

Teachers' Work, Food Policies, and Gender in Argentina

SARAH A. ROBERT

Department of Learning and Instruction, University at Buffalo

HEATHER KILLELEA MCENTARFER

Department of English, SUNY Fredonia

Few studies explore teachers' involvement in school feeding, questioning gendered implications within a feminine and feminized profession. Ethnographic data from one public high school in Metropolitan Buenos Aires suggest that teachers' efforts to address student hunger added new work roles: food advocates/activists, food managers, and service providers/caregivers. The data illustrate the collision of gendered roles (feeding and teaching) as well as how the gendered nature of policy shapes teachers' work. [teachers' work, gender, policy, school feeding]

Hunger is a major educational concern around the globe: the World Food Programme states that approximately 66 million children attend school hungry on a daily basis (World Food Programme 2009:4). Where school feeding programs exist, they attempt to alleviate hunger and malnutrition to support students' education. Curiously few studies question the implications of school feeding for the teaching profession (Conklin and Bordi 2003; Murphy et al. 2000; Russell et al. 2007), let alone question the gendered implications of food work on a feminine and feminized profession. How are teachers involved in school feeding programs, which provide such vital support for students' education? How does that involvement affect teachers' work in a moment characterized by cuts in social services and economic crises? In this article we explore teachers' work feeding students in one public high school in Metropolitan Buenos Aires, Argentina. Ethnographic data revealed that feeding students via two different programs added three new nontraditional roles to high school teachers' work, roles that reflected feminized work behaviors and practices. In particular, the food work illustrated how the policies (discourses, texts, processes, and contexts) involved high school teachers in more affective or care work associated with elementary teaching. We suggest the feminization of teaching work insidiously expanding from elementary education has uncertain implications for secondary education. We argue that the gendered nature of feeding and teaching work has colluded with the gendered nature of policy to create this change.

Our argument resulted from braiding two strands of literature: teaching work historically framed as women's work and involving feeding students, and policy as a socio-cultural practice—a gendered one, specifically (Stambach and David 2005). Numerically in the majority, women are responsible for the formal education of children in many parts of the world. Intimately linked to discourses of caring, self-sacrifice, and nurturing, "the teacher" has long been embodied by women and framed in relation to the role of mother (Fischman 2000; Morgade and Bellucci 1997). Since the beginning of the Argentine mass education project, teachers were presumed to feed students "literacy, values, and civic virtues" along with spirituality (Fischman 2007:356). Feeding hungry students, as policy and economic crisis demanded in the early 21st century, could be seamlessly woven into historically perceived ideas about the daily responsibilities of teachers.

The feminine and feminized nature of teaching, however, is nuanced and merits further dissection. Gustavo Fischman (2007) asserts: "contemporary social representations of teachers [as mothers] have simultaneously discarded, preserved and transformed symbolic characteristics from the past" (p. 364). To begin, women and men teach. During the time of this study, high school teaching became an attractive profession for men in the wake of neoliberal state reforms and massive layoffs following privatization of state industry and the opening of the economy. Men are in the minority, but they have entered the profession, potentially challenging the symbolic image of the teacher-as-mother and the feminized quality of work performed (Fischman 2000).

Also, teaching continues to be performed by women and to be considered women's work but referring to teaching as feminized does not equate to an understanding of how feminization (or gendering of teaching work) occurs. Several studies were identified that suggest historical and contemporary social, economic, and political state agendas defined new representations of the teacher (Fischman 2007; Silver 2007). Patricia Silver suggested a masculinizing of teaching in the Puerto Rican context in line with a reform agenda for public education promoted by neoliberal discourse (Silver 2007).

The gendered nature of teachers' work and the lack of prestige often granted traditionally feminine work may have been reinforced by neoliberal policies prevalent in Argentina at the turn of the 21st century. Raewyn Connell (2005) writes, "Neoliberalism is in principle gender neutral. The 'individual' has no gender, and the market delivers advantage to the smartest entrepreneur, not to men or women as such" (1815). Nevertheless, in practice, neoliberalism has brought about complexly gendered realities, unleashed on a terrain of social, economic, and political inequality. Regarding teachers' work specifically, Connell describes the "decomposition" of their work "into specific, auditable competencies and performances" (Connell 2009:220) requiring "skill, but not intelligence" (Connell 2009:224). Connell (2009) further challenges the "limited" (p. 220) nature of neoliberal conceptions of teachers' work, which do not attend to the often-exhaustingly embodied and emotional elements of that work.

Control of teachers' work is a hotly contested focus driving policy and reform. Unfortunately, gender is often overlooked or ignored as a sociocultural force shaping education reform, or acknowledged as an aside (Smyth and Shacklock 1998:73). When gender is not examined as an organizing component, an everyday practice, and a discourse framing educational change, the social forces mobilized as part of policy processes remain unexamined.

These dynamics of gendered teaching work and gendered state policies will become relevant in the study described below of high school teachers' implementation of feeding programs filling the gaps left by the retraction of welfare services. We also describe the ways in which female and male teachers took on three new caregiving roles to meet the needs of their students. We critique these roles as representative of an upward movement of a feminization process in high school teaching.

After a discussion of the relevant literature and research design, we first describe teachers' feeding work in one public high school in a working poor neighborhood in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and set within the context of ongoing economic crisis and retraction of the welfare state. Next, we critique three new roles: food advocates/activists, food managers, and service providers/caregivers, taken on by teachers and principals to address hunger in their schools as manifestations of a collision of the gendered nature of teaching and policies crafted with a gendered practitioner in mind. We conclude with a critique of these roles as representative of feminization expanding within the profession.

Gendered Food Work and the Policies that Promote It

School Feeding, Hunger, and the Missing Teachers

The literature on school feeding and hunger takes two different directions, neither sufficiently exploring or acknowledging teachers' work with hungry students. The first corpus is didactic. Teachers' involvement is limited to teaching students about hunger and poverty who are presumably not hungry or living in emergency situations (Wassermann 2007; Fox 2008; Obermaier and Schrufer 2009). A second body of literature considers development, health or nutrition-related studies, and teacher involvement as peripheral to the research concerns (Gleason 2008; Datar and Nicosia 2012; Conklin and Bordi 2003; Murphy et al. 2000; Mirtcheva and Powell 2009). Martha Conklin and Peter Bordi's (2003) study assessing teachers' perceptions of an in-class breakfast program was the only publication found that situated educators near the center of the analysis of school food; however, it focused on teachers' impressions of an in-class feeding program and not on the program's impact on teaching work. Thus teachers' involvement remained unrecognized and un-theorized. Despite teachers' relative absence from school food literature, teachers are involved in school feeding. The invisibility of their efforts to provide sustenance to students perhaps serves as an all too real reminder of the ways that teachers' care work is overlooked and unaccounted for while simultaneously feminizing teachers' everyday work practices.

About Gender and Gendered Food Work

Gender undergirds symbolic representations of "the teacher as worker" (Casey and Apple 1989). We also understand gender to be an individual, interactional, and structural force shaping teachers' work (Apple 1986). Organizational frameworks infused with gendered cultural meanings shape individuals' "institutional practices, procedures, and role identities" (Ridgeway 2009:8). The structural and interactional dimensions of teaching demand care and service, work that is not remunerated or even considered an addition to the labor of educating but that is essential to getting the job of educating done. Gender was considered a

background identity . . . [that] acts to bias in gendered directions the performance of behaviors undertaken in the name of more concrete, foregrounded organizational roles or identities. [G]ender becomes a way of acting like a doctor or driving a car. [Ridgeway 2009:8]

In other words, the gendered work of feeding students is backgrounded or overshadowed by the gendered role of teacher. However, it is precisely because teaching and schools as a workplace are powerfully framed as gendered work and workplaces that the foodwork infiltrates so fluidly into teaching work (Ridgeway 2009:9). Following Cecilia Ridgeway's (2009) argument, we searched for the spaces where the gendered institutional structures of teaching and of feeding interacted with individual teachers' cultural beliefs about gender.

Gendered Policies

Feminist educational policy analysis suggests that policies, like workers and organizations, are gendered (Marshall 1999; Rhoten 2000; Stambach and David 2005). Amy Stambach and Miriam David (2005) call our attention to educational policies' connection to institutional histories in which persons are differently situated in power relations. They point out, for example, that mothers and fathers have "different histories of engagement within families and public education" (2005:1637). They examine how school choice poli-

cies conceptualize “mothers,” “fathers,” and “parents.” Similarly, this study examines how school food policies conceptualize teachers in relation to feminine “histories of engagement” with schools and work. As Datnow (1998) has shown, teachers read policies from within the gendered hierarchies of schools. However, this study differs from Datnow’s because teachers read policies as well as the *lack* of policies and provisions, and they act according to gendered institutional roles, as policy implementers and as policy *protagonists*. Teachers in our study enacted one policy (scholarships, explained below) and fought for another one (school snacks, also explained below). Teachers did not just “receive” policies to implement; they went after them in order to educate, and they did so accepting and enacting masculine and feminine feeding roles and responsibilities as part of their education work. Food policy adds affective work to high school teachers’ days in addition to educating in social studies or language arts.

Research Design

This paper was developed from an ethnography conducted during the 2005–2006 academic year in Argentina.¹ The ethnography explored neoliberal reform from teachers’ perspectives situating teachers as policy protagonists. Teachers are conscious of the need for educational reform, are critics of reform, and are responsible for making reform possible (Ozga 2000; Robert 2008, 2012), yet they are often excluded from the formulation of policy, beginning with the identification of the policy problem (see Robert and Kovalskys 2011). Teachers in our study did not envision themselves as policy makers; interviews with them often began with the statement, “I don’t know education policy, but . . .” It was their responses that followed these words that became the focus of this study. Our interviews with teachers (six women and six men) and directors (one woman and one man) at the Pampas School (a pseudonym), were influenced by work on teachers’ life histories (Goodson 1992) and feminist oral history (Gluck and Patai 1991), as well as by techniques to ensure that insights of political actors are grounded in context (James 2000). Rather than treating programs that alleviate hunger as dropped into the black box of school (Young 1971), we draw attention to *food politics* (Paarlberg 2010), or the ways teachers engage the state around issues of hunger in schools. When educators engage in politics to improve students’ lives, the scope of their work is expanded. The nature of that expansion merits critique, as it can reveal the ways feminine (and masculine) work practices are brought to the forefront as teachers attend to students’ basic needs. It also reveals the ways schools are situated within broader gendered structures that perpetuate work inequities through incoherent and fragmented policies and programs. Combined with observations of what teachers referred to as typical work days, Sarah Robert was introduced to a context in which students lived with fluctuating nutritional needs and inconsistent food provision.

Robert identified two food programs in which teachers were involved at Pampas, a working poor high school in Metropolitan Buenos Aires. Pampas lay approximately 30 kilometers from the city of Buenos Aires, in a developing suburban region with some public infrastructure (e.g., water and electricity) but lacking many other forms (e.g., gas, sewer, postal service, paved roads). The two food programs that did reach the school are National Student Scholarship Program [*Programa Nacional de Becas Estudiantiles*] and the Universal Snack Program (discussed below). Teachers were energized by the critical pedagogical approaches of Paulo Freire (1973/2000) in Brazil and the application of Antonio Gramsci (1971) to education; the educators worked *for* the community and *with* the community to address the problem of hunger.

Furthermore, we were compelled by teachers’ urgent request to take note of how reforms affected their work beyond the classroom. Teachers referred us to books, articles,

theater, and protests or marches in order to, as one educator suggested, “deepen our understanding of the crisis” not held at bay by the classroom door. Cultural artifacts along with interviews, observations, and policy research enriched and enlarged cultural expressions of teachers’ everyday work lives as more than just instructing students, or being in front of students [*frente del aula*], grounding them in the temporal moment (Agar 1996).

Teachers’ Food Work in Argentina

Historicizing School Food in Argentina

Argentine teachers have been involved with school feeding programs since their inception at the turn of the 20th century. As early as 1906, teachers in public schools were providing students with what was known colloquially as the “cup of milk” [*copa de leche*] to augment caloric and protein intake (Billorou 2008; Buamden et al. 2010). Children targeted to receive the “cup of milk” were not making progress in learning and/or not attending school regularly; the children needed nourishment. The number of students served, what they were served—milk and/or bread—and who was responsible for funding the program varied from school to school; the early school feeding program was decentralized, dependent on local politics and preoccupations. The research was conducted in this fragmented or chaotically localized system of school feeding.

Beginning in the 1990s, Argentina’s national government initiated economic restructuring opening up the economy to the global market and privatizing state industries. These reforms were followed by a second wave of neoliberal reforms of social programs including education, health care, and pensions. Like other gendered worker–citizens (Arnot and Dillabough 2001), teachers were personally impacted by the enormity of these reforms, which affected their income (Robert 2013) and pensions. They were further impacted by the reforms’ effects on poverty levels and the living conditions of their students.

With the collapse of the Argentine economy in December 2001, feeding programs were necessary. In 2001 the population living at risk of or living with food insecurity stood at 22.9 percent, and that population grew to 40 percent in the months following the crisis (Britos et al. 2003), the largest percentage that Argentina’s public school feeding programs ever had to address. The crisis put more pressure on a chaotically managed set of programs that were running on scarce and inconsistent budgets, whereby some elementary and high schools had feeding programs that others did not. Some programs offered a glass of milk while others provided breakfast and/or a snack and/or lunch. Still other programs offered money to families to buy food on their own. Two feeding programs pulled Pampas’ teachers into feeding roles and responsibilities.

Hunger at Pampas, Part 1: Student Scholarships

The National Student Scholarship Program [*Programa Nacional de Becas Estudiantiles*] was initiated in the Province of Buenos Aires with funds channeled through the federal government from the Inter-American Development Bank (Dirección General de Cultura y Educación n.d.). The program’s objective was “to provide material support to students in vulnerable socio-economic situations strengthening their basic [social] conditions so that they can remain in school” (Dirección General de Cultura y Educación n.d.). Parents received two lump sums during the year of varying amounts (between \$100–200/Argentine pesos), explained Pampas’ Assistant Principal, Josefina Ramazzotti, “exactly for the purpose of feeding the student as well as the family” (Interview 04-22-2005).

To receive this support, families had to demonstrate financial hardship deemed a risk or barrier for a 14- to 17-year-old to complete a secondary education. Ramazzotti described

how financial hardship was defined: "Families [that earned] less than \$500 Argentine pesos/month, more than \$200 below the poverty line for the province" (Interview 04-22-2005). More importantly, students and families had to attend a school where faculty and administrators had secured classification as a school authorized to receive and administer the program. That is, students and their families received food scholarships because teachers, staff, and principals had brought the program to their school and administered it.

Pampas educators were compelled to secure the program for their students and then took responsibility for holding meetings to inform families, ensure that all paperwork was obtained and completed, submit materials to the province, and distribute funds prior to acceptance deadlines so that students did not lose the award. No funding was provided to schools to run the program.

The scholarship program guidelines set by provincial, national, and nongovernmental lenders distant from Pampas varied from year to year in every way except one: teachers, staff, and administrators were responsible for facilitating the program without additional pay or even acknowledgment of their services. When this research was conducted in 2005, the assistant principal anticipated that the amount awarded would be two payments of \$100–150. As Ramazzotti stated, "In the past several years, the amount has varied; last year it was \$200 in two payments" (Interview 04-2-2005). The variations represent a hardship for the families and the educators involved as they struggled to support students' needs.

Teachers struggled with unpaid work, sometimes during school breaks or vacations. Ramazzotti explained:

Another change that occurred in recent years is when the payments are dispersed. Last year they occurred in the middle and at the end of the school year. Teachers and administrators had to go and look for students and their families because the provincial government sent awardees' letters to the school after [students] left for winter and end-of-year vacation. Students and families must sign an acceptance form by a deadline in order not to lose the award. So the only option for teachers and staff was to go door-to-door looking for all the award winners. [Interview 04-22-2005]

The scholarship, an indirect school feeding program, only worked—only reached recipients—if administrators and teachers worked extra hours during the school year, during winter break, and during the summer months locating the families and arranging for all required paperwork to be filed on time. The transfer of responsibility for social welfare from the state to teachers reflects the neoliberal conceptualization, as described by Connell (2005), of teachers' work as the primary site of policy influence over student achievement. The fact that teachers were not paid for that work and that it was not part of their collectively bargained job descriptions reflects the neoliberal devaluation of teachers' work. Furthermore, the expectation that teachers would carry out bureaucratic food work (in addition to the teaching work for which they had been educated) reflects the neoliberal understanding of teachers as "technicians" (Connell 2009:224) rather than education professionals. The gendered elements of these dynamics become clear within a context in which prestige is associated with heavily masculinized spheres of influence, and the loss of prestige takes place within a traditionally feminized profession around the traditionally feminized work of providing food.

However, teachers and administrators followed through so that their students' and their families' needs were addressed by one of the few social services offered to the community. Over three hundred first-year students applied for the scholarship in 2005. Yet Ramazzotti stated that the school turned away families because of changing qualifications, including families' lack of legal documents and legal confirmation of their addresses. She performed this work because, as a member of the school community, she believed it was her responsibility to administer a program that met such a desperate need.

While the school-based work was outlined in detail on the government's website, district and provincial education officials overlooked the intensity and demand of

program administration, let alone working in a poor school. The interim principal, Esteban Polanco, captured the invisibility of their efforts in the following anecdote, which described how the previous principal, Roberto Acosta, had been reprimanded by an inspector for not submitting bureaucratic paperwork for one week (inspectors were the next level up from principals in a long hierarchy of administrators).

One time, the inspector reprimanded, in writing, Roberto Acosta [the previous principal]. A week passed and the inspector demanded an explanation in writing, with signature, to be delivered to district offices [mail is not used to send official documents]. Acosta was to explain why he had committed the imprudent and irresponsible act of not presenting official administrative documents. Acosta [wrote to] tell her [the inspector] what he had resolved for the school [community] the week he did not deliver his official paperwork: "I met with a father . . . with the student's family that did not have food and we tried to brainstorm how to resolve this, with another [family] that did not have shoes, with a teacher who needed help, with a domestic violence problem in another family" . . . The inspector apologized, said she felt bad . . . and told him that she did not know that schools had to deal with all of these issues . . . I think this reflects a little bit the disconnection there is between these levels. We feel that . . . we get reprimanded constantly. We avoid paperwork . . . because we get one or two days behind in handing in a certain document and we are always left with the feeling: they don't know how it is in schools today, where we work. [Interview 10-06-2005]

This example captures the invisibility of the teachers' and administrators' work in the eyes of an extensive educational bureaucracy. It also captures how Acosta's work, like that of other school administrators and teachers, intensified in terms of providing services and care work—work that, as Connell (2009) argues, involves embodied and emotional labor often unrecognized by neoliberal ideology. Finally, it captures the experience of reporting to a blind educational administration pulling back from providing support to schools but adding lengthy, disconnected administrative paperwork to workloads. The scholarships are just one of the school feeding programs in which educators and educator-administrators were involved at Pampas.

Hunger at Pampas, Part 2: Universal Snack Program

A second school-feeding program also existed at Pampas. Like the scholarship program, it provided support to students to continue their education and was administered by faculty and staff. It differed from the previous program in two ways. First, the snack program provided nourishment in school rather than cash payments to families. Students received a fortified snack (*merienda fortificada*), which included hot tea (*mate cocido*) and a cookie (a traditional cookie called an *alfajor* filled with *dulce de leche*), or a box of sweetened juice and a simple ham sandwich on French bread. The other difference was that the provided snack was the result of teachers pushing for a reinterpretation of the parameters of a Provincial and National feeding program. That is, Pampas' in-school snack program was, in the words of teacher Mónica Álvarez, the "result of teachers' demands" ("*producto de la exigencia de los docentes*") (Field notes 04-08-2005). Whereas the scholarship program was aimed at high school students, the state-funded snack program was not inclusive of high school students. In 2004, when several Pampas students passed out during school because they had not eaten in days, teachers' involvement in feeding began anew.

With 71 percent of people in Pampas living below the poverty level (INDEC 2003:4), teachers and administrators were aware of economic difficulties for students and their families. Unemployment was so high and persistent across generations that many students were unfamiliar with the term for worker [*obrero*], having never known anyone with steady employment (Robert 2008). Many educators chose to work at Pampas because they

believed these conditions to be unjust and believed in youths' right to an education. Students' fainting was a new call to action for teachers. With the school principal's guidance (Acosta at the time), teachers initiated a dialogue with their students about their lives. Many students revealed that they were hungry. Some students came to school hungry while others avoided school altogether, ashamed of their families' inability to feed them. Many entered the workforce out of necessity rather than attend school. Although elementary students received supplemental nutrition at neighborhood schools, there was no comprehensive plan in place for adolescents. The students' stories motivated educators and community members to take action.

Any funding to be secured for feeding would entail challenging the limited parameters of the school-feeding program. Feeding students was logistically complex; the high school was not built with feeding in mind. There was no kitchen, cafeteria, or staff to store and prepare food. Bringing a feeding program to the school also meant challenging the traditional parameters of high school teaching work. Unlike the work of their elementary counterparts, the work of high school teachers has traditionally been conceived of as teaching content knowledge, epistemology, and methodology not caring for students like feeding them.

Educators pooled their resources, collecting money, food items, and supplies to implement a short-term solution: snack time for adolescent students similar to that in elementary schools. The snack was served to students at their desks during instructional time. Students refused the snack unless it was offered to the entire class; those suffering from hunger refused to be identified as needy (see Russell et al. 2007). Even when a universal snack program was instituted, some students did not eat. Lautaro Morales, a teacher, explained, "You will not see all of them taking and eating the food. Do not read this as if they are not hungry. The students are embarrassed; they do not eat the snack provided out of pride [*orgullo*]. They are ashamed because they have not eaten; they are poor" (Field notes 04-08-2005).

A long-term plan was needed to sustain a universal school-feeding program supported by the province's School Food Service [*Servicio Alimentario Escolar*]. School officials, along with students, parents, and community members, collectively pursued a larger plan, one that would garner funding from education and social service agencies and extend the plan indefinitely. They approached district and provincial government agencies and officials to secure funding to build a kitchen in the school's courtyard. Teachers' advocacy was unpaid. Travel back and forth to the district headquarters and provincial capital was not reimbursed. Their efforts were entirely voluntary, as was the work by students, staff, and community members.

The teachers-turned-food-advocates had to persuade officials that the current feeding policy was outdated. Historically, the school feeding model had not included food for adolescents because it had been designed a century prior, when few poor students had access to secondary education. Throughout the 20th century, educational attendance changed drastically. By 1999, 85 percent of secondary-level-aged students attended high school (UNESCO n.d.) even though high school education was not mandatory. Furthermore, proponents of the food program argued that all students deserved support from the Argentine government to pursue their education, that it was their right as citizens. They were knowledgeable about human rights-related doctrines such as the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 24. which was ratified by Argentina in 1990 and states, "Parties shall . . . take appropriate measures . . . to combat disease and malnutrition . . . through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking water" (Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights n.d.). Teachers and administrators cited human rights legislation to make a case for funding the school-feeding program to government agencies and researchers.

In the same year, the school's long-term feeding plan began to take shape. District governing bodies provided support for a kitchen, a food service worker, and food delivery. By 2005, the Pampas universal school-feeding program was in place. Educators and administrators were satisfied with the result of their collective efforts to secure the feeding program. Funding was in place, and students were being fed. Teachers could turn their attention back to classroom instruction; their days as food activists were coming to a close. However, each day during snack time, as instruction was briefly set aside, teachers were reminded of how their work had changed.

In a context in which elementary teachers were seen as "second mothers," the work of these teachers was seen as focusing on content. Their work was to educate, not to care for adolescents' well-being beyond that provided through a formal education. However, when hunger seeped into the school community with ongoing economic crises, so too did new work roles, identities, relations, and practices for high school teachers.

Involvement in the Gendered Work of Feeding

Teachers' involvement in addressing student hunger and bringing school feeding programs to Pampas brought with it three new roles that changed the nature of teachers' work: food advocates/activists, food managers, service providers/caregivers. Teachers fulfilled these roles through a combination of gendered practices and gendered behavior (Ridgeway 2009). The nature of teachers' involvement in feeding hungry students—their practice of these roles—is rooted in the structure of elementary teachers' work (Martin 2003), historically feminized in accordance with the social, political, and economic agenda of the state (Fischman 2007). The demanding food policies drew secondary teachers into "doing gender" through a misassigned history of feeding students and essentialization of teaching practices. Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987) argued for de-essentializing *gender* by viewing gendered behavior as "an accomplishment" (126), a set of ways of being carried out by persons in light of social and institutional expectations. "Doing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological. Once the differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the 'essentialness' of gender." Drawing from this argument, Anita Chikkatur (2012) writes that, "institutional arrangements—such as designating bathrooms and locker rooms as male or female—appear to be responding to already existing 'normal and natural' differences when, in fact, they produce these differences" (p. 82). Likewise, if unquestioned, the requirement—and the taking up—of additional care work by high school teachers reinforced and shifted upwards feminine and feminized feeding responsibilities at a moment when the school was considered to be the last remnant of the state serving citizens in many areas of the nation.

Food Advocates and Activists

Throughout the process of addressing hunger in Pampas, educators acted on behalf of their students. They played an active role in challenging "arrangements of power, prerogative, and prioritization that emerged across the spectrum of educational institutions" (Smith Crocco et al. 1999:2) in the context of second-wave neoliberal reform. From ensuring that the school participated in the scholarship program to organizing at the grassroots level to obtain a snack program, educators demonstrated participatory and active citizenship based on a belief in democratic, public, and equitable education for all students.

Activism on behalf of students is not necessarily a signifier of gender, although the movement of members of a feminized profession into the public, political sphere may

represent a challenge to traditional gendered spaces. However, the manner in which teachers framed that activism, the expectations the state had for teachers to perform hunger work, and the nature of that work are gendered in ways that draw on the history of teaching as women's work. "Care and connectedness" (Casey and Apple 1989:182) emerged as central to this work, which entailed endless hours of tracking down families, explaining the terms of the scholarship, and arranging meetings at school for them to complete required paperwork and show legal documentation. It required the teachers to find families a second time if payments were delivered outside regular school sessions. The teachers answered with hours of their lives beyond the "official" definitions of their work as educators. This work reflects often-unrecognized embodied and emotional labor (Connell 2009).

Teachers' responses seem quite logical, natural, even, and seemingly coalesce with the structure of the state's programs to address hunger: If you want services, you must come get them. Women (and men) do this, though at times they do so by playing out particular institutional roles, for example, their roles as mothers and grandmothers (see for example Fisher 1989). While previous demands on the state were framed by the feminine body and related roles of mothers and grandmothers, female and male teachers' demands are made with the leverage of the symbolically gendered feminine body of the teacher (Fischman 2007). The teachers' demands thus do not fall out of the realm of public perceptions that teaching work includes carework.

With the withdrawal of the state from delivering services, teachers had to go after even those social benefits that are presumably protected by rights' doctrines. This inherently demanded more of teachers, intensifying their work, increasing administrative responsibilities, and providing fewer funds to complete extra work or to meet an escalating social crisis. While written about extensively in education reform research, this intensification has not been critiqued in terms of power relations premised on gender. New and demanding arrangements between workers and the state, however, are actively negotiated.

Food "Managers"

Preparing and serving food (except at the most prestigious levels of the profession) have long been women's work. In most cultures, women are responsible for planning, purchasing, and preparing nourishment for the family unit (Counihan 1999). While illustrative of an unequal gendered division of labor, food practices are ripe with struggles for power within households and communities around the world. In times of crisis, women often join forces to feed their communities by setting up community kitchens [*ollas comunitarias*] (Counihan 2008). In this case, poor women have the economic knowledge, means, and practices to feed not just themselves but those around them. Teachers' work at Pampas reflected such practices in marginalized communities and more general notions of women's responsibility to feed the community. Teachers could not fulfill their responsibility to educate if students were hungry. Pampas educators drew on gendered narratives of feeding as they organized and planned the execution of both hunger-fighting programs. They practiced feminine skills related to feeding in the school in order to protect their ability to practice another set of skills to educate the Pampas population.

Teaching history or language arts does not normally entail food management beyond an occasional party or special event. Yet at Pampas it did. Within literature on teachers' work, elementary and secondary teachers are divided as if the gendered qualities and attributes commonly associated with elementary teachers' work (e.g., caring for students by feeding, nurturing, and nourishing them) are nonexistent or less prevalent at the secondary level. Yet the secondary teachers in this study—men and women—needed to engage in this feminized work before they could teach history or literature to anyone: they

had seen their teaching time diminish along with their students' attention spans and attendance. Like work involving food in the home, these efforts were deemed worthy of neither recognition nor remuneration within a professional sphere. This shift in work roles reflects what researchers describe as a global pattern in which educators' work becomes deprofessionalized (Cortina and San Román 2006; Giroux 2009; Connell, 2009) and/or teachers become technicians (Fischman 2007).

It also reflects the complex dynamics of teaching described by Connell (2005) as political. Despite the concentration of power within masculine spheres in a neoliberal context, Connell writes, "In local and central government, practical alliances between women and men have been important in achieving equal-opportunity measures" (1817). Datnow (1997) has powerfully demonstrated how gendered dynamics among teachers can erupt into struggles for power and influence, and can impede school change. In Pampas, by contrast, women and men together took up the gendered roles of food providers in order to carry out their work as teachers, blending social justice politics with carework (see Valenzuela 1999).

Food Service Providers and Hunger Care

Teachers' work practices changed to those of social service providers so that they could remain knowledge purveyors. Argentine educational researchers suggest the increased service work described above is the impact of welfare state withdrawal (Dussel et al. 2000). As social services were eliminated, schools were the only public institution accessible at the margins of the state. Schools were re-imagined as social service centers fulfilling the needs of state "clients" while also still required to provide free, secular education. Teachers in this study were not averse to serving students and their families (see Robert 2013). At least in this study, educators and administrators wanted to serve the community, even as it meant taking steps away from what they first intended to provide: an education.

This new teacher role reflects what John Smyth and Geoffrey Shacklock (1998) explain as: "women are allocated gender-specific tasks in school; tasks which emphasise nurturance and de-emphasise those organizational skills that come to have priority for promotion to senior positions in the school" (p. 75). Yet, we also saw how men (and women) in administrative positions of power engaged in gendered organizational skills. Ramazzotti and Acosta used their positions of authority to care for and serve students and families. When indirectly reprimanded for doing so, Acosta fought back, writing a letter to explain all the unacknowledged work that had been done and its impact on the community members. Ridgeway (2009) explains that even in settings where women are disproportionately represented, as in the school, men can and do hold positions of power, which they can use to shape social situations. In this case, Acosta did so while demonstrating all the care work he performed in a week that was unaccounted for by the administrators above him. He did so because such work—like other caring work, including that performed in the home—is unrecognized and deemed unworthy of remuneration.

In this study, men and women teachers at the secondary level were involved in new work roles feeding students and their families. This suggests that the lines dividing and differentiating secondary teachers' work and elementary teachers' work were disappearing in the context of second-wave neoliberalism and crises early in the 21st century when the research was conducted. Elementary educators' hard work has long included educating children, as well as caring for their food needs. The Pampas high school teachers' work now involved the same. If teachers at Pampas wanted to do their work educating students in history, geography, language arts, or science, they also had to attend to feeding them.

They had to confront an intensification and expansion of their work in general terms but, more importantly, in terms of gender roles, relations, and practices.

Feminization of High School Teaching

Through community organizing and grassroots activism, teachers worked with administrators, students, parents, and community members to address a serious impediment to adolescents' continued education: the need for food. Feeding students, however, involved gendered behaviors and practices often associated with elementary teachers' work of caring for young children.

The effect of these efforts on teachers' work was complex, with implications for individual teachers and for broader conceptualizations of high school teachers' work. For individual teachers, efforts to prevent student hunger added to the work that they needed to complete. Yet those efforts made possible the work of teaching subject matter to students.

On a professional level, teachers' efforts to address student hunger in the absence of comprehensive feeding policies and the retrenchment of social services feminized secondary teachers, intensifying gendered responsibilities and expectations of fighting for and administering social service programs. While the state continues to demand learning results, teachers were required to do more noninstructional work in order to achieve those results. As teachers and administrators at Pampas, men are also taking part in this feminizing process, challenging the limited notions of teachers as women and mothers (Fischman 2000, 2007). Men and women together fulfilled food work, potentially feminizing their level of the profession, in order to practice and even protect it.

This study offers insight into teachers' practices of second-wave neoliberal reform. The receding welfare state creates ideal conditions for an overall revivification of the gendered nature of teachers' work due to poverty outside of school and the structure of school feeding programs in Argentina. While in the short term this reflects an intensification of teachers' work, further research is needed to understand the long-term impact of food activism, of food work, and of administering social programs on high school teaching. Not all teachers need a school-feeding program or have to work to support one. Still, in the global context of public fiscal crises, slashed educational budgets, and the shift away from the Keynesian welfare state at the turn of the 21st century, school communities will need to mobilize and struggle for the needs of their students at all levels of education around the globe. Demanding policies and the historical nature of teachers' work means there is no escaping this extra work.

Sarah A. Robert is an assistant professor in the University at Buffalo's Graduate School of Education. Her research focuses on understanding how teachers' work and teachers' knowledge are affected by neoliberal education reform. She is specifically concerned with how teachers understand and then do policy in and out of the classroom, often looking at the ways gender is involved in these struggles for educational change and equity. She is the director of the Social Studies Education Program and teaches master's and doctoral level courses about social education and gender, curriculum, and instruction (saraharobert@gmail.com).

Heather McEntarfer is an assistant professor of English Education at SUNY Fredonia. Her research interests focus largely on gender and sexuality in education, particularly teacher education. She is also interested in teaching about diversity more broadly, in the ways

narrative writing and reading can be a part of that instruction, and in the transition between high school and college writing for working-class college students (Heather.McEntarfer@fredonia.edu).

Notes

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