



Incentives, Teachers, And Gender At Work

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Abstract: Incentive pay programs have become panacea for a multitude of educational challenges. When aimed at teachers the assumption is that rewards entice them to work in particular ways or particular schools. However, the assumption is based on an economic formula that does not take into consideration the gendered nature of policy processes. This study examined ethnographically 10 teachers' decision-making processes regarding whether to take up The Rural Program [*La Ruralidad*] in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, which rewarded qualified educators with bonus pay to work in hard-to-staff schools, to address the question: How does gender mediate teachers' decision-making process to take up an incentive reward? I isolate three conditions: safety, transportation, and community, to show how gendered relations, identities, and roles incentivize teachers. I argue that masculinities and femininities mediated teachers' approach to taking up incentives. Rather than a simplistic, one-time-only decision, the study shows an on-going policy process that involves women and men in "rational economic decision making" mired by gender.

Keywords: incentives; gendered organizations; teachers' work; policy; Argentina; teachers; teacher distribution; masculinity; femininity

Incentivos, Docentes y Género en el trabajo

Resumen: Los programas de incentivos parecen ser una panacea para una gran cantidad de desafíos educativos. Al ser dirigidos a los docentes se asume que los premios los incentivan a trabajar de ciertas maneras o en ciertas escuelas. Sin embargo, esta suposición se basa en una fórmula económica que no toma en consideración la perspectiva de género

en los procesos de elaboración de políticas. Este estudio es una examinación etnográfica de los procesos de toma de decisiones de 10 profesores sobre si aceptaban el programa La Ruralidad en la provincia de Buenos Aires, Argentina, que remuneraba a maestros calificados para trabajar en escuelas con dificultades de atraer docentes. El objetivo del estudio es indagar cómo la perspectiva de género intercede en la decisión de aceptar un incentivo. Separo tres condiciones: seguridad, transporte, y comunidad, para demostrar cómo las relaciones, identidades y papeles de género incentivan a los profesores. Sostengo que la masculinidad y femineidad afectaban las consideraciones de los profesores sobre los incentivos. En vez de ser una sencilla decisión coyuntural, este estudio muestra un proceso de políticas estructural que involucra a mujeres y hombres en la "toma racional de decisiones económicas" teñidas de género.

Palabras-clave: incentivos; género; trabajo de docentes; políticas; Argentina; docentes; distribución de docentes; masculinidad; feminidad

Incentivos, professores e Gênero no Trabalho

Resumo: Os programas de incentivo parecem ser uma panaceia para uma série de desafios educacionais. Sendo destinados para os professores é assumido que os prêmios os incentivam a trabalhar de determinadas maneiras ou em certas escolas. No entanto, essa suposição é baseada em uma fórmula econômica que não leva em conta a perspectiva de gênero na formulação de políticas. Este estudo é uma análise etnográfica dos processos de decisão de 10 professores sobre se eles aceitaram o programa na província rural de Buenos Aires, Argentina, que remunerava professores qualificados para trabalhar em escolas que não conseguiam atrair bons docentes. O objetivo do estudo é investigar como o gênero intercede na decisão de aceitar um incentivo. Neste trabalho separamos três condições: segurança, transporte e comunidade, para mostrar como os relacionamentos, identidades e papéis de gênero incentivam os professores. Defendo que as masculinidades e feminilidades influenciavam as considerações dos professores sobre os incentivos. Em vez de ser uma simples decisão conjuntural, este estudo mostra um processo de políticas estruturais que envolvem as mulheres e homens na "toma de decisões racionais e econômicas" tingida de gênero.

Palavras-chave: incentivos de gênero; trabalho educativo; políticas; Argentina; professores; distribuição de professores; masculinidade; feminilidade

Incentives, Teachers, and Gender at Work

Incentive pay programs aim to entice educators to behave in ways that will result in specific outcomes: to get teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools (Arrieta & IDEA, 2010; Vegas, 2005), to teach toward standardized exams (Lavy, 2003), or just to show up for work (see Parker, 2010). Such programs are an extension of a historical shaping of education policy by economic theories (McKay Wilson, 2009), a worldwide phenomenon that views free market theories as cure to economic and social ills (see Lavy, 2003, p. 6). Evolved from principal-agent theories (see Prendergast, 1999), which propose that workers respond to rewards and are thus motivated to work in an employer's interest (Ross, 1973; Vegas, 2005, p. 3), incentives are touted as a potential panacea for educational inequality and nearly every facet of life (Levitt & Dubner, 2005). While teachers may respond to monetary incentives, it is unclear "how the incentives work and under what conditions they create the types of changes desired" (Umansky, 2005, p. 21).

In this article, I examine how incentives work. I look at how teachers decide whether and how to take advantage of one program and what conditions shape teachers' decision-making process. Specifically, I analyzed 10 (5 men and 5 women) teachers' decision-making regarding The Rural Program [*La Ruralidad*] in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, which provided bonuses of 30% to 120% of the teacher's monthly salary for working in hard-to-staff public schools to alleviate the unequal distribution of qualified educators. The program is similar to incentives initiated around the world to get teachers to work where they currently are not working, often in poor urban or rural communities at underfunded schools.

I approached the study of incentives from the standpoint that all policies are socio-cultural artifacts (Shore and Wright, 1997) produced by persons and groups of persons enmeshed within particular contexts. Teachers in this study understood, interpreted, enacted, and resisted incentives that were texts, discourses, and that became a part of their everyday work practices (Ball, 1994). Through this sociocultural process of policy production, gender and other markers of identity pervade on-the-ground interpretations of policies. The aim of this paper is to challenge the notion of a rational economic decision-making process that is context free and treats policy practitioners as objective decision makers free of socio-cultural constraints and power differentials. I foreground gender, specifically, as a useful analytic concept to examine how policy works and to problematize the underlying neoliberal logic of rational economic decision making. By neoliberal (neoliberalism, etc.) I am referring to the blending of liberal theories asserting individual autonomy and agency free from contextual constraints with neoclassical economic theories that claim markets—and the individuals that form them—function above and beyond political and social life.¹ It is important to note, however, gender is not the only social marker of identity that undermines rational and instrumental policy practices but rather the focus for this article based on a robust feminist educational policy analysis and gender, work, and organization literature.

Gender is a useful analytic concept for understanding policy processes, or as Umansky (2005) writes, “how [policies] work” (p. 21). Yet gender is often not considered in educational policy research. Gender policy analysis acknowledges the integral role masculinities and femininities play in organizational processes of change from policy creation to implementation. Policy is not neutral or natural; gender mediates educational policy processes such as educational detracking (Datnow, 1998), school choice (André Bechely, 2005; Stambach & David, 2005), and school management (Chan, 2004). Research also tends to personify policy, as if policy on paper (rather than people writing it or deciding how to carry policy out) is what gets the proverbial job done. Yet it is men and women enmeshed in struggles for limited material and symbolic resources in contexts of inequality that produce (or contest and resist) educational change. And, finally, educational research often treats policy as a linear two-step function and focuses analysis on the outcome, rather than on the process. However so much transpires between crafting of policy language to interpretation and production. How policies work is not linear and not static rather it changes with the actors involved in the contexts where they are doing policy. Policy makers and researchers must acknowledge and address its sociocultural nature if investigations are to shed light on how education reform, such as incentives, work.

¹ For an accessible and historically linked definition of neoliberalism Robertson (2011) provides citations to classical social and economic theories (e.g., Locke, Hayek, Polanyi, Stiglitz) that neoliberalism evolved from, as well as its evolution in the education arena. Historicizing the term is of import to understanding one of the implications of this study: that policies are not static nor one-time decisions. Rather policies continue to be transformed and practiced even by policy makers.

Using narrative analysis (Riessman, 1993) to seek out the story in the ethnographic data, I isolated conditions shaping teachers' decision-making for The Rural Program. Teachers' views (e.g., opinions, perspectives, beliefs) of incentives were not explored; rather, the data collection focused on teachers' decision-making process related to the salary reward. Did teachers want a bonus? How did teachers go about obtaining the teaching hours that provided the Rural Program bonus? What conditions prevented teachers from obtaining the bonus? What conditions enabled them to get the bonus? What, if anything, did teachers do to compensate for their inability to access the bonus if in fact they desired more salary?

I compared and contrasted the conditions to theories of the gendered nature of policy and of gendered work organizations in order to critique neoliberal policies of teacher incentives and the rational economic decision-making assumption on which they are premised to answer the central question: How is gender involved in teachers' "rational economic decision making" about incentives? I show women and men teachers engaged in so-called rational economic decision-making mired by masculine and feminine roles, relations, and identities.

I argue that teachers' ability to obtain the incentive reward was mediated through masculine and feminine practices, roles, and identities in a continuing process of negotiation with themselves, their immediate social relations, their evolving conceptualizations of teaching work, and the broader reform context. Women and men indeed desired monetary rewards in the context of intensified global economic insecurity; however, teachers' ability to access the reward was mediated by gendered roles, relations, identities, practices, and structures. Teachers make rational decisions about taking up incentives that are mediated by socio-cultural constraints and unequal positioning within the policy context.

Review of Teacher Incentive Literature

Incentive research in education is growing as the number of mandates grows. To date, the majority of education policy literature examines the success of an incentive to produce a stated policy goal: higher test scores from students (Lavy, 2003) or enticing educators to work in hard-to-staff schools (Wheeler & Glennie, 2007). However, how were these outcomes achieved? Policies are part of a socio-cultural process (Sutton & Levinson, 2001) and mediated by context (Datnow, Hubbard, & Conchas, 2001); policies do not achieve an outcome. And all policies are not successful. Teachers—*street-level bureaucrats* (Maynard-Moody & Musheno, 2003; Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977)—mediate policy, sometimes changing behavior to conform to policy makers' desired outcomes (Glewwe, Ilias, & Kremer, 2003), resisting policy suggestions (Datnow, 1998), or just ignoring them altogether. This study looked at how teachers decided whether an incentive is desirable and the conditions that shaped their decisions to take (or not) the reward. To move the extant literature in a new direction, the fieldwork focused on capturing policy process within the context where the incentivized women and men workers are making their decisions.

Several studies were found that examined the scope and effect of incentive programs for high-needs schools (see, for example, Guarino, Santibañez, & Daley, 2006, for a comprehensive overview of research) similar to the Rural Program. While some researchers found different rates at which women and men took up incentives in high-needs schools (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004), little is understood as to why there are different rates. The current study helps explain why there are different rates among women and men, offering a contextualized and gender-focused analysis of the decision-making process behind varied rates and a new vista from which to probe how incentive policies work. The contribution to the extant literature is a thick description of women and men's

policy decisions from which to critique the presumed rational economic decision making process from a gendered perspective.

Involving Gender in Neoliberal Policy Analyses

Incentive policies assume teachers respond to rewards in predictable and straightforward ways: if teachers want an incentive, then they will make decisions to obtain the reward. This study turned to feminist educational policy analysis and gendered work organizations literature to understand the hot button issue of teacher incentives with a focus on the role gender plays in decision making. The gendered perspective offered attempted to move beyond counting men's and women's heads to examine masculine and feminine relations, identities, roles, and practices of the teachers, heeding Glasser and Smith's (2008) findings that education research generally contains vague definitions and applications of the concept with most limited to counting women and men.

To understand how incentives work through teachers' constrained decision making, I interrogate how gender is embedded in the foundational concept of the rational and instrumental actor on which neoliberalism is based. Incentive pay programs, for one, assume the rational and instrumentalist modern teacher (Dillabough, 1999) is less constrained by social and contextual issues. The Rural Program, for example, assumes that teachers' motivations are unencumbered by social constraints such as gender (or class, or race, or ethnicity, etc.). These assumptions are based on the premise that all teachers—men and women, urban and rural—approach incentive programs with the same advantages, disadvantages, meanings, and identities (Acker, 1990). Teachers live and teach in contexts of social and cultural inequality. They make decisions about incentives based on their own limited and finite material and symbolic resources and their location in the policy context. I applied these insights to this study by examining the school context that teachers had to decide whether or not to work in. This included examining what teachers considered typical workdays, the school building, where the school was located, and the means by which teachers arrived at work. Brought to the forefront of discussions of incentives, these constraints and advantages / disadvantages complicate the notion of a rational and instrumentalist modern teacher. This is not an effort to prove the teachers are making irrational decisions. Rather the concern is with revealing how gendered persons make rational economic decisions in complex socio-cultural contexts.

Revealing how gendered persons do policy on the ground only reveals part of how masculinities and femininities are embedded in the process. A rich body of literature has examined the gendered nature of work and organizations, further complicating the context-free neoliberal teacher-subject. Joan Acker (1990) articulates how workers are treated in organizational theory as "abstract categories that have no occupants, no human bodies, no gender" (p. 149). However, she also demonstrated how the "hypothetical worker" imagined to fill this disembodied category is male. The male worker has been imagined as free from the "legitimate obligations" (p. 149) associated with women (i.e., child bearing and raising) and better suited to work in a capitalist structure.

The hypothetical, symbolic, and embodied teacher has traditionally been a woman. Thus the work structure including pay, responsibilities, and educational preparation has been constructed around the legitimated obligations associated with women teachers in Argentina and elsewhere in the world (Apple, 1986; Biklen, 1995; Cortina & San Román, 2006). For more than a century, teaching has been women's work in Argentina (Morgade & Bellucci, 1997). Women accounted for 79.4 % of the national teacher corps including preschool through tertiary (non-university programs) levels (Ministerio de Educación, 2006) and 81% of teachers in the Province of Buenos Aires where this study was conducted. Women represented just over 66 % of high school teachers nationwide.

Approximately 40% of women teachers nationwide are the primary breadwinner (Dirié & Oiberman, 1999, p. 3-4). This study critiques the incongruence of a hegemonic category of male worker and work with the female worker and work structure of teaching into which incentive's logic is placed.

It also examines the notion that the hegemonic male makes decisions free of constraints and free of context, complicating Acker's assertion of the male as free-agent albeit a privileged one. The Rural Program was instituted in the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina, at a time when teaching emerged as prime employment for men perhaps in light of massive privatization of state industries (e.g., gas, oil, railroads, and water) dominated by working class men. The conceptualization of teaching as women's work was shifting (Dirié & Oiberman, 1999): working class men challenged teaching (Fischman, 2000) and teacher education's feminine dynamics (Fischman, 2007). Such dynamics often go unrecognized in reform contexts and policy analyses that conceived of workers and work through static gendered lenses assumed to be natural and stable.

Teaching represents flexible work, meaning hours paid are not extensive or seemingly set. Public high schools have multiple sessions (morning, afternoon, and evening) lasting 4.5 hours in the Province of Buenos Aires. High school sessions were further divided into teaching hours. That is, teachers were contracted to teach one hour or one class in a school, another hour and class in another school, and so on up to a maximum of 30 hours a week. This flexible structure represents a feminine work arrangement often simply referred to as women's work. With a short workday or the "option" to work just a few hours, teachers—presumably mothers—could then be home to fulfill their reproductive and familial responsibilities. As with labor around the world, this structure has intensified the work of the women and men who must shuttle physically and emotionally / psychologically between multiple places of employment.

Acker (1990) writes that readings of the symbolic gendered worker can work in oppressive, if hidden, ways:

Rational-technical, ostensibly gender-neutral control systems are built upon and conceal a gendered substructure (Smith 1988) in which men's bodies fill the abstract jobs. Use of such abstract systems continually reproduces the underlying gender assumptions and the subordinated or excluded place of women. (p. 154).

The Rural Program is an "ostensibly gender-neutral policy." This analysis of how incentives work contributes to theory of the gender dynamics surrounding teaching work in the Argentine context, and it contributes to a theoretical understanding of such dynamics within the global context of neoliberal educational reform in which incentives are applied.

Data and Methods

The fieldwork for this study was completed in July-August 2003 and during the 2005 academic year (February to December). I ethnographically explored 10 (5 women and 5 men) teachers' perceptions of the impact of educational reform on their work in public high schools in the Province of Buenos Aires. Teachers' work was categorized around three different titles and related work arrangements: tenured (permanent work for lifetime), provisional (no ownership of work, indefinite timeframe), and substitution (no ownership of work, definite timeframe). According to the 2006 National Teachers' Census, 66.6% of teachers worked only tenured hours, just over 9% had only provisional hours, and almost 19% had only substitute hours.² The remaining percentage worked a combination of tenured, provisional, and substitute positions. The 10 teachers in this study

² The newest census data added another work title. *Contract work* was defined as persons hired outside of the three pre-existing categories (Ministerio de Educación, 2006, p. 16). Just over three percent of teachers are

approximated the national census data with 70% tenured (3 women/4 men); 10% provisional only

Table 1

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Primary Bread Winner? (Y/N)	Attended Rural School as Student? (Y/N)	Location Of Residency	Number Years Teaching	Employment Status (tenured, substitute, etc.)	Number Hours Teaching/Week
Monica Alvarez	37	Y	N	City of Buenos Aires	9	Tenured	36
Ana Laura Cabezas	48	N	N	City of Buenos Aires	9	Combination	24
Margarita Echeverria	37	Y	N	City of Buenos Aires	5	Tenured	30
Alejandra Espina	40	N	N	Province of Buenos Aires	18	Tenured	17*
Isabel Gomez	28	N	Y	Province of Buenos Aires	7	Provisional	24
Mario Macaya	34	N	N	Province of Buenos Aires	5	Tenured	31
Alberto Membrives	48	Y	N	Province of Buenos Aires	16	Tenured	28
Lautaro Morales	29	N	Y	Province of Buenos Aires	5	Combination	23
Enrique Morino	41	Y	N	Province of Buenos Aires	9	Tenured	55
Esteban Polanco	39	Y	N	Province of Buenos Aires	9	Tenured	14**

*Alejandra Espina taught 45 hours per week. This number reflects hours taught in high school. It does not include teaching hours at the university level.

**Esteban Polanco taught less hours in 2005 because he assumed an administrative position. His tenured teaching hours were being covered by Lautaro Morales as provisional work hours.

performing this type of work. It is plausible that the actual figure is higher as many teachers combine positions over the course of an academic year and tabulations did not separate out contract work plus other forms of work. None of the teachers in my study mentioned this arrangement and therefore further critique is not included here. However, the appearance of contract work in an already fractured labor market deserves further scrutiny in relation to the broader neoliberal reform trends in education and the economy. It potentially illustrates the ways that educators are now being hired outside of collective bargaining agreements.

(1 woman); 20% working mixed hours (1 woman/1 man). All the teachers completed a survey to map out work histories within the school community adapted from anthropological models that map out household characteristics within a community. The data included in Table I comes from completed surveys and paints a very basic picture of who the teachers are, how long and how many hours they have been teaching, the stability of their work hours, and importance of their pay to the family unit. This information is enhanced with interviews and observations.

I interviewed the teachers twice using a semi-structured interview format, which blended teacher work life histories (Goodson, 1992) and feminist oral history traditions (Gluck & Patai, 1991) to understand why teachers chose to teach, what they perceived to be the purpose of their work educating youth, and how—if at all—their work and their perceptions of that work had changed. I observed teachers' workdays, including travel from their home to various school locations, at three different points during the school year: beginning, midyear, and finals, as well as their work obtaining more teaching hours.

I applied the *constant comparative method* throughout the fieldwork process. In interviews and observations educators directed me away from the impact curricular reform had on their classroom work to how broader non-subject specific reforms affected the organization of their work. I continued to examine this lead by collecting, analyzing, and focusing on the category of work beyond the classroom (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), which led to archival research on non-curricular policies to continue the process of *data transformation* (Glesne, 1999; Wolcott, 1994).

The codes for this particular study emerged from a review of the data and were analyzed against the theoretical framework and literature outlined above to probe the issue of how policy works and the ways that gender is involved in rational decision making. All names for people and places are pseudonyms. All translations are my own.

The Rural Program in Context

Similar to other national contexts, Argentina suffers from an unequal distribution of qualified educators. Despite a shortage of work in the general labor market (12.7% unemployment and 10.1% underemployment in 2005 when the field work was completed), despite the flexibility of teaching work described above, and despite more men entering the classroom, qualified educators—men and women—still found some schools undesirable. The Rural Program attempted to alleviate the unequal distribution of qualified educators in the Province of Buenos Aires' public schools with bonuses equivalent to a percentage of the teacher's salary from 30%, 60%, 90%, 100%, to 120%. The bonus percentage is assigned by the government based on unfavorable, inaccessible, prone-to-flooding, or a combination of these school conditions (Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1957/2005).³ No definitions for the terms were provided. None of the women who participated in this study taught in

³ The Rural Program was presented by research participants as a recent policy yet archival research revealed documents with the policy language dating back to 1957. While the policy was reissued and reauthorized in 2005—hence the teachers' sense that it was a recent policy—as part of the second-wave of neoliberal reform, the earlier date is important as it supports two of the implications of the current study. It illustrates that policy is an on-going process and not static. Neoliberal policy logic applied to the State is not a new phenomenon, but rather one that has evolved over time to its current and more widespread manifestations. The differing dates also suggest incentives need to be historicized, an analytic endeavor that may yield much needed insight into how such policies work or fail to work and under what conditions. By historicizing the success or failure of such plans to achieve stated policy goals, research would also shed further light on the assertion this study makes that incentive policy processes are mediated by persons in a non-linear fashion whether the person's decision making examined is a government policy maker or a teacher. Alternatively, the incentive component of the policy may have been added on to the older, comprehensive teacher policy in 2005.

90% schools; the men did. None of the men taught in a 100% or 120% bonus school. All ten teachers taught in at least one classified school: Pampas, described below.

To understand the unfavorable conditions behind a 60% category for one school consider the following description of Pampas, the public high school where this study was conducted. Seventy-one percent of the population around Pampas lived below the poverty line (INDEC, 2003, p. 4; see also INDEC, 2007). Additionally,

during the summer break between the 2004 and 2005 school years, all the windowpanes were stolen except in the faculty lounge, computer room, and main office, which have functioning locks on the doors. Winter came and the windows were not replaced; the community could not pay for them and the government did not fix them. Students and teachers were subjected to wind and rain; they began each class wiping mud and water off desks and chairs. The temperatures during morning classes were as low as forty degrees Fahrenheit. The area did not have gas lines useful for heating. Staff bought electric heaters to share and lock up when not in use. None were used in classrooms. While the building had water, there was no public sewer line. Bathrooms regularly overflowed, if they worked at all. The concrete building was filthy and freezing. (From Author's Field Notes)

In Pampas' favor were four factors, which perhaps kept the school from qualifying at a higher percentage. First, it was located on a paved street within five blocks walking distance of a main highway. Second, Pampas sat between rural and urban landscapes in what sociologists call the second ring of Metropolitan Buenos Aires. Though it qualified for the Rural Program, it was not so rural that public transportation was unavailable or irregular. Third, while the unpaved side streets became muddy puddles during rainstorms, the area did not flood. Last, Pampas was known among educators and educational researchers for its inclusive mission and strong community ties. The school offered marginalized youth and their families a space in which "primary relationships that are profoundly broken are sutured together" (Duschatzky, 1999). The school was founded through grassroots organizing by elementary teachers, parents, and students who, prior to Pampas, had no accessible high school. As a result of this origin perhaps, Pampas continued to be considered a community organization, built and functioning to serve the needs of its neighbors.

Findings

More Money

The 10 teachers—5 women and 5 men—whose decision making was the focus of this analysis all taught in the Province of Buenos Aires. Though minimum base salary for teachers is set through negotiations between the national government and national umbrella of teachers' unions, provinces have the ability to pay teachers above that minimum to adjust for local economic contexts. The Province of Buenos Aires was the second wealthiest province, with the largest population (almost fourteen million), and the second highest cost of living (INDEC, 2001). Base salary for teachers—no difference was noted between women and men's salaries—was set at approximately \$840 Argentine pesos / month for thirty hours maximum work a week (US\$ 347/month) excluding one-time incentives offered by national and provincial governments, health benefits, and pension inputs. This was the third lowest base salary in the nation (Ministerio de Educación, 2007, p.14). These contextual factors inevitably shaped teachers' decisions regarding incentives. All the men and women wanted to earn more money offered through the Rural Program; however, teachers' rational economic decision-making process took into consideration conditions to determine whether or not they could obtain the incentive.

Analyzing 5 women and 5 men teachers' work life narratives and practices revealed that safety, transportation, and community were three conditions shaping decisions as to whether and how to obtain the salary incentive.

Safety

Going places

Though men talked about more dangerous neighborhoods and the need for more discipline in Rural Program Schools, this did not dissuade them from pursuing teaching hours there. The men did not suggest that there were unsafe spaces of work for them, just more difficult assignments. For Lautaro Morales, working in new settlements [*asentimientos nuevos*], or shanty towns [*villas*], was difficult because of the school conditions, and also because the conditions in which students lived affected the student-to-teacher relationship. "It's the affection. The kids [at Pampas] have more emotional support, and are more affective. I think that it's because they are in contact with these needs at home. [At other Rural Schools], no. They live with violence, addictions, broken families."

Morales refused to take me to the other two Rural Program schools where he taught, which were 90% classified schools. He just said "no, I cannot take you there." Morales practiced gender, or what Martin (2003) refers to as workers "socially constructing each other at work by means of a two-sided dynamic of gendering practices and practicing gender" (p. 343). In this case, he was socially constructing my femininity, class identity, and my Otherness in relation to the Rural Schools, and he could not and would not—even as a working class man—assure me safe passage to them.

Morales considered himself and other young men he taught with to be "going places" by obtaining hours at Rural Schools. He was a newer teacher with five years experience, lower on the seniority scale, but had obtained teaching hours at three incentive schools. He and a male friend explained that not only did Rural Program placements ensure a financial boost, but that logging more teaching hours would enable them to move up through the teacher seniority rank and on to other career goals: curriculum development or administration. The schools providing this financial and career boost were not considered unsafe or difficult to access; safety and access were not even an afterthought. For these two young, self-identified⁴ working class men, The Rural Program placements were tickets to a stable, professional career and a middle class income.

Personal safety and fitting in

Three of five women voiced concern for their personal safety at work or on their way to and from work. One concern was the assumption that squatter settlements or shantytown populations were prone to violence inside and outside of the classroom, echoing Morales' comments above. None of the women had experienced violence in or around the schools where they taught.

⁴ As mentioned in the data and methods section above, teachers completed a survey for which they were asked what class they identify with, espousing Bourdieu's (1984) conceptualization of class as relational, not determined solely by (financial) capital (see also Wright, 2005). The teachers' responses would potentially differ from class identity determined by family income. What is unclear from this study's data is how, if at all, the intersection of men's gender and class identity might affect their decision making about incentives. For example, would class identity limit men's access to Rural Program Schools? Would there be working class school communities in which men would not work? Whether middle or working class, would men be less concerned with safety, transportation, or community? Similarly, how might class further mediate women's access to Rural Program schools? All the women in the study self-identified as middle class, might self-identifying working class women not face such barriers to Rural Schools? This is both a limitation of the data and a future research trajectory.

However, Monica Alvarez believed it was just a matter of time before violence erupted at Pampas. A female Spanish Language Arts teacher was robbed and assaulted as she left evening classes during the 2005 school year. For the time being, Alvarez firmly believed that “God was watching over Pampas.”

Student misconduct was common (e.g., talking back and not following directions) and commonly experienced by the three women concerned for safety too. Margarita Echeverria discusses behavior in relation to her ability to teach:

. . . many teachers want . . . discipline. (. . .) I can’t teach when I am preoccupied with behavior problems. I want to teach content, not be silenced in the middle of my class. Yes, I want to teach content and I can’t.

Monica Alvarez spoke of the problem of misconduct too. She described it in terms of authority. “It is ok that students do not read, they have many problems,” she suggested, “as long as they are not insulting you, something that I have felt in schools, that they insult the teachers with all the insults that you can imagine.” When students stop viewing schools and teachers as authority, problems arise for the women. None of the men stated that they had discipline problems. Four of the five men stated that they were aware that their female colleagues did have problems with discipline.

Isabel Gomez used a map to avoid schools with a “reputation for having behavior problems.” Despite hours being available, she “took a job at another school, figured that based on where it was physically located that the kids were coming from good families.” When asked, “What do you mean by good families?” Gomez responded that the kids “behave well. The children are well-behaved.” The other two Pampas teachers, Monica Alvarez and Margarita Echeverria, employed similar strategies of consulting maps and teaching friends, but they did not mention a concern for the families served by the school. While both struggled with student conduct, they attributed the problem more to group dynamics of adolescents when in schools.

Search strategies employed by Alvarez, Echeverria, and Gomez limited women’s ability to get a reward. Their concern was intimately connected to their concern for safety to teach without challenges or disciplinary problems in schools. Their search for safe schools also included safe communities and a concern for personal safety, for protecting their feminine bodies and for not crossing a gendered geographic line even for work and incentives. Limiting the space through which they moved in the labor market limited women’s work hours and any linked incentive reward.

Travel to schools was one example of this type of safety concern. On our first trip to Pampas together, Alvarez warned that we must cross a highway, which was very dangerous. She felt she took her life into her hands each time she crossed it.

There are no rules, no respect for the pedestrian, and even if there was a light, that does not mean that traffic will stop for it, plus there are vehicles that are turning onto the highway and may not see a pedestrian crossing.

After successfully running across the highway, she turned to me. “Every time I come out here, it’s the same crossing.” Alvarez feared for her safety in relation to transportation infrastructure, or lack of it. As will be discussed below, most men in this study, but not most women, drove cars and thus would not have faced this dangerous crossing.

The women also anticipated physical violence and adapted strategies to avoid it. Women would walk together, clutching purses tightly to their bodies and walking down the middle of side streets. When asked why they walked down the middle of the road (I was fearful of getting hit by a car), Monica Alvarez, Margarita Echeverria, and Isabel Gomez laughed because they did not know exactly why they chose to walk in the middle of the street. They told me that they just did.

Within such practices lies the potential for consciousness-raising and the development of collegiality. However, this shared experience of having to walk in groups for fear of personal safety is an inconvenience. Whereas the men might finish classes and return home immediately, the women teachers had to either wait for a ride or for others to walk with them before heading to the highway to wait for their next bus. The teachers did not finish teaching at the same time. They were contracted to teach specific hours, not to teach in a specific school as teachers are accustomed to in western and northern school systems. Teachers' work is so fragmented across high schools that community or collegiality is challenging and challenged. Walking is an inconvenient survival strategy for maintaining employment at schools where bonuses can be earned.

The female teachers perceived some geographic spaces as off-limits and unsafe to them, including bus stations, stops, and routes, as well as neighborhoods and school sites. Whether restrictions were imposed by others or by one's self, they reiterated historically derived notions of gender-divided social and cultural spaces. Throughout modern capitalist history, women have had their movement restricted in relation to socio-cultural ideas of what is feminine, appropriate, and safe. When such restrictions are challenged—as they so often have been—women have been punished. Girls are taught at an early age not to walk alone at night for fear of being attacked. The blame, if a girl does get attacked, lies not on the human rights violation, the act of violating another, but rather on the girl for the infraction of moving through physical space in a particular temporal moment.

The policing of girls' / women's bodies does not stop with space and time but continues with appearance. From girls' / women's headscarves in public schools in France to women teachers' shaving practices in the United States (Koza, 2003), policing of women's bodies is widespread in educational settings. Dressing to blend into a Rural School and remain safe was a lesson learned by Monica Alvarez. She discussed her first weeks of teaching at Pampas.

When I started I went more made up, with high heels . . . until one day I realized that . . . I was told by an older member of the school staff, and, poor thing, she did not know how to tell me . . . that day it had rained hard, and the street was a river and me with my heels . . . 'Monica, you see how it is outside in the street, in the neighborhood' . . . She did not know how to tell me! 'Look, it's not a good idea to wear heels, you could fall, it's all mud. There is no sidewalk.' I understood what she could not tell me: one needs to come dressed more simply, less out of place . . . look at the people dressed simply, really, don't get dressed up much. Also, she told me for another reason, another question too: There are certain clothes, students just cannot have. There are kids who will tell you, nice jacket, teacher. Still others are capable of saying, 'Ah! Look at this one with those clothes, who does she think she is.' I was told to avoid those situations, because they could rob me.

Alvarez was wearing clothes she wore regularly in the City of Buenos Aires during her teacher education program. She began to wear jeans, sneakers, and less formal blouses to teach, so as to conform her body and appearance to that of the Rural School surroundings. This policing came from her female colleagues and was internalized. Alvarez was not presented with nor did she negotiate an alternative performance of a young woman teacher in the Province. While she was presented with a seemingly alternative version of woman than she knew it was limited to appearance, her gendered performance was not to change (Butler, 1990) just her clothing, for her own safety. This policing and conformity of Alvarez's body to her work environment stands in contrast to Morales' comments downplaying Pampas as an unsafe school with unsafe students. Although Morales was performing a feminine job, his masculinity still is deemed acceptable even perhaps more resilient and capable for the work in Pampas and other Rural Program schools.

Alvarez also was uncomfortable during her five-block walk because it was an unfamiliar space, because she had to walk in the dark sometimes, and because she had to cross a dangerous highway on foot. These were attributes she could not change, but she decided she could change her appearance. These gendered regulations were present for women teachers when contemplating Rural Program incentives. Because they were mindful of personal safety while commuting to classes and while at school, they conducted research prior to signing up for Rural Program teaching hours and continued to do that research while working within the communities and when seeking more teaching hours. Again, Butler's critique of the limitations of gender constructs was helpful and indeed helped tease out tensions within the bins. The women's research involved negotiating femininity; it was reflective of their search for environments into which they could perform the socially accepted role of teacher while traveling to them involved passing through spaces that were not necessarily deemed safe for that feminine subject. The incentive rewards those women able to negotiate the tensions surrounding teachers' femininity.

Transportation

Transportation factored into one man and four women's decisions whether to accept Rural Program placements. Four of the five men owned and drove a car. Only Lautaro Morales walked or took buses. If the cost of transportation and time to travel was not excessive in relation to the number of hours offered at incentive schools, he accepted the work. He had to walk eight blocks on a dirt road to reach one of them, for example, but the time was not a cost factor. Because of car ownership, men commuted less time than women did. Three of the five men commuted less than five hours a week. Only one woman commuted less than five hours a week. Isabel Gomez only had one hour commute each week by bus to get to the two schools where she worked. She also had the least number of work hours.

Why did women not own cars or have drivers' license? Monica Alvarez and Ana Laura Cabezas reported that they did not have the money to purchase and maintain a car. Cabezas in particular discussed living on a very tight budget in which three of the four family members contributed to make ends meet. The fourth, her husband, was retired and brought in a small pension. She just did not have the money. Monica Alvarez confided that she and her girlfriends dared each other to go to driving school to get drivers' licenses. They passed driving school but never paid the fees to get the official licenses. "Why would I waste the money? I cannot afford a car and expenses!"

Driving and owning a car was a masculine activity among the educators in this study. Of the five men teachers, four had cars. Only one woman had a car. Gender is a salient social category shaping teachers' transportation options. Unfortunately, the Automobile Club of Argentina does not disaggregate driver data by gender to further understand this condition.

Gomez also was concerned about spending too much money and time commuting to safe schools. She only accepted teaching assignments requiring less than two bus rides from house to school.

I had the opportunity to work in another school but after noting that I had to take two buses to get there, I gave up the position. It was difficult to travel between jobs. And the cost of travelling made it not worth the effort.

All four car-less women investigated whether the school was on a major road where buses could drop them off in front of the school. Alternatively, they looked for short walks to and from the school. In the wintertime when daylight hours were shorter, concerns over transportation and personal safety overlapped. Morning sessions began at dawn and afternoon classes ended at dusk. (None of the women accepted evening teaching hours at Pampas.) Walking with others was a

common practice. Rather than victims, the women understood their situation to be an inconvenient necessity. Having to find a ride to the highway with teachers or others to walk with was an inconvenience, but it was a survival strategy that the women accepted and navigated to continue to earn a living and develop a career.

Community

A sense of community was the last condition found to mediate teachers' decisions to work in Rural Program classified schools. Women and men used their knowledge to get placements in schools with a reputation for faculty-community relationships or supportive, mentoring faculty and administrators. They learned through previous teaching assignments that in many of the higher reward Rural Schools, they would teach less and discipline more. They wanted the financial reward, but they also wanted the professional satisfaction and growth that comes with working in a supportive, caring school community. They wanted to teach. Five of the teachers even arranged to co-teach and lead students through a historiography course even though the school could not pay for all of their work hours. Echeverria explained,

In reality [the directors] gave me the [paid] hours but I have a very friendly relationship with Lautaro Morales. For one we are very compatible in how we think history should be. So he and I support each other. (. . .) we are friends and we collaborate.

When community was a strong attribute of schools, men and women decided to work there and, in this case, a financial reward was not a concern.

Pampas was a desirable teaching placement because of a reputation for community. The school was dedicated to working class and working poor students and their families. Teachers and administrators had a common goal beyond earning a pay check and teaching their subject matter: to include students and their families in the school, to open the doors, to offer a chair, and to listen to what was needed to support students' secondary education. As Enrique Morino explains,

Reform, order, norms are good, but only one of the pillars [of education]. I think the other also is intra-school work, here [in Pampas], I think, that you need to consider . . . consensus, that mandates do not reach. The image of [Pampas] was the horizontal school, the open school.

The teachers often quoted or referred to Paulo Freire and fashioned their work in terms of *conscientization* (Freire, 2000). Lautaro Morales' description of his work at Pampas reflected this concept. He described the purpose of his work as helping students recognize that:

they are . . . active subjects and creators of their own history. If they do not know where they come from, it's like awakening . . . without memory. You have to know who you are, and where you are going, why you are in the place you are . . . history helps you with this, helps you realize you are an active social subject and how to act . . . be a part of humanity.

Men in this study reported seeking teaching hours at Pampas for the focus on serving the working poor and impoverished community. This sense of serving was attributed to a director who united faculty members across three school sessions at Pampas (morning, afternoon, and evening). The director also worked to develop a school community that included faculty and the neighborhood.

The teachers often contrasted the community offered at Pampas with the broader expulsive educational system and society. Membrives, Morales, and Polanco, referred to Pampas as "the last frontier" for students. Beyond Pampas was the abyss, and the school needed to teach curricular knowledge and how to cope with limited opportunities. "How far does the State go to help students? The State does not exist any more," lamented Morales. Although much in and around the neighborhood of Pampas was not ideal, a collective commitment to cultivating an inclusive school

community that aimed to support students and their families in the absence of public services or employment seemed to overcome The Rural Program identification. Esteban Polanco described the school as:

attentive to social change, [a] pioneer in realizing that societies were changing, that the world was changing, and that it would generate, in Metropolitan Buenos Aires, an important mass of unemployed people and that this would have grave social consequences. The school would be the last bastion of what remained of the State.

The men were concerned about the lack of support offered to communities and took on the work at Pampas to address it.

Breadwinning

There was another definition of community that potentially shaped men's drive to go after the incentive rewards. Esteban Polanco described how the pressure to provide for his family pushed him to seek work hours and enabled him to overcome the potential impediment of being a man in a woman's job:

There is a strong work component. I think that my case is representative of many teachers in the province. (. . .) you have to talk about the whole process of the state receding, of the [privatization] of public services. In this framework is an increase in unemployment that continues. My wife was a teacher or just about to become an elementary teacher and that was in my favor in comparison with many of my contemporaries, at least my wife worked. [But] I had to find an alternative job in a very difficult moment when doors closed and did not open.

Polanco confessed to his teaching colleagues in a group interview that he went into teaching to earn an income and benefits for his family: teaching was a job, not a calling. While becoming a teacher could be perceived as a barrier for the men in this study, the need to be a breadwinner pushed them to seek teaching hours and climb the seniority scale.

Women, of course, were also concerned with earning salary and benefits to support their families. Ana Laura Cabezas spoke of her tight budget. Two of the five women in the study were primary breadwinners, two more were significant contributors to their families' financial well-being, and the last was not concerned with income brought in. None of the women framed their drive for work hours solely in terms of income generated. Rather their search for work was overshadowed by the need to assess where that work would be done and with whom.

Women teachers as community activists

Women also were eager to work at Pampas. Ana Laura Cabezas and Alejandra Espina were especially eager to work in collaborative, supportive schools. They entered and stayed in the profession out of a sense of activism. They did not see Pampas as dangerous; rather, they viewed Pampas as underserved and the students and their families as victims of social and economic inequality and injustice. Cabezas noted that the students she worked with at Pampas were "kids too" and deserved a(n) (public) education. They saw a chance to build community and hoped that as a bonus, they could collaborate with like-minded educators. The women who embraced and practiced the activist teacher challenged the simple and simplistic dominant images of educators as caregivers, nurturers, or "second mothers" (Fischman, 2000). Rather their work at Pampas expands on teacher conceptualizations prevalent in Argentine society and other national contexts as well. This activist teacher contrasts somewhat with the men's views of working for the community.

Men articulated their activism in terms of fulfilling the duties or the role of caretaker left unfulfilled by the retracting welfare state. So while they talked of advocating on behalf of the school community, their talk stemmed not from broader inequality, but rather in terms of filling the abyss

created by the dismantled state. The gendered nature of state and nation-making (See Dore and Molyneaux, 2000; Yuval-Davis, 1997) and of the gendering process of state policies and programs (See O'Connor, Orloff, and Shaver, 1999) is not lost on the men teachers. They read the failures of the state to care for the Pampas community to be a failure of the head of the imagined household and they set out to pick up the responsibilities.

Pampas' work offered all teachers a sixty percent reward through the incentive program. The incentive, however, was not only the money: it was also the possibility of working for the school community. Men and women teachers desired a sense of community at their workplace, the opportunity of working for a community, and of fulfilling community expectations of taking care of family.

Discussion of Findings

Critiquing Rational Economic Decision Making

Teachers' gender had an impact on access to incentives and decisions to obtain them. This is evident from the teachers' stories about whether or not they work in Rural Program Schools. I discuss the findings here in relation to the rational economic decision-making that incentives are premised on and that teachers acted on.

Men's access: A cost-benefit analysis by the rational, instrumental subject?

With few exceptions, men were able to apply a straightforward, constraint-free cost-benefit analysis to assess whether to accept teaching hours at Rural Program schools. They wanted extra pay and therefore took hours at Rural School Programs. The incentive provided an immediate benefit and with only one exception: Lautaro Morales' lack of a car. The men made the decision without safety, transportation, or community being a hindrance. The incentive pay program motivated men to seek rewards, and men, unlike women, had fewer impediments to achieving them.

Perhaps the men in this study were circumspect for reasons of masculinity. Perhaps they did face more impediments to work, including safety concerns. The participants had lived through a brutal military dictatorship, which many discussed in oppressive terms. The potential for violence when travelling to Rural Program schools perhaps did not match that earlier state-sponsored violence. Or perhaps, as Morales pointed out, the students at Rural Schools were not violent, they were just poor, and the men read the communities as such, travelling for the most part in their cars, and taking advantage of incentives where possible.

Masculinities mediated the decision-making process surrounding the incentive pay program. However, that mediation did not inhibit or present obstacles to taking advantage of bonus pay and garnering as many hours as possible. While this study does not demonstrate significant barriers for men to take advantage of the incentive, it does illustrate how gendered roles, relations, identities, and structures play a part in the decision making process, namely by not inhibiting access or, in the case of community expectations of the male breadwinner, translating to a push toward work. If the men want the reward (as the logic of incentives suggests) then they will seek it. The men did with few barriers and with the promise of longer-term career growth, or as Morales described it, of "going places."

Women's access: Compromised cost-benefit analyses of a rational instrumental subject?

Women's cost-benefit analysis approach to the incentive took into account personal safety and transportation to Rural Program schools. Women researched safe and accessible schools and took what hours they could. When they could not take on the hours, they made compromises in the

short term to obtain more paid work at the schools where they had hours. Compromise or not, the women acted in rational economic ways when making decisions about incentives. The decision-making process just happened to involve a concern for safety and transportation too. Their efforts to make up for the limitations safety and transportation placed on them are strikingly rational decisions that, in the end, pointed toward a concerted effort to earn more income from their teaching. Monica Alvarez took on one extra paid hour a week at Pampas coordinating the social sciences faculty and curriculum. While she saved on not having to travel to another school, she confessed that to fulfill the responsibilities, she worked more than one extra hour a week and even worked during breaks. The number of hours she had to put in was also increasing each year. In the 2005 school year alone, due to new educational reform mandates, she was putting in 7 more hours a month than she was paid for in order to meet the demands to submit lesson plans and other administrative records to provincial authorities.

Alejandra Espina also worked as an assistant principal at one of the schools where she taught. She sensed that 2005 was the last year she would hold the position, however, and would therefore lose the extra pay. The province had announced that it would formalize the position, requiring her to apply for the job she had held for over five years. She was unsure she had the required credentials and was also unsure about participating in a formal oral and public competition against other applicants. She contemplated returning for a master in history to enhance her teaching and earnings instead.

Returning to school was a compromise that women made when faced with less than desired teaching hours. Isabel Gomez returned to school in 2005 to obtain certification in Geography. She hoped that two certifications would increase her chances of securing more hours of safe and accessible work. She diverted her energy away from securing more hours for more pay in history classrooms, taking the chance that in the long term, she would secure more work via both subject areas.

Echeverria utilized this strategy too, beginning a university-level history degree. Only two of the ten educators in this study held university degrees. She, like the majority of Argentina's secondary educators, earned teaching credentials through a non-university teacher education institute, or normal school. Echeverria justified her choice to study more first as a way to strengthen her pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) and second as a way of strengthening her seniority and access to hours. A university degree gave educators more points, which bumped them up the teacher seniority ranking. In the short term she would pay for her studies (fees, materials, transportation, and time unavailable for teaching) so that in the long term they might provide her a return of improved professional skills and knowledge and a boost up the seniority ladder and access to more teaching hours. Gomez and Echeverria devised compromises that called for more unpaid work with the hope it would lead to more work hours.

Women made compromises based on the hope that in the long term, more education would lead to a combination of improved teaching (Espina), broader access to teaching hours (Gomez), and / or more seniority points (Echeverria) and therefore more work hours. Only one of the men was studying during the time this research was conducted. Enrique Morino began a master in history program. However, he did not equate his studies to his secondary school teaching or even to more work (he had the most teaching hours out of all participants). Instead, he aimed to move up the academic teaching hierarchy with his master degree; he had his sights on getting out of high school classrooms and into higher education.

Conclusions

This study examined teachers' decisions to take advantage of an incentive program, The Rural Program, which aimed to entice teachers to work in hard-to-staff schools. The objective was to critique the neoliberal notion of rational economic decision making free from social or cultural norms, roles, practices, or identities. I examined ethnographically how teachers went about obtaining teaching hours at schools where they earned the reward and why sometimes they did not work in incentive-rewarding schools. I isolated from the data three conditions that mediated teachers' decisions to (or not to) take work at the qualified schools: safety, transportation, and community. Above, I laid out the conditions in relation to theories of gender, work, and organization and gender policy analysis. Combined, these theoretical fields aided in the articulation of how masculinities and femininities are embedded in the concept of worker, the work performed or expected of the worker. They also illuminate the gendered nature of policy processes aimed at changing workers and their work places.

Contributing to literature on incentives in workplaces, this study takes gender as an important analytic concept for understanding how incentives work on the ground. The findings suggest that men and women behave differently in respect to incentives, mediating their decision to take up a reward based on rational economic decision making that is tainted by gender. The study concurrently contributes to theorizations of teachers' work by making visible the ways women and men negotiate their work options based on differential access to symbolic and material resources and power.

This paper illustrates how men and women were differently constrained by gender identities, roles, and relations. Men, for the most part, seemed to "act" as rational and instrumental actors assessing The Rural Program and its benefits. Yet, they were—as Polanco reminded us—constrained and pushed by social and contextual issues in deciding on work. These issues were related to broader structures that shape the spaces through which men and women move and what gendered practices men and women espouse within those workspaces.

The incentive program invoked qualities more often associated with hegemonic masculinities: bravery and strength, connecting gendered bodies and identities to monetary rewards. The connection was not lost on men who moved into the feminine space of the school and feminized profession of teaching. While taking the Rural Program incentive, they also maintained some sense of hegemonic masculinity: they continued on as the male breadwinner. Divorced from a sense of process and from context, analyses of incentives overlook these important interpretations.

This study also suggests that neoliberalism has a history. Incentives, at least as is the case of the Rural Program, are not new but rather were implemented, tested, and perhaps receded from the limelight. Incentives continue to evolve, becoming entrenched in the 21st century educational arena, and not only studied in the present but historicized.

Deciding on Community

All ten teachers taught at Pampas. The reasons why both men and women remained at this school illustrated what teachers desired in a workplace and why they decided to stay or leave hard-to-staff schools. The Pampas case showed how the goals of The Rural Program—to address the problem of teacher distribution and inequity of educational opportunity—could be met. Pampas was attractive to qualified educators because of the sense of community, illustrating that incentives are not only monetary (though in a context of economic instability, monetary incentives were desirable to all). Teachers also desire the nonmonetary incentive of being part of a larger project.

Gender Policy Analysis

Gender needs to be central to policy analysis, particularly when the policies are applied to the gendered work of teaching. And gender needs to be central to critiques of neoliberal reforms not only of education, but also of work more generally. New reforms of teachers' work derived from neoliberal ideological strains are posited as gender and even context neutral. The present effort contributes to the literature that challenges this assumption. Instead of enticing teachers to act uniformly in rational and instrumental ways to meet the state's goals, incentive programs draw on broader structures of gender to mediate decision-making. The ways teachers negotiate incentives are not so straightforward, nor are they linear and simplistic processes. Their analysis should not be either.

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