaPorMaritaVerón.⁹³ Such social media coverage

⁹² Rita Arditti, "'Do you know who you are?' The Grandmothers of the Plaza De Mayo" *Women's Review of Books* 24, no. 5 (Sept-Oct 2007): 12.

⁹³ Camps, *La Red*, 461.

fanned the flames of protest. The internet hacker group Anonymous responded by publishing the address, telephone number, and bank account numbers of three of the judges across various social media websites. With the post came a message: “One by one they will fall, because we are Anonymous. We want a country free of corruption and we do not forget.”⁹⁴ Protests in the streets occurred after the initial decision. Such outrage and international press likely contributed to the government response.

Sibila Camps suggests the results of the initial trial created an important mobilization throughout the country around the issues of sex trafficking and governmental corruption. The trial itself garnered significant attention under which there were more journalists than public in the audience, and most of those who were not journalists required personal invitations by the Fundacion de Maria de los Angeles. Outside the courtroom activists from Mujeres de la Matria Latinoamerica (MuMaLa) chanted, “Without clients there is no trafficking” and “justice for the disappeared women.”⁹⁵ Other human rights organizations would later joined them. La Casa de las Mujeres, Las Lilith, la Central de las Trabajadores de la Argentina (CTA), and Hijos y Abogados y Abogadas del Noroeste Argentino en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales.

The trial also generated significant political interest. Letters of support came from political groups including, el Partido Comunista Revolucionario (PCR), el Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores (MST) la Corriente del Pueblo-Jujuy y La Cámpora, the youth national movement aligned with president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. Camps suggests that Trimarco had various close relationships to government officials of

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Camps, *La Red*, 451.

different political origins. Susana Trimarco had the backing of Nilda Garré, the minister of Security in the Government. She traveled to Tucumán publically stating her pleasure in bringing moral support and solidarity with Trimarco's cause.⁹⁶ Other officials include a national deputy, legislators in the Buenos Aires city government, and members of the Oficina de Rescate y Acompañamiento .⁹⁷

As Trimarco's activism has become higher profile, her campaign has also attracted attention beyond Argentina. Her office is adorned with awards by the United States State Department.⁹⁸ Additionally Trimarco has gained the attention of the Catholic Church and is currently in the process of collaborating with the Vatican to help sex trafficking victims.⁹⁹ However, this attention pales in comparison to the amount of domestic attention Trimarco's fight has received. The frequent coverage of Trimarco's activism by *Clarín* magazine has made Trimarco and Verón the first names that come to mind when one mentions anti-sex trafficking to Argentines. This cultural gravitation towards Trimarco proliferated to the television set when producers adapted the story of Marita Verón's disappearance into an award-winning Argentine soap opera called "Stolen Lives." The show that attracted two million viewers nightly was declared a show of social interest by the Buenos Aires City legislature in 2007.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, Trimarco's story has not gone unnoticed by the political elite in the capitol of Buenos

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 452.

⁹⁸ Gilbert "A Desperate Mother's Search Leads to a Fight Against Sex Trafficking."

⁹⁹ "Susana Trimarco se encontró con el Papa Francisco y autoridades de la Santa Sede," Fundación María de los Ángeles, May 8, 2014, <http://www.fundacionmariadelosangeles.org/prensa/susana-trimarco-se-encontro-con-el-papa-francisco.htm>.

¹⁰⁰ Brian Byrnes, "Argentine Mom seeks Daughter Forced into Prostitution," *CNN*, September 18, 2008, <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/americas/09/17/stolen.lives/index.html>.

Aires. Beyond the aforementioned phone call by President Cristina Kirschner regarding the botched trafficker trial, and the widespread protests resulting from the trial, the president has acknowledged Trimarco as a powerful figurehead for female involvement in politics as seen with the Mother's Day Facebook post.

The earlier successes of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo likely set the stage for Trimarco to use her status as a mother justification for protest. Feminist philosopher Judith Butler, in her response to Joan Scott's critical feminism, explains how this could be the case. Referencing Scott's work on the *parité* movement in France, Butler notes how female political activity not only served as to create social change, but "women as a category became established as a site of enunciation."¹⁰¹ For Butler, acts of historical French feminists set the stage to formulate current French feminists as viable political actors. The public attention and advancements of the Madres not only further established women as a viable vehicle of protest in Argentina, but positioned motherhood as one of the most essential tools in that protest. The similarities in the tactics and motivation for both the Madres and Trimarco suggest Trimarco continued legacy established by the Madres.

Whether Trimarco intended to follow this legacy is not yet certain. Trimarco has not explicitly mentioned the Madres as the model for her activism. It is more likely that Trimarco identifies with the Madres struggle. She expressed such a sentiment in September 2013 after winning an award from the Madres for her activism. Trimarco expressed "Today I feel like I greatly identify with the Mothers and Grandmother of the

¹⁰¹ Judith Butler, "Speaking Up, Talking Back: Joan Scott's Critical Feminism" in *The Question of Gender: Joan W. Scott's Critical Feminism*, eds. Judith Butler and Elizabeth Weed (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

Plaza del Mayo and it is a great honor for Hebe to give me this award that I will take with great pride, because they are great fighters, renown throughout the world.”¹⁰² This view suggests a belief of solidarity for the Madres cause and respect for their endeavors. However, while such an acceptance speech acknowledges the influence of Madres it does not mention the influence the Madres had on her actions. Affirmation by Trimarco that she was inspired by the Madres for her own fight has yet to explicitly be stated. However such acknowledgement by Trimarco between the similarities of her own fight and the Madres, and the acknowledgement of the Madres influence may suggest she unintentionally drew from the Madres with regards to implementing her own search.

Regardless of whether of the similarities between the Madres and Trimarco are intentional, unintentional, or even merely coincidental, the implication remains the same. Both the public and the government have drawn on a history of the Madres and applied it to Trimarco. As Garmendia, Trimarco’s attorney states, “This idea of a woman searching for her lost daughter, this is something that Argentinians understand...because this is who Marita is. She is a disappeared person, like all the others. And Susana is a mother searching for her daughter.”¹⁰³

¹⁰² “Trimarco: ‘Me identifico con las Madres y Abuelas,’” *En Orsai*, September 11, 2013, <http://www.enorsai.com.ar/politica/2747-trimarco--me-identifico-con-las-madres-y-abuelas.html>.

¹⁰³ Scott C. Johnson, “Argentina’s Susana Trimarco: One Mother’s Fight Against Human Trafficking,” *Newsweek*, October 29, 2012, <http://www.newsweek.com/argentinas-susana-trimarco-one-mothers-fight-against-human-trafficking-65407>.

Chapter 3. SEX WORKERS RESPOND

With a Spanish cover of the Bee Gees “Stayin’ Alive” playing in the background, snippets of video show various spots in Buenos Aires where small advertisement depicting scantily clad women and phone numbers hang visible for everyone to see. About five seconds in the screen flashes pink with black curly text stating “ To fight for the rights of sex workers we need to change the picture people have of prostitution.”¹⁰⁴ Introducing “Mom Calling Cards” the video now depicts those promiscuous advertisements with artistic modifications. One has a mother washing her child in a bath. Both the artistically modified advertisement, and the videos next curly black text state, “86% of sex workers are mothers. Help us change the picture of prostitution.”¹⁰⁵ This creative art campaign by The Association of Female Sex Workers of Argentina (AMMAR) demonstrates how another group within Argentina is invoking motherhood as a means to changes perceptions towards prostitution.

AMMAR serves as a significant voice for sex worker rights in Argentina. It exists as the first de facto trade union for sex workers in Latin America.¹⁰⁶ Responding to police violence to sex workers, the organization formed towards the end of 1994. In 1995 the organization joined the Central Office of Argentine Workers (CTA), a workers union in Argentina. This solidified their message of sex work constituting labor. In 1997 the organization integrated with The Network of Latin America and Caribbean Sex workers

¹⁰⁴ “Ammar- Mom Calling Cards,” Vimeo video, 00:59, posted by “Tomas y Lucas,” October 5, 2013, <https://vimeo.com/76222110>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Roberta Radu, “Argentina’s prostitutes – Mothers First, Sex Workers Second,” *The Guardian*, June 17, 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/17/argentina-prostitutes-advertising-campaign>.

(RedTraSex). This regional sex workers rights organization is composed of organizations from fifteen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, and Uruguay. This international organization serves to defend the rights of sex workers throughout the region.¹⁰⁷

Domestic political connections supplement their international ties to increase their influence as the voice of sex worker rights. AMMAR helped draft a bill presented to the senate that would classify sex workers as self-employed. In Buenos Aires the congresswoman María Rachid has in the past partnered with AMMAR to introduce legislation to allow for the regulation of houses where prostitution occurs. While the presented legislation has had limited success, the capacity for the organization to reach the point where their legislation is, at the very least, introduced suggests that AMMAR serves as an influential voice in the fight for sex workers rights.

Most recently this voice has utilized motherhood to reveal complications with Argentina's new sex trafficking policies. Susana Trimarco has served as catalyst for these new laws. For instance, Sibila Camps attributes the passage of the 2008 federal law punishing traffickers as a result of Trimarco's struggle. However it must be noted that these laws are not only Trimarco's doing. These new sex trafficking laws build on earlier attempts to regulate and legislate prostitution in Argentina.¹⁰⁸

The original laws regarding prostitution in Argentina are reported as municipal laws. For instance in January 1875 the Buenos Aires municipal council legalized female

¹⁰⁷ "Quienes Somos," AMMAR, accessed April 22, 2015, <http://www.ammар.org.ar/-Quienes-somos-.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Camps, *La Red*, 18.

sexual commerce in authorized bordellos. These laws approached prostitution with a regulatory framework. Starting in 1875 Bordello owners would pay a municipal tax of 15000 pesos per year in exchange for a license to operate a bordello. Scholars argue these policies were designed to protect clients rather than the prostitute. Prostitutes essentially needed permission to leave their houses, and biweekly medical exams were administered in order to make sure clients would not get sexually transmitted diseases from these “degenerate” women.¹⁰⁹

Donna Guy argues that attention issue of sex slavery seemed to accompany licensed prostitution in Argentina.¹¹⁰ International attention to white slavery in Argentina caused Alfredo Palacios, the newly elected Socialist in the Chamber of Deputies, to respond to the outcry to end exploitation and trafficking of young women. After several failed attempts a 1913 law passed that was designed to punish pimps. This bill broadened the definition of white slavery to encompass corruption of minor, both male and female, and adult women under age twenty-two. The guilty party would face jail time, and if a family member were involved, they would lose parental rights.¹¹¹ Guy notes that this law was not intended to abolish licensed prostitution. However, Guy argues that the Buenos Aires Police increased their arrests of prostitutes while the courts debated the meaning of

¹⁰⁹ Donna J. Guy, “White Slavery, Public Health, and the Socialist Position on Legalized Prostitution in Argentina, 1913-1936,” *Latin American Research Review* 23, no. 3 (1988): 61.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 66-7.

the new law.¹¹² This law did little to curtail traffickers and only served as justification for police to arrest unlicensed prostitutes.¹¹³

This attention to white slavery culminated in the nineteen thirties. Attention to Jewish white slavery caused members of a Jewish pimps' association, the Zwi Migdal to be arrested. By December, Buenos Aires Intendente José Guerrico decreed the abolishment of municipally regulated prostitution in the city. After several years of struggle, in 1934 mayors of Buenos Aires finally agreed to replace existing ordinances with laws that focused on medical care and finding honest jobs for those leaving the *bordello*.¹¹⁴ Discrepancies arose regarding whether these measures outlawed prostitution or only *bordellos*.

This resulted in the 1936 national legislation that included provisions of abolishing licensed prostitution. This was the law of Social Prophylaxis that Guy claims was part of a series of laws designed to wrest public health reform away from municipalities and place it under national supervision.¹¹⁵ This law was heavily debated on the proper way to interpret the law. Between 1936 and 1944 conflicting legal opinions were offered. Some courts decided all acts of prostitution violated the *bordello* ban. Others insisted that the law did not criminalize prostitution, only *bordellos*.¹¹⁶ On December 1954 President Juan Perón authorized the Ministry of Justice and the interior to allow provincial and territorial governments, including the municipality of Buenos

¹¹² Ibid., 73.

¹¹³ Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*, 117.

¹¹⁴ Guy, "White Slavery, Public Health, and the Socialist Position," 74-75.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 77.

¹¹⁶ Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*, 187.

Aires, “to permit the installation of those establishments referred to by the Law of Social Prophylaxis.”¹¹⁷ Guy claims that the intention of the decree was to “defend family, society, and nation through medically supervised municipal bordellos.”¹¹⁸ Around this time Argentina expressed endorsement of international resolutions reflecting a radical feminist view towards prostitution in 1957 through its accession to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. This resolution holds that prostitution and trafficking as necessarily intertwined and “incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person.” The resolution states “the Parties to the present Convention agree to punish any person who... procures... even with the consent of the individual”.¹¹⁹ Additionally Argentina adheres to the Convention of 1960 that Garciela Vargas suggests also aligns with a perspective that desires to abolish prostitution. After the rise of the dictatorship the new military dictatorship maintained most of the original provision of the Law of Social Prophylaxis, although it neither closed down military bordellos it authorized in 1944 nor recriminalized prostitution. A law in June 1965, law 16.666, reverted the standards completely back to the original provisions of the Law of Social Prophylaxis.¹²⁰

While this has been the law of the land, Sibila Camps claims that the regulation did little to change the organized crime regarding prostitution between 1930 and 2008. She contends that bordellos still existed in the hundreds and men still paid for sex. Camps

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 180.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others 25 July 1951

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/TrafficInPersons.aspx>

¹²⁰ Guy, *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*, 204.

suggests several reasons for the failure of the Law of Social Prophylaxis to serve as a significant mechanism to stop traffickers. First, she suggests the law focused mainly on prostitution rather than traffickers leaving less legal mechanisms to punish procurers. Additionally she describes how some legal professionals viewed the law as primarily focused with public health rather than human rights. Legal arguments regarding abuse become less relevant when the purpose of the law is to prevent the spread of disease. But above all else, she claims that the law has been ignored throughout history and could have probably been utilized more frequently. For the most part before 2008 it is believed that “ although prostitution is not illegal in Argentina, many of the activities which often surround it, such as running brothels and causing public disturbances, are.” ¹²¹

For Camps it was the failure of the government to maintain a uniform and stringent adherence to the law that prevented the law of Social Prophylaxis from greatly restricting prostitution. She points to provincial laws that were not overturned that created pockets where legalized prostitution could occur.¹²² So while the Palacios law did little to punish traffickers, the law of Social Prophylaxis also did little prevent prostitution. These laws did little to prevent the increased visibility of prostitution that resulted from the 2001 economic crisis and could not satisfy the international pressure to become harsher on trafficking.

The 2008 law that was passed in the wake of the Marita Verón trial is claimed as the first federal law that punishes human trafficking in Argentina. Traffickers could now be subject from three to fifteen years of prison time. The enactment of the law led to

¹²¹ Bonello “Argentina Sex Workers go Back to School,”

¹²² Camps, *La Red*, 242-3.

substantial raids of brothels.¹²³ Provincial laws with similar aims attempted to involve Trimarco to assist in their passage. The governor of Córdoba aimed to pass such a bill in his province and invited Trimarco to give a presentation to generate favor for the bill.¹²⁴ Provincial laws between June 2012 and May 2013 developed in provinces of Río negro, Neuquén, Tucumán, Mendoza, Entre Ríos and Corrientes developed regulations that gave the Police more authority prosecute traffickers and some developed programs designed to rehabilitate victims.¹²⁵ A report by AMMAR suggests that the 2012 modification of that law, which removed the distinction of trafficking victims as voluntary law, also responded to the case of Marita Verón.¹²⁶ This 2012 law responded to complaints of defense lawyers of traffickers utilizing consent of victims over the age of 18 as a means for acquittal. This tactic is one that the defense attorney used in the Verón trial. The law made a lack of consent an aggravating factor rather a necessary condition for consideration as a trafficking victim.¹²⁷

AMMAR has heavily criticized the application of the new laws and regulations regarding sex trafficking. A report from AMMAR found these new forms of legislation reflective of the radical feminist perspective in Argentina with regards to how to consider prostitution.¹²⁸ It points to the 2012 law of eliminating the distinction between forced and

¹²³ US Department of State *Trafficking in Persons* Report, (June 2009), 64-66.

¹²⁴ Camps, *La Red*, 241.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Georgina Orellano, Cecilia Varela and Débora Daich, “Políticas anti-trata y vulneración de derechos de las trabajadoras sexuales,” *AMMAR* December 11, 2014, <http://www.ammar.org.ar/IMG/pdf/informe-ammар.pdf>, 5.

¹²⁷ US Department of State, “Country Narratives A-C” *Trafficking in Persons Report*, (June 2014), 66-68.

¹²⁸ Orellano, Varela and Daich “Políticas anti-trata y vulneración de derechos de las trabajadoras sexuales,” 4.

free prostitution as aligned with the viewpoint that all prostitution is forced. Provincial and Municipal laws also developed after the trial. Camps notes the first was Regulation 3.941 enacted in 2009 by the Municipality of Santa Rosa in the province of La Pampa. This law targeted *wiskerías* and cabarets, long seen as loophole for public brothels ban, and seen as sites that encourage sex trafficking. The new law expanded the ban of prostitution to “places open to the public in which the realization, tolerance, promotion organization of any sort facilitating the acts of prostitution or sexual offers of any type and mode.”¹²⁹ Other cities in the province followed suit with similar regulations. According to Camps, three years earlier the province had thirty five known operating brothels. After these regulations, that number fell to four.¹³⁰ AMMAR claims two deleterious consequences from this law. The law didn’t focus just on the prostitution of others but subjected everyone involved with sex work to scrutiny. Second it allowed for the police to enforce the law without judicial oversight.¹³¹

AMMAR claimed multiple negative effects of the new laws and regulations. First, many of the women “rescued” for sex trafficking have their money taken by the police since it seen as evidence. They list other occurrences where the police subject the sex workers to violence by hitting them in the head with their guns.¹³² This emphasis of police violence against prostitutes has been emphasized elsewhere in the literature defending sex worker rights. Elena Reynaga references a report by AMMAR that police detained sixty-three percent of sex workers. Fifty-five percent of these individuals report

¹²⁹ Camps, *La Red*, 240.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Orellano, Varela and Daich, “Políticas anti-trata y vulneración de derechos de las trabajadoras sexuales,” 6-7.

¹³² Ibid., 9-10.

that they were mistreated in some way while detained, with 17.1% saying they were physically abused, 29.3 % argued that they were verbally mistreated, and 18.8% claiming psychological abuse. While Reynega admits that some of these abuses occurred before the increased shift of attention to prosecuting sex traffickers rather than prostitutes, Reynega does claim that the laws have assisted in perpetuating these abuses.¹³³

Thus the policies that have resulted from Trimarco's motherly activism have perpetuated a rather limited view with regards to a prostitute's agency. The ability to control the money earned becomes limited by police using it for evidence. The ability to choose where to sell sexual services has become limited under the guise of cracking down on trafficking in brothels. The ability for a prostitute to claim choosing sex work out of free will no longer serves as a means to escape the label of victim. It is concerns like these that have been raised by those aligned with the sex workers rights movement in Argentina.

These individuals have attempted to distinguish themselves from the Marita Verón-type examples of sex trafficking. One slogan they have adopted is "Trabajo sexual no es igual a la trata de personas," which means "Sex work is not the same as human trafficking." This slogan can be found as stenciled graffiti around the city of Buenos Aires (see Figure 3). Even Susana Trimarco echoes this observation, "sex trafficking is one thing and prostitution is another."¹³⁴ However this belief has been undercut by surrounding international pressure and history endorsing abolitionism. Even if Trimarco has endorsed a position that closely relates to that of AMMAR, what the public, media,

¹³³ Elena Reynaga "La lucha contra la persecución del trabajo sexual como forma de lucha contra la trata," 78.

¹³⁴ Camps, *La Red*, 457.

and government has grasped from her activism is that there is a majority of females that are exploited into sex slavery.

Possibly recognizing this overwhelming public sentiment, AMMAR does not claim that sex slavery is a myth but rather suggests the policies do not target solely sex trafficking victims. For instance, the secretary general of AMMAR Córdoba, Eugenia Aravena, makes the critical observation that though sex trafficking does occur, the application of the anti-sex trafficking laws calls for the closure of all locations involved in prostitution, both private and public. The effects of these laws cause women not subject to the same exploitation as trafficking victims to lose their jobs. She claim that pimps are not always involved with prostitution yet trafficking lumps all of the sex workers into one category of “victim.” Thus she calls for a distinction between sex work and sex trafficking.¹³⁵ A similar call for a distinction between sex work and sex trafficking occurred after Cristina Kirschner passed her executive order that prohibited public advertisements for sexual services. Elena Reynaga, the attributed leader of AMMAR at the time, exclaimed that the government was mixing human trafficking with sex work”¹³⁶ The national portion of AMMAR has echoed this push as well. A report authored by the President of AMMAR, Georgina Orellano, and two anthropology professors from University of Buenos Aires suggests creating legislation that codifies a

¹³⁵ “AMMAR Córdoba. trabajo sexual no es igual a la trata de personas,” YouTube video, 10:56, posted by “Actavideos,” December 9, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q_Umxexjbt4.

¹³⁶ “Se está mezclando la trata de personas con el trabajo sexual,” *Clarín*, July 7, 2011, http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/mezclando-trata-personas-trabajo-sexual_0_513548755.html.

distinction between sex workers and sex trafficking in order to limit the amount of persecution suffered by sex workers who have not been trafficked.¹³⁷

While the organization desires to make the distinction between sex trafficking and sex work, AMMAR has been careful to appear in agreement with ending sex trafficking in Argentina. A newsletter posted by AMMAR July 2011 maintains that AMMAR is familiar with the issue of sex trafficking seeing they have fought against it for fifteen years in Argentina.¹³⁸ A press release by the organization in October 2014 explains how they reported a sex trafficking ring in Paraná. At the end of the release it exclaims in all caps “AMMAR IS NOT IN FAVOR OF TRAFFICKING NOR THE EXPLOITATION OF PERSONS.”¹³⁹ This extensive push to explain their opposition to sex trafficking is also illuminated by a news story regarding of a member of their organization as serving as a shield for sex trafficking rings.¹⁴⁰ AMMAR was quick to respond by claiming that the person in question was not linked to AMMAR and that they had disassociated with the person a year earlier.¹⁴¹

The motivation to maintain a stance against sex trafficking likely comes from two factors. First, as an organization designed to bring attention to abuses to sex workers,

¹³⁷ Orellano, Varela and Daich, “Políticas anti-trata y vulneración de derechos de las trabajadoras sexuales.”

¹³⁸ “El delito a combatir no es el trabajo sexual, sino la trata y la esclavitud de las personas, adultos y niños,” AMMAR, July 6, 2011, <http://www.ammar.org.ar/El-delito-a-combatir-no-es-el.html>.

¹³⁹ “Ammar Denunció a una Red de Explotación sexual que funcionaba en Paraná (Entre Ríos),” AMMAR, October 24, 2014, <http://www.ammar.org.ar/Ammar-denuncio-a-una-red-de.html>.

¹⁴⁰ Mariana Carbajal, “La dirigente comprometida con la trata,” *Página 12*, October 16, 2014, <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-257623-2014-10-16.html>.

¹⁴¹ “Posicionamiento de AMMAR sobre la nota de Mariana Carbajal en Página 12 respecto al procesamiento de la Sra. Brizuela,” AMMAR, October 16, 2014, <http://www.ammar.org.ar/Posicionamiento-de-AMMAR-sobre-la.html>.

AMMAR would find attention to sex trafficking partially beneficial. The organization's history of denouncing sexual exploitation and pimping demonstrate how some of the anti-sex trafficking goals align with those of AMMAR. Second, AMMAR likely recognizes the popularity of the anti-sex trafficking movement. Making clear that they are against sex trafficking attempts to minimize the number of their political enemies, while providing them with a site to draw attention to their own agenda.

Recognizing the political sway with regards to the attention to sex trafficking is reflected by a press release by AMMAR at the time of the Marita Verón trial. In a February 2012 press release AMMAR framed to the case of Marita Verón as a step in the right direction with regards to exposing corruption. They claim the allegations of corruption were the same type of corruption that Sandra Cabrera was attempting to uncover when she was assassinated. The case of Sandra Cabrera is near and dear to AMMAR's heart. At the time of publication AMMAR's website has their own section dedicated to information about this women. A sexual worker and activist for AMMAR Rosario, Sandra Cabrera was assassinated the 27th of January in 2004. AMMAR claims that she was assassinated for reporting sexual exploitation of youth and adolescents and police corruption. They are currently seeking justice for her death believing the police have insufficiently investigated her murder. Appealing to the situation with Marita Verón AMMAR attempts to draw parallels between the two cases in order to secure justice for Cabrera.¹⁴² Thus AMMAR has recognized the success of the Verón trial and have attempted to use that success for it's own political goals.

¹⁴² "Por el esclarecimiento de la desaparición de Marita Veron," AMMAR, February 8, 2012, <http://www.ammar.org.ar/Por-el-esclarecimiento-de-la.html>.

Whether appealing to *marianismo*, recognizing the political success of Trimarco's tactics, or a mixture of both, AMMAR has also started to appeal to motherhood within its political rhetoric. A graffiti ad campaign started in 2013 by AMMAR best demonstrates this appeal to motherhood. On a Buenos Aires street corner one side of a building displays a woman dressed in a short miniskirt and high heels posing provocatively. On the other side of the corner of the building the woman is seen as pushing a stroller with a toddler AMMAR claims this demonstrates a vital reality of the sex work industry in Argentina, where eighty-six percent of sex workers are single mothers. The focus of the campaign highlights prostitutes as mothers and demonstrates how motherhood is seen as a valuable tool to generate sympathy for sex workers. This campaign defends sex work as an economic necessity rather than a pleasurable profession. By stating, "We wanted to show we are first of all women, mothers, and breadwinners and then sex workers,"¹⁴³ the president of AMMAR Georgina Orellano downplays the stigmatized sex worker identity in favor of the identity as a valorized mother. Additionally, she claims sex work is "not an easy choice, it's what we have to do."¹⁴⁴ Such a sentiment does not reclaim the sex worker as a noble profession, nor as a desirable profession. Instead the profession is framed as a method to satisfy motherly obligations. It serves as an economic means to provide for children when no other options are available. Orellano creates the assertion of mothers first, sex workers second in order to raise interest in the creation of laws to protect sex workers. She claims, "We need [a legal framework] to end marginalization

¹⁴³ Radu, "Argentina's Prostitutes."

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

and to empower us.”¹⁴⁵ Thus the purpose of the mother-first rhetoric is to reclaim state protection of sex workers.

Thus, the motherly activism employed by the sex workers rights movement operates in a similar fashion as Trimarco’s motherly activism, but with very different ends in mind.¹⁴⁶ Both utilized motherhood to call for protection of individuals labeled as ‘whores.’ While Trimarco frames the prostitute as a victim, AMMAR frames the prostitute as an autonomous breadwinner. In this fashion AMMAR attempts to return agency to the prostitute with motherhood. The rational desire to provide for a family creates a conceivable reason why an individual might choose to sell sexual services rather than necessarily be forced into the profession. Motherhood for AMMAR has thus served as a rhetorical tool to claim agency for sex workers.

Motherhood has also served a different function for these sex workers. Similar to how the Madres and Trimarco used motherhood as motivation for their political action, sex workers in Argentina appear to use motherhood as their motivation to claim sex work as legitimate. Motherhood appears to function as a means for sex workers to justify their profession. Maria Eugenia, former sex worker from Cordoba and founder of a school for sex workers, says “ I don’t regret having been a sex worker for 25 years – I don’t regret it at all. I’ve raised my daughter, I have my family, my house.”¹⁴⁷ Raising a daughter immediately follows not having regrets, suggesting they are somehow linked. Sex work gave these mothers the monetary assistance needed to provide for their children. It is a mother failing their child that is positioned as shameful for these women. Patricia, a

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Bonello, “Argentina Sex Workers Go Back to School.”

different sex worker in Cordoba, claims that going back to school has helped her speak properly, allowing her to mitigate that “shame when you feel when you take your kids to school.”¹⁴⁸ Shame of failing to fulfill obligations of a mother overshadows any shame tied to selling sexual services. Thus, it appears that acting as mother gives some sex workers the courage to claim prostitution as legitimate work in a climate that views them as either victims or worthless sexual deviants.

The disappeared from the dictatorship also influenced sex worker activism. This took a different form than the emulation of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo. Rather than frame the disappeared as children from mothers, Cordoba AMMAR investigated the stories of disappeared prostitutes labeled as subversive by the government. In a video they released on YouTube they interviewed individuals that knew the disappeared prostitutes. In a scroll of text at the beginning of the video it explains the attempt is to make visible the story of the disappeared sex workers.¹⁴⁹ Those kidnapped by the government were subversives of all types from political dissidents to homosexuals. AMMAR here attempts to bring to light the story of prostitutes who fell into this broad category. This serves as another example of how the sex worker rights movement in Argentina attempt to insert the voice of autonomous sex workers into a preexisting successful discourse. Given the success of the Madres in garnering widespread sympathy of the disappeared, the sex workers utilized the same imagery to insert the perspective of the sex worker.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ “Recuperando las voces de trabajadores sexuales en la dictadura ‘Buen Pastor,’” YouTube video, 14:19, posted by “AMMAR Cordoba,” March 22, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ydw2jGApHWQ>.

The re-appropriation of culturally significant events appears as a theme with AMMAR. Finding their profession stigmatized and neglected they have attempted to latch onto culturally significant events as a means to insert their own story of the autonomous sex worker. The widespread sympathy for the disappeared from the “Dirty War” has been repurposed to garner sympathy for disappeared sex workers. While AMMAR has utilized the sympathy derived from Trimarco’s activism to call for the investigation for a fellow member’s murder. Thus, while AMMAR calls for an end to the harms created by the policies provoked by Trimarco, they see Trimarco’s story and its motherly components as powerful and useful for their own goals. When asked to clarify AMMAR position on human trafficking and the extent it clashes with Trimarco, President of AMMAR Georgina Orellano stated:

Our position on the issue is not specifically targeted at the work of Susana Trimarco. Firstly, we have a huge degree of respect for her and her struggle; we put ourselves in her shoes as a mother. But we would like to meet with her and have the chance to work with her in the struggle against human trafficking in a way that doesn’t jeopardize sources of work or the rights of sex workers. The current debate about human trafficking — which is prohibitionist in terms of sex work in general — has made sex work even more clandestine than it was before.”¹⁵⁰

Such a statement suggests that AMMAR believes the debate that Trimarco has helped create has pushed their work even further underground and has framed prostitutes as devoid of agency. Yet despite these concerns AMMAR identifies with Trimarco’s appeal to motherhood and hopes to repurpose her motherhood activism in a way that respects the autonomy of the voluntary sex workers.

¹⁵⁰ Georgina Orellano, ““Let’s debate human trafficking without judging sex workers,”” interview by Jayson McNamara, *Buenos Aires Herald*, May 11, 2014, <http://www.buenosairesherald.com/article/159166/%E2%80%98let%E2%80%99s-debate-human-trafficking-without-judging-us%E2%80%99>.

CONCLUSION

Since the turn of the twenty first century a growing interest in sex trafficking has occurred in Argentina. Susana Trimarco amplified this attention to sex trafficking by reframing prostitutes as trafficked daughters after the disappearance of her own daughter. The effects of her activism, combined with international pressure coming from the United States, contributed to an increase of policies aimed to combat sex trafficking. These policies framed prostitutes as victims and precluded the possibility of prostitution as a legitimate profession. Those within the sex work industry have taken issue with these policies and have formulated activist strategies to challenge the conceptualization of the prostitute as only trafficked victim. These strategies involve reframing prostitutes as mothers choosing to sell sex in order to provide for their children. This appeal to maternalist rhetoric to acquire protection for prostitutes also appears in Trimarco's activism. Trimarco positions her concern as mother for her missing child as a reason to why the state should help those who sell sexual services. Thus while Trimarco utilizes motherhood to reframe the prostitute as sex trafficking victim, sex worker activists utilize motherhood to reframe the sex trafficked victim as a working mother. These appeals to motherhood follow a tradition laid forth by the Madres of the Plaza de Mayo in order to garner sympathy for individuals neglected or persecuted by the state.

Such findings about the appeals to motherhood provide valuable insight with regards to Argentina activism. Given the belief by Argentines that appealing to motherhood contributes to their political goals, it is very likely that other arenas of protest have appealed to motherhood as well. Further research on how motherhood has impacted other areas of Argentina activism should be pursued. By understanding how the role of

the mother plays in activism, changes within familial roles can be used to predict the nature of future political actions. Such an understanding will assist activists to better organize for the future, and will give scholars theoretical tools to explain how protest movements function and how legislation develops.

It is clear that with regards to the new anti-trafficking legislation the rhetoric of motherhood has had a significant impact on Argentina attention to sex trafficking. Since the passage of the first national anti-trafficking legislation in 2008, the nature of Argentina's response to sex-trafficking has substantially changed. The national law has transformed the reporting of statistics relating to trafficking. The TIP report in 2008 relies upon 2007 trafficking data unaffected by the 2008 legislation. This TIP report relies on "anecdotal data" to convey Argentina's effort to prosecute traffickers and rescue victims. The TIP report blames a "lack of an enacted federal anti-trafficking law" as impeding "the collection of nationwide data and statistics, making analysis of Argentina's anti-trafficking efforts difficult to gauge."¹⁵¹ The data for prosecution of traffickers outlined particular provincial accounts of arrests, yet had little information with regards to aggregated data. With the 2009 TIP report referencing data affected by the 2008 law, the note of anecdotal data disappeared from the TIP report and was instead replaced by aggregated accounts of federal efforts to prosecute traffickers. This included how many arrests, how many raids, how many victims rescued, how many convictions and the status

¹⁵¹ US Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report June 2008
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105501.pdf> 57-59.

of the investigations.¹⁵² The 2008 law thus served as a means to clearly convey to the world Argentina's efforts as a nation to stop trafficking.

A contribution to this clearer communication probably results from a clear statute that trafficking could be prosecuted under. In the 2007 TIP report, it summarizes Argentina's efforts to punish traffickers as moderately improving yet uneven. This unevenness is claimed to develop from punishing traffickers with various statutes ranging from criminal codes to immigration regulations.¹⁵³ The 2008 law served as single banner to punish traffickers and thus gave a clear reference point for researchers to see Argentina's efforts in combating trafficking. However this prosecution has not been absolute. The 2014 TIP report suggests that some prosecutors still use prostitution related ordinances for sex trafficking related crimes.¹⁵⁴ Given that the government has not yet issued implementing regulations of the 2012 anti-trafficking law this tendency may decrease once the more flexible 2012 law that allow prosecution of traffickers even with victim consent is properly implemented.

With a national law on the books to combat trafficking attention to national law enforcement collusion and complicity also increased. Previously TIP reports emphasized accounts suggesting local and provincial authorities as corrupt and complicit with trafficking. In 2009, a year after the national anti-trafficking law passed, the TIP report notes, "according to NGOs and international organizations, some elements of the

¹⁵² US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2009, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123357.pdf>, 64-66.

¹⁵³ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2007, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/82902.pdf>, 54-55

¹⁵⁴ US Department of State, "Country Narratives A-C" *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2014 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/226845.pdf>, 66-68.

country's security forces are complicit with human trafficking activity. Most of these allegations are directed against provincial and local officials, though allegations relating to federal forces came to light during the past year."¹⁵⁵ Thus while corruption on the local level remained the focus, complaints of corruption from federal law enforcement occurred a year after a new law that gave federal authorities more power to prosecute traffickers.

This attention leads to a different impact of the national anti-sex trafficking push in Argentina such as the emphasis on training of law enforcement officials with matters regarding trafficking. During the reporting period of the 2010 TIP report, ten provinces created their own specialized law enforcement units to investigate trafficking. Additionally the prosecutor general approved a standardized protocol for the investigation of sex trafficking cases and guidelines for identifying, interviewing, and assisting victims. This effort to standardize law enforcement procedure has further evidence when during the same year authorities trained over four thousand judicial officials and law enforcement officers on victim identification and care. However, the 2010 TIP report also states there is a need for more training regarding investigation and prosecution of trafficking crimes.¹⁵⁶

These regulations have reflected a radical feminist perspective that endorses the abolition of prostitution. These government attempts usually focus on demand for sexual services. The 2008 TIP report highlights the city of Buenos Aires and the International Organization for Migration's billboard campaign entitled "Without Clients There is No

¹⁵⁵ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2009, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/123357.pdf>, 64-66.

¹⁵⁶ US Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2010, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/142979.pdf>, 63-64.

Prostitution” as part of a continued effort to reduce demand for sex acts. The 2010 TIP report suggests, “ in an effort to reduce the demand for commercial sex acts, the Prosecutor General signed a resolution instructing federal prosecutors to seek the closure of all brothels NGOs reported.”¹⁵⁷ These campaigns have to focus on demand have continued with government officials reporting in 2014 funding a public awareness campaign “targeted at the potential clients of sex trafficking victims.”¹⁵⁸ An example of such a public awareness campaign was visible in the 2014 World Cup commercial breaks, guaranteeing the widespread consumption of the message by the avid football fans of Argentina.¹⁵⁹

Despite efforts by AMMAR it appears that the dominant trend in Argentina remains to focus on radical feminist approaches to sex trafficking by focusing on decreasing the possibility of prostitution to occur. Explicitly Trimarco has expressed a similar belief as AMMAR. Namely that “sex trafficking is one thing and prostitution is another.”¹⁶⁰ However, this belief has been undercut by abolitionist international pressure. Even if Trimarco has endorsed a position that closely reflects AMMAR’s perspective, what the public, media, and government has grasped from her activism is that there is a majority of young women that are exploited into sex slavery.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ US Department of State, “Country Narratives A-C” *Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2014 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/226845.pdf>, 66-68.

¹⁵⁹ Comité contra la Trata de Personas “Spot Mundial – Paremos la trata,” YouTube video, 1:06, from a commercial by the Comité contra la Trata de Personas used for Argentine broadcasts of the 2014 World Cup, posted by “Comité contra la Trata de Personas,” June 9, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7sSs0EEEnRQ>.

¹⁶⁰ Camps, *La Red*, 457.

A culture influenced by *marianismo* must be careful not to deem motherhood as the only legitimate female participation if it wishes to secure a political voice for all its citizens. AMMAR's "mother first, sex worker second" graffiti campaign serves as an example of prioritizing motherhood over other roles women play. Similar to McCormick's criticism of Eva Perón's proposed policies of economic compensation for housewives, such a stance does not extend the potential for women to participate in the public sphere outside of motherhood, or as equal citizens. A possible result may be that non-mother sex workers that possibly participate in prostitution out of a search for empowerment, or as a means to pay for college, will still be framed as helpless victims of sex trafficking since they do not have the legitimate excuse of providing for their children. McCormick might be right that the Madres were able to move women into the political sphere through the guise of motherhood. However the problem becomes when this serves as the only guise a woman may utilize to participate politically.

Marianismo and the glorification of motherhood necessarily require self sacrifice from the mother's position. Mothers are admirable precisely because they sacrifice and endure so much for their family. As shown with both Trimarco and the sex workers in Córdoba, many women in Argentina appear happy with this role, finding value in the love they give their family. This value must not be discredited. However the space for other values should establish along side this glorification of self-sacrifice. Women who do not desire to have children, women who wish to pursue their own goals rather than support a husband, these women have no way to voice their interest when motherhood framed as the sole legitimate political platform for women. It remains to be seen if other areas of Argentine politics have successfully integrated female participation, but with

regards to prostitution and sex trafficking policy, motherhood appears to remain a dominant discourse. Although a definite improvement from having no political voice at all, more work still remains to include women outside the roles of mother and child.

FIGURES



Figure 1 Small Ad discovered posted on side of building in the City of Buenos Aires. Text on side states "flier delivered by hand do not produce in public view-Law 260"



Figure 2 Plaza de Mayo where the Madres of the Plaza del Mayo protest every Thursday. Photo by author.



Figure 3 Memorial that incorporates pictures of disappeared persons kidnapped by the government during the “Dirty War” period. Photographed by author in Córdoba, Argentina.



Figure 4 graffiti found on a Buenos Aires street corner stating, “Sex work is not the same as human trafficking”.
Photo by author.

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