

There's No Substitute: The Politics of Time Transfer in the Teaching Profession

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Abstract

Recent scholarly attention has turned to the imbalance of work time in the United States. While some workers experience overwork, others remain underemployed and often in a contingent employment relationship. In a related vein, school districts across the United States are experiencing a shortage of substitute teachers while regular teachers experience heavy workloads, long workdays, and significant work/family conflict. Absent the ability to draw more substitutes into their employment pool, many districts propose solutions to classroom coverage problems that involve a time transfer from a group of substitute teachers to regular teachers by reducing their reliance on substitutes and extending teachers' work hours. Although substitutes who were interviewed expressed a desire for more teaching hours, they were constrained by their need to make a living either through multiple jobholding or finding a higher wage job. This case study demonstrates the process through which a time transfer is proposed, contested by teachers, and ultimately adopted without challenging the disparities between these groups of teachers.

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Introduction

United States' school districts are experiencing a shortage of substitute teachers (Candisky 1999; Lee 1999; Meuller 1999; Sahagun 1999), reporting that between 10 and 40 percent of the requests for substitutes cannot be filled on any given day (Sahagun 1999; Rossi 1999). Everything from lack of benefits and low pay for substitutes to increased mandatory training for full-time teachers are cited potential causes.¹ Districts' strategies to alleviate the shortage include increasing substitute pay or providing bonuses or some benefits, hiring "permanent" substitutes, having teachers' aides, graduate students or community members substitute, combining classes, reducing training demands on full-time teachers, and having full-time teachers cover each others' classes. The most prevalent solution appears to be having administrators or other teachers cover classes.²

Full-time teachers are experiencing heavy workloads, long workdays, and significant work/family conflict (Drago et al. 1999) just like individuals across the occupational spectrum (Schor 1991). While some experience a "time squeeze," others find themselves without enough work (Rifkin 1995) or piecing jobs together in order to make ends meet in our increasingly stratified and segmented labor market (Stinson 1990). Increases in contingent work (Parker 1994, Barker and Christensen 1998), and rises in involuntary part-time employment (Tilly 1996), demonstrate that too little work and too much work exist side by side in our economy. As Schor (1991) reveals, increases in work time are not simply a reflection of worker preferences, but are shaped through political/institutional processes.

To help shed light on the seeming paradox of overwork and underemployment, this analysis is situated at the nexus of regular and contingent work.³ In this case, the form of contingent work examined is substitute teaching. Substitutes, like temporary workers,⁴ can be brought in and removed as needed. Also like temporaries, substitutes cannot expect steady employment, their jobs are unlikely to provide social protections such as health insurance and pension coverage, and there are extreme fluctuations in daily activities. However, substitutes differ from agency temporaries in the structure of the employment relationship. Agency temporaries are paid by their agency and deployed at a variety of work sites run by client companies, which pay the agency a fee for the service. The power dynamics in this three-party relationship, which are highly unfavorable to temporary workers, are

discussed at length by Rogers (2000). In contrast, substitutes are hired directly by the school district and deployed throughout various school buildings in the district.⁵ The absence of a third party from this relationship implies that substitutes are akin to direct hire temporaries or on-call workers, two contingent worker categories about whom there is little research (for exceptions see Rothstein (1996) and Kalleberg et al. (1997)).

This case reveals a process I have labeled “time transfer.”⁶ Time transfer is the shift of a job’s work time from one group of workers to another that differs somehow in status, pay, or other characteristics (such as their employment relationship). The job, in this case to teach students, can be accomplished through a variety of combinations of regular teacher and substitute teacher use. Theoretically, one group of workers might have time transferred away from them either through a reduction in hours or available jobs, while the other experiences an increase in hours or available jobs. For teachers in this study, the time transfer involved changes in working time rather than available jobs -- a decision to decrease reliance on substitutes’ time resulted in time transfer from substitutes to regular teachers.⁷

Time transfer is a political process that may be contested by various stakeholders, and may include elements of institutional and ideological coercion. In the case studied here, the proposed time transfer at issue is from substitute teachers (who are said to be in short supply) to traditional, full-time teachers. Despite objections from teachers and a multitude of suggestions, the administration ultimately decided that increasing the working time of teachers would represent a significant component of its strategy to alleviate the substitute problem. Time transfer is found in an attempt to reduce teacher absence from the classroom for meetings and professional development activities by moving those tasks to after school, weekend, or summer hours. When these activities are moved, the teachers’ labor process is changed --either their work is intensified, their work hours are extended, or both. For example, when teachers lose some of the after-school time they usually spend grading or preparing for the next day’s classes, they must either pack more planning and grading work into their preparation periods or do more work at home in the evenings or over the weekends.

The observation that a time transfer takes place is perhaps less interesting than uncovering the process through which this happens. In a twist of the old Marxian question as to why workers work as

hard as they do (Burawoy 1979), this study looks at why and how a group of workers ends up taking on more work, *even as they resist the change*. In this case, workers (teachers) were fully aware of the time at stake and that they were being asked to do more. They resisted the stepped-up demands, but ultimately took on the time transfer. Why this happened is not simply a matter of forceful coercion or hopes of increased consumption. In addition to political and financial considerations, teachers' ethos of professionalism and our cultural understandings of teachers and of contingent work played a significant role in the process.

While Schor's (1991) analysis provides a compelling macro-level analysis of the paradox of the simultaneous existence of overwork and underemployment (arguably macro-level evidence of time transfer), including rampant consumerism, as well as institutional arrangements that entice employers to create long hour jobs, this study documents more micro-level processes of changes that take place within a profession in a complex organization.⁸

The Gendered Character of Regular and Substitute Teaching

Time transfers cannot be understood without the lens of gender and the gender politics of time (Negrey 1993). This argument is particularly salient in the gender-segregated realm of teaching. Although women have taught in the United States since the 1700s when they were restricted to teaching pre-elementary children (Schmuck 1987), it was not until the 19th century and industrialization that teaching had become "feminized" or identified as women's work (Markowitz 1993; Schmuck 1987). Urbanization, immigration, and free public schooling generated a great need for more teachers, and male teachers were hard to find (Hoffman 1981). "By 1860, the majority of teachers were women" (Schmuck 1987; p. 76).

Women's⁹ literacy rates were high, and since teaching paid more than other employment alternatives (factory work, domestic work), teaching appeared to be the ideal job for white middle-class, educated women. In fact, teaching became known as women's "true profession," a construct that Weiler (1998) notes is "a middle-class white construct" (p. 13). Widespread ideological support for the shift of women into teaching was supported through the construction of school as a "continuation of the family." Because school simply was understood to be an extension of women's home sphere,

women's work outside the home in school teaching was not seen as disrupting the separate spheres axiom (Hoffman 1981; Markowitz 1993; Weiler 1998).

The irony of the times is that while women's "natural" mothering abilities were thought to make them superior teachers, teachers who were actual mothers were not allowed to teach until the 1940s when the marriage bars were lifted (Schmuck 1987). True to the ideological construction of separate spheres, women who taught could only be mothers in one sphere at a time. Marriage and childbearing embodied women, signaling the need to remove them from the public realm (Acker 1990). One profitable side-effect of the marriage bars for school districts was a constant turnover and replenishment with young, less expensive teachers. However, Markowitz (1993) found that contrary to the ideology that marriage was a "procession," teaching was in fact, a profession. The vast majority of those who were forced to leave after pregnancy returned to teaching until their retirement (Markowitz 1993).

Today, 75% of all teachers are women (Weiler1998), and considerable occupational segregation still exists within teaching, with women being concentrated in elementary teaching and language arts at the secondary level, and men in secondary math and science as well as supervisory positions (Schmuck 1987; United States Bureau of the Census 1999; Williams 1992). Women's overrepresentation, particularly in elementary education, remains "evidence" that teaching offers an easy schedule for parents who wish to combine career and family. Contrary to these popular stereotypes, Drago et al. (1999) find long workdays and significant work-family conflict among elementary school teachers. Nevertheless, teachers as a group still place great value on one of the ancillary rewards of teaching, the summer hiatus (Cohn and Kottkamp 1993; Lortie 1975; Kottcamp, Provenso, and Cohn 1986), which gives them the ability to continue their education, do curriculum work for the coming school year, or spend time with their own families.

If full-time teaching does not represent a flexible and easy career option, substitute teaching offers the possibility. Substitute teaching represents (on an ideological level at least) the perfect "career" for a mother – there is no grading or preparatory work to take home, one can work as often or as little as desired, and absence from the home is only required during the hours children are in school. Low pay is considered non-problematic because women's work is assumed (whether true or not) to be

secondary. In other words, it is believed that substitutes do not require substantial pay because they work for “pin money” (Markowitz 1993).

Although today we think of a substitute as the person who stands in for a teacher in case of absence or parental leave, this was not always the case. During the Depression school boards replaced tenured teachers with per diem substitutes who were paid less, had no job security, and no benefits of any kind (Markowitz 1993). Justification of these conditions for substitutes rested on gender ideology that represented women as temporary teachers on a procession to marriage (Markowitz 1993) despite the fact that many women teaching at the time were the sole support for their families.

Substitute teaching remains constructed as mothers’ work; however, because married mothers’ labor force participation, work hours, and wage earnings have shown dramatic increases over this century (Kemp 1994), the traditionally conceived labor pool (i.e. the ideal mother-substitute teacher) has been shrinking. In today’s economy, substitutes who want to earn more than pin money may find alternate employment, leaving districts with substitute shortages.

Methods

This research is a case study of a school district in a non-metropolitan town in Pennsylvania. Certain characteristics of the district make it a less than ideal choice if one wished to extend these results beyond the study site. Generalization is certainly limited by local labor market conditions and labor force characteristics, and because the district is characterized as having more economic resources than some of the districts in the same region of the state. While unemployment in the county where the district is located is lower than the Pennsylvania average of 4%, districts around the state and across the nation with higher local unemployment figures are experiencing similar substitute teacher shortages. Importantly, the issues and potential solutions discussed in the problem-solving group closely mirror those found in newspaper articles from many areas of the country (Lee 1999; Sahagun 1999).

I used several methods for gathering the data. First, I spent several months doing participant-observation of joint union-administration problem-solving meetings around the issue of the substitute teacher shortage (these meetings are known as “meet-and-discuss”). I was invited to attend the first such meeting by the union and the administration groups whose relationship was described to me as

cooperative and mutually supportive.¹⁰ My role began as an observer with little participation, but evolved over time into nearly a full participant, gathering data and helping synthesize suggestions. During the course of participant observation, I had many opportunities for informal discussion with administrators, union leadership, and other teachers.

Second, I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 30 substitute teachers. Participants were drawn as a stratified random sample based on teacher type (10 secondary, 10 elementary, and 10 special subject) from the district's substitute teachers on-call list.¹¹ I had to oversample for men in the elementary group, yielding 20 women and 10 men in the total sample. The substitutes ranged in age from 23 to 73 years old, with a median age of 41. All of the substitutes were white, reflecting the racial/ethnic homogeneity of the area. Each interview lasted between one and one and one-half hours, was conducted in-person, and was audio-taped and transcribed. Interviews focused on work histories, reasons for substitute teaching, experiences of substitute teaching, time use, and work/family questions.

Third, I surveyed all of the district's regular teachers (approximately 500) at the request of the meet-and-discuss group. The response rate was over 50%. The purpose of the survey was to assess teacher attitudes toward suggested methods for alleviating the substitute teacher shortage. In addition to teachers' ratings, the survey instrument provided generous opportunity for open-ended comments on each of the suggestions.

Together these three components of the research provide a comprehensive picture of substitute teaching and its dynamics in this district. The participant-observation and information from teachers helps to round out the information gleaned from the substitutes about the experience of substituting as well as how they understand the substitute shortage.

How the Leadership Team Formulated Solutions

Over a period of more than 15 months, the teachers' union and school district administration took part in "meet-and-discuss." Although the issue at hand was initially framed as the substitute shortage and specifically "how to get more subs" for the district, the focus quickly shifted to regular teachers' time use. Through a survey, the group discovered that their most favored solutions (those that transferred work time to regular teachers and away from substitutes) were in fact, the least favored

by the teachers. Nevertheless, at the conclusion of the meetings, the group turned to the very solutions the teachers resisted. The remainder of this paper is an attempt to understand the process by which this time transfer occurred even as it was contested by teachers. The findings demonstrate the importance of political and ideological processes, and gendered notions of professionalism and contingent employment for understanding time at work (Epstein et al. 1999; Rogers 2000).

The union called for the meet-and-discuss because teachers had complained about feeling pressure to come in when they were sick. Principals had been conveying their difficulties in finding substitutes to teachers who were calling in sick or taking a personal day. Just prior to the start of the meet-and-discuss process, the superintendent's office issued a reminder to principals and their office staff that teachers must be able to take their sick time and should not be pressured to come in when ill. Thus, the meetings started with a single agenda item: how to recruit more substitutes for the pool. Although a few teachers initially expressed concerns that poor pay and unprofessional treatment of substitutes were defeating recruitment efforts, the focus shifted to how to reduce the need for substitutes after the administration provided data on the composition of teacher time out of the classroom. Their data were gleaned from the district's human resource computer system, and showed that the bulk of teacher time out of the classroom (approximately 75%) was due to job-related demands such as curriculum planning, professional development, conferences, computer training, and committee meetings.¹² This information led to brainstorming sessions focused on generating and evaluating potential solutions to the substitute problem.

I have classified the potential solutions into seven categories, and summarized the debates generated by the group for each one. The first four were eventually translated into specific questions on an opinion survey sent to the districts' full-time teachers. Group members felt that last three items pertained most closely to substitutes, and thus did not affect full-time teachers directly enough to be included in the survey.¹³ At the time of the distribution of the survey, the group consensus favored internal substitution and use of non-school hours for meetings and planning.

Internal substitution: *Internal substitution involves teachers voluntarily signing up to cover colleagues' class periods on a pay-per-period basis. Volunteers typically give up either lunch time or their planning period.*

Unpaid internal substitution was informally practiced in the district prior to the events described here. A veteran teacher who had taught in other states where internal substitution was both formal and paid was the first to introduce the suggestion because he “liked having the extra money in his paycheck at the end of the month.” Teachers and principals alike embraced the idea of paid internal substitution, with only minor mention of time pressures such a change might create due to the loss of in-school planning periods. To counter the latter possibility, the group resolved to make paid internal substitution “completely voluntary—teachers could *choose* to earn extra money.”

The suggestion was framed as a winning solution for everyone: teachers could earn extra money, administrators would not have to enter the classroom, and the students would have a “qualified” teacher in the room at all times. Teachers at the meeting expressed satisfaction because the practice was currently unpaid. The group considered the districts’ costs for paid internal substitution, but did not see them as prohibitive. As one teacher noted, some of the costs of internal substitution would be defrayed because “a substitute would not have to be paid for that time.” Because pay issues were part of the teachers’ contract, the terms of internal substitution would have to be ironed out through contract negotiations the next year.

Use of non-school hours: *The use of non-school hours (hours outside of the children’s school day) includes moving meetings, planning, and training to the end of the school day, weekends, or the summer months. Teachers would be required to attend these sessions for which they would be paid.*

Like internal substitution, this notion was firmly embraced from the start. A consensus developed that the substitute “shortage” stemmed from increased professional development activities, but that these activities “make [teachers] better professionals so that we can better serve the kids.” The group could not agree on whether to move the sessions to after school, weekends, or summer. While, the principals favored after school hours, because “people can either stay right through or come back after 6 p.m. when it is quiet,” the teachers present expressed only a slight preference for summer. Because full-time teachers’ pay was substantially higher than that of substitutes, cost issues would have to be reviewed and managed through contract negotiations.

Incentives not to use sick/personal days: *The school district would increase the number of accumulated sick days payable at retirement, and/or pay for personal days not taken.*

There was a mixed reaction to this suggestion. One teacher felt that his colleagues near retirement used sick days unnecessarily, “why not take a whole afternoon off when you have a dentist appointment if you have the days and you know you won’t be paid for them.” The superintendent, a principal, and several teachers heartily disagreed with one teacher stating, “a day off makes *more* work for me because I have to prepare a lesson plan for the substitute and then catch up when I get back.” Increased pay-out for personal days brought more agreement than sick days; however, teachers in the group still argued that they used these days judiciously, and that they are truly needed by teachers. The group left these suggestions on the table for future contract negotiations.

Permanent substitutes: *The district would hire full-time substitutes in specific buildings who would “float” from classroom to classroom as needed.*

Teachers initiated this suggestion by referencing other districts (especially in other states) where “permanent” substitutes were successfully employed. Support for this arrangement was framed (by all parties) in terms of the continuity permitted through having a substitute who consistently was part of the landscape—students would react better to a substitute they knew, and learning would continue with these substitutes in the classroom. The administration calculated that they would need at least 35 full-time substitutes, which would nearly triple the substitute budget.

In addition, state certification requirements pose logistical problems particularly at the secondary level where teachers are subject-certified. The State of Pennsylvania requires that a district must first seek out a substitute certified in the subject they will teach that day. An English teacher cannot substitute for a math teacher unless it has been documented that the district tried but was unsuccessful in finding a certified math substitute. The group agreed that using substitutes within their certification areas ensured that “learning was happening that day;” however, the cost issue appeared to squelch any serious pursuit of this option.

Increased pay for substitutes: *The district would increase the daily substitute rate in hopes of attracting more substitutes.*

This suggestion was raised early on by the teachers, and one teacher in particular who brought a letter from a substitute with 10 years of experience substituting in the district. The letter stated that although this person had worked for 10 years, she had not received a pay increase for at least 8 years. Research done by the teachers revealed that this district's rate was low compared to some in the state, but not compared to many in the surrounding areas. The administration objected to raising substitute pay because "it's the labor market, unemployment is low and raising sub pay will not bring us any more substitutes. When the economy dips again, and it will, we will be paying too much and unable to decrease our rate." In addition, the administrators were concerned that increasing substitute pay would anger neighboring districts.

Increasing the substitute budget was another major obstacle even though as one teacher pointed out, "the district has saved money all these years they didn't give subs a raise." To raise substitute pay, the money would have to come from somewhere else, possibly from money that would benefit students. However, at one of the last meetings, a teacher revealed that several of the surrounding districts recently had increased their substitute pay. In the end, the pay was raised from \$70/day to \$90/day in order to remain competitive with surrounding districts.

Better treatment of substitutes: *If substitutes were supported in performing their job and shown greater respect, they would remain on the substitute list.*

Discussion of the treatment of substitutes focused on providing substitutes a realistic chance for a full-time job by perhaps guaranteeing job interviews for those who substitute a minimum number of days. Teachers felt this would enhance the "testing ground" aspect of substitute teaching and make substituting more attractive. The administration was not in agreement with one member stating, "We can't promise all of them jobs." One teacher felt that if a substitute "is not qualified to have a contract position, then why allow her to substitute for years?" Other teachers felt the district might be reluctant to shrink the substitute pool even further by hiring "good subs" into full-time jobs. Eventually these suggestions were dropped because the district was "going to hire the best person whoever it is."

Other concerns in this category were the inconsistency among building policies, and the lack of information given to substitutes. Only a few buildings provided each substitute with a handbook of information such as the location of emergency exits and bathrooms, lunchtime procedures, the location

of supplies, and who to ask for help. The principals recommended that all buildings provide a handbook to substitutes, and the teachers suggested an in-service day for substitutes to acquaint them with the district, buildings, and teachers. While the group accepted the handbook idea, they struggled with whether to make the in-service paid or unpaid, mandatory or optional.

Better recruiting efforts/use of emergency certification: *Expanded recruiting efforts along with greater use of emergency certification would increase the pool of available substitutes.*

Throughout the discussions, many in the group maintained that the substitute shortage could be lessened in part, by improved recruiting efforts and increased use of emergency certification, which allows a person to substitute in up to four subject areas with any bachelor's degree and only a few days of teacher training. However, the district's last attempt to find people for emergency certification yielded only 2 responses, with low unemployment cited as the culprit. Several teachers disliked emergency certification because it "placed someone in the classroom who had no background in education and only a few days of training." The administration acknowledged this concern and stated that emergency certified substitutes were used only as a last resort.

Favoring the Time-transfer:

Over several weeks of meetings the most favored potential solutions tended toward shifting additional work time from the pool of substitutes onto full-time teachers (i.e. the time transfer options of internal substitution and the use of non-school hours).¹⁴ Serious doubts arose about the effectiveness of increased recruiting; therefore, the logical direction became decreased teacher time out of the classroom. The meet-and-discuss group seemed uniformly ready to accept the change even though the details would have to be ironed out in the next round of contract negotiations. Even though they fully expected to confirm their position, the group decided to survey the teaching workforce before finalizing the decision.

How the Teachers Felt about the Proposed Solutions: Results from the Survey

The survey results did not conform to the meet-and-discuss group's expectations. Table 1 displays the mean ratings for each of the suggestions contained in the survey instrument. Contrary to expectations, the teachers' most favored solution was the hiring of permanent substitutes who would be hired and paid like regular teachers, but would "float" from classroom to classroom as needed.

Teachers were least favorable to solutions that represented a time transfer (internal substitution or the move to evenings and weekends).

Table 1: Mean favorability ratings for substitute shortage suggestions
(1=highly unfavorable, 4=neutral, 7=highly favorable)

Suggestion	N	Mean	Std. Error of the Mean
Internal substitution*	155	3.58	.18
Move to evenings	265	3.29	.13
Move to weekends	265	2.20	.11
Move to summer	267	4.32	.13
Sick days paid	262	5.56	.11
Personal days paid	254	5.48	.12
Permanent substitutes	269	6.09	.08

*Internal substitution question does not apply to elementary teachers

Tests of paired means (not shown) among all of the options' ratings reveal statistically significant differences with two exceptions. There is no difference between ratings of internal substitution and the move to evenings, and between increasing paid sick and personal time. Teachers see both internal substitution and moving meetings to evening hours as similar options because each lengthens teachers' workday. Evening meetings lengthen the workday in an obvious way, but internal substitution lengthens the workday since teachers end up taking home the work they would have done during their preparation periods. Increasing the payout for unused sick time and vacation time were viewed as similar kinds of options.

While none of the time transfer options were highly favored, the point estimates show men being more favorable than women on each of the time-transfer options. However, only one significant difference between women and men surfaced in the mean ratings of solutions (see Table 2). Men were somewhat less unfavorable toward weekend work than women, although both groups rated this option very unfavorably. After creating three different composite measures of time transfer to test if men were more favorable to the category of time transfer options, only borderline significance was achieved on one of the composite measures.¹⁵

Although consistent gender differences were not found in the mean difference above, an analysis of the open-ended responses was done to see if any difference emerges in the meanings behind the numerical

ratings for men and women. The nature of the qualitative comments seems to imply that women and men may object equally but for slightly different, if overlapping reasons.¹⁶ While there were numerous men who mentioned the need to protect family/personal obligations from work infringement, comments from women in the 25-45 age range were more routine. Men were just as likely to mention other obligations like their own educational pursuits or coaching as reasons for disapproving of the time changes.

Table 2: Tests of mean differences of favorability for men and women
(1=highly unfavorable, 7=highly favorable)

Suggestion	Sex	N	Mean	Significance
Internal substitution	men	46	3.98	.18
	women	106	3.43	
Move Evenings	men	67	3.49	.38
	women	192	3.23	
Move Weekends	men	67	2.58	.05
	women	192	2.10	
Move Summer	men	67	4.64	.15
	women	194	4.23	
Sick days Paid	men	66	5.71	.35
	women	190	5.48	
Personal days paid	men	65	5.69	.24
	women	184	5.39	
Permanent Substitutes	men	66	5.89	.17
	women	197	6.15	

Overall, teachers’ hand-written comments indicated high-degrees of work-stress and time-squeeze, and many responses made explicit reference to potential work/family conflict. Approximately one-half of the respondents wrote comments regarding at least one of the time transfer suggestions, and nearly all of these comments were “negative” in that they were used to express opposition to these extra time requirements. The “positive” statements were from a few teachers who indicated that they were not looking forward to the increased time requirements, but that they would do what is best for the students.

Below are representative comments for each suggested time transfer: internal substitution, move to evenings, move to weekends, and move to summers. Teachers’ comments indicated a general time crunch and a family time crunch.¹⁷ Of all the areas in which teachers expressed concerns with work and family conflict, internal substitution seemed to provoke the least apprehension. Instead,

concerns centered on more general time pressures related to work. Evening and weekend work evoked the strongest family time crunch responses, while the summer work suggestion evoked concerns equally divided between general and family-related time crunches.

General Time Crunch

After teaching a full day, having paper work and planning to do at night, I don't feel as mentally sharp at night for a meeting. (elementary teacher, 54 year-old woman)

I already work weekends, evenings, and summers. (secondary English teacher, 26 year-old woman)

We need more time to do what is needed. The pace is killing us off old and young. (secondary science teacher 53 year-old man)

Family Time Crunch

Internal substitution:

I have 2 young children at home and need my planning time to get things done at school. (elementary teacher, 32 year-old woman)

Evening Work:

I have 2 small children under 6. I would have to pay for sitters! (elementary school teacher, 35 year-old woman)

Weekend Work:

I feel strongly that family obligations take priority on weekends. (elementary school teacher, 31 year-old man)

Summer Work:

Before I had a child, I would have thought these were great options. (elementary teacher, 26 year-old woman)

Despite the general dislike for time transfer solutions, nearly two dozen teachers (a few of the same ones we hear from above) expressed a willingness to take on additional time commitment in the form of internal substitution if it were paid, *if it were to benefit the students*, or if there was "an emergency." For example,

I depend on the few planning periods I have and would only be able to do this with advanced notice, which seems to defeat the need. (In an emergency situation, I would—but what defines emergency?) (elementary teacher, 33 year-old woman)

What is striking given the outcome of the meetings is the extent to which teachers opposed suggestions that would potentially increase their working time. Given the decline of extrinsic rewards for teaching in the years since Lortie's (1975) landmark study, teachers have come to place an even

greater emphasis on the intangible benefits of teaching such as the summer hiatus (Kottcamp, Provenso, and Cohn 1986). Because teachers are less likely to be in their twenties than they used to be (Kottcamp, Provenso, and Cohn 1986), and married women teachers are no longer barred from teaching, the teaching schedule may be attractive to a group that has been increasingly encountering work/family conflict. Although the stereotype of teaching is that it provides a flexible career for women¹⁸, we see here that even if their reasons vary, men and women both value maintaining the existing time structure in teaching.

The Other Suggestions

The most favorable attitudes in the written comments supported the hiring of “permanent” subs and raising substitute teacher pay. Comments indicated that teachers thought permanent substitutes would be better teachers because they would be familiar with the students and the curriculum. They would be “real teachers,” and “professional teachers.” There were numerous comments recommending an increase in substitute pay even though this suggestion did not appear anywhere on the questionnaire. This too was framed as a matter of professionalism. Nearly all the respondents who commented on the sick and personal day options explained that teachers already use these days sparingly so it would be hard to take even fewer.

What Were the Substitutes Saying?

Attendance at the meetings was limited to the regular teachers on the committee, including a union representative, and members of the district administration. No substitute teachers took a direct part in the process, nor were they part of the local teachers’ association.¹⁹ On one occasion, a teacher did bring in a letter from a long-time substitute that explained the difficulties of being a substitute teacher. Substitute teacher voices were all but absent until the group asked for feedback based upon my interview research. I eventually provided the group with an overview of the relevant themes from the interviews.²⁰ The sharing of these data steered the group toward two solutions they had dropped earlier: increasing substitute pay, and creating a better work environment for substitutes. The following discussion is an overview of the themes elicited by the interviews with substitute teachers in an attempt to more fully understand the politics of time transfer.

Who they are and what they want:

These substitutes did not fit the stereotype predicated on the “traditional” gender division of labor. Like the majority of temporary agency workers, substitutes were not typically working to supplement a primary wage earner’s income, nor seeking flexible employment while their children were in school, although there were four individuals (13%) in my sample who fit this description. Substitute teaching with its low wages and instability is supported by a particular conception of women’s career patterns. To the extent that individuals fitting the stereotype may have existed in the past, they are even fewer available now. Most partnered individuals interviewed were in dual earner families where their income was integral to the family’s economic stability.

Like temporary workers, substitutes preferred traditional employment to contingent arrangements (Polivka 1996; Rogers 2000). Approximately three-quarters of the substitutes I interviewed wanted a regular teaching job, and either heard or felt that substitute teaching was the route to that job. However, many substitutes were frustrated and felt passed over *because* they were substitutes.²¹ Like temporary workers, substitutes found that they were stigmatized and limited in their mobility into regular, full-time jobs (Henson 1996; Rogers 2000). Therefore, it is not surprising that several substitutes were pursuing occupational changes at the time of the interviews. One substitute was planning to take a full-time job as an assistant manager at Wal-Mart, and another was planning to go full-time at his now part-time job at a bookstore. Steady, full-time hours and health benefits were among the primary reasons for seeking the change.

Despite the declared shortage, many substitutes reported not working enough hours. It was not unusual to find substitutes who worked 2, 3, or even 4 jobs to make ends meet. One young teacher described her many jobs that together yielded less than \$15,000 a year. She kept substituting because she wanted a full-time teaching job.

It’s tough, but where I want to be is a full-time teacher so I don’t have any other choice. So, I work three jobs. I go from 8:45 to 1:15 at the school district and I’m in first grade. My typical schedule is 4 ½ hours at the school district and then from 2:00 to 3:30 I go to my next job, which is at this restaurant, bookkeeping. Then at 3:45, I go to [the tutoring center] and work there from 4:00 to 8 or 9 at night. Unless I substitute in the afternoons, then I skip the bookkeeping for that day. So that’s it. It’s a little messy, but it’s the only way I can pay my bills. ...I guess I’m always tired and I catch up on everything on the weekends. It stinks

because I work so late and then I can't have dinner every night at least until 8:30. [24 year-old white woman]

Many substitutes, even those who needed the money, spoke of consciously reducing their substitute hours either to work at another job that "pays more and doesn't give me all that stress," or because "some days it's just not worth getting out of bed and facing that for \$70." Two-thirds of the substitutes interviewed cited serious classroom management difficulties as the major drawback of the job. It was the single-most important stressor judging by the frequency and intensity with which this topic was discussed. Substitutes felt their position was not legitimate in the eyes of the students, thus keeping order was problematic.

It's a black mark if you have an incorrigible classroom, which of course isn't your fault. The regular teacher has laid the groundwork for that. You're bound to get one especially when you're not noticed and not known in the building. I have a 15 year-old. I know what they do. We did it too when we were in school. Get-the-sub is the favorite occupation. [54 year-old white woman]

Many substitutes who had difficulty with classroom management cited feeling that their disciplinary actions toward students were not supported either by the regular teacher or the school administration, leaving them with few options to control student behavior. A majority of the substitutes went so far as to say that it was impossible to do a good job as a substitute, that there was an underlying belief that what they do in the classroom is and cannot be valuable.

You cannot do a good job. [You] just keep them quiet, keep them in the room, keep the noise down and try. If the lesson plan is ridiculous, like three videos, they go stir crazy. And if you don't do the lesson plan, you try to do something else. You can't win, so anyway, that's what you do. ...And there's a lack of support, lack of job satisfaction. Very often, the attitude of your school is that you're just kind of a boil that they have to have. They don't want you, it's negative. [54 year-old white woman]

In addition to a lack of lesson plans, inadequate or over-detailed lesson plans also were problematic. Substitutes felt they could not execute the plans exactly as dictated by the teachers, particularly if they were substituting outside of their certification area. The lack of simple, everyday information was equally troubling. The location of the bathroom, copy machine, and office supplies as well as the procedures for lunch time were most frequently mentioned as crucial, but missing information.

Understanding the mismatch:

The interviews revealed that substitutes' perceptions and needs did not match the meet-and-discuss group's understanding of the situation. Substitutes, as a group, needed to work full-time and wanted a regular job. The low pay, the irregular nature of substitute teaching, and the uncertainty of being hired, led substitutes to combine jobs or seek alternate careers. While short hours and low pay necessitated a second or third job for many substitutes, multiple jobholding restricted their availability for additional work. Once in this situation, substitutes were reluctant to increase their reliance on substitute hours. Even if a second job paid slightly less per hour, substitutes knew the work would be there. Without higher pay, guaranteed hours, or a job interview, substitutes felt they would not or could not change their strategy.

Therefore, even if raising substitute pay did not bring in *additional* substitutes, it might indeed increase the responsiveness of existing substitutes. Efforts to guarantee steady work or job interviews might also sway substitutes into greater availability. Nearly all of the substitutes interviewed expressed a profound love for teaching and sadness at having to forego working with children. They wished substitute teaching represented a better employment option.

One of the greatest concerns of substitutes, treatment by students and school personnel, was only tangentially addressed in the meetings. Substitutes routinely mentioned a need for better communication, more information, and more support for control in the classroom. Even more troubling to substitutes was the degree to which they felt incompetence was designed into the job, that they were supposed to "shut up and not teach." Several observed that substitute teaching appeared to "run backwards," that to be a good substitute, you needed highly experienced professionals (well-paid and well-respected) who could create learning in the classroom at a moment's notice. They wanted to "teach rather than babysit."

It is unclear whether changes in treatment could have any meaningful effect absent changes in pay and security, or whether the changes in pay and security could be successful without changes in treatment. What is clear is that the problems of the substitute shortage cannot be solved simply by more aggressive recruiting of substitute teachers. There are structural problems, and the substitute teaching shortage may represent a structural strain (Lortie 1986) insofar as teachers who have become

certified in an era of increasing professionalization and credentialing will become frustrated with the conditions of substitute teaching and go elsewhere.

Thus, the district's substitute shortage was the result of a complex combination of the quality of the substitute job, stability, and pay, as well as the availability of other employment options for substitutes. Early on in the process, little attention was paid to the voices of the substitutes, and the group concentrated on time transfer options.

Results of the Process

At the end of the 1998-99 school year, the meet-and-discuss group convened to summarize its findings to date and put forth suggestions, many of which would have to be handled during future contract negotiations. At this time, the group determined that substitute pay might have to be raised, and that substitutes needed better treatment (given an orientation and even training), but that the larger and more significant problem was due to too many demands on teachers' *in-class* time (i.e. curriculum development, training, professional conferences). The discussion of moving training and curriculum planning would continue in the Fall, although it appeared that changes would focus on adding paid time in the summer months or otherwise extending the school year to accommodate more in-service days.

After a four month gap between meetings, the group reconvened in late Fall 1999 and met monthly through Spring 2000 in order to complete their discussions and create a final report for the district. The direction of the meet and discuss group took a significant turn when one principal expressed his desire to move some teacher activities to evenings (from 6-10 p.m.) to best accommodate the teachers because, "They could go home and come back when it's quiet. We'd get a lot done." Summer and weekend time appeared to be off the table despite attempts to reintroduce these options. When reminded of teachers' preferences from the survey and their family obligations, the principal replied that, "we will simply have to move some of these things to the end of the day, I mean we're professionals here!"

During later discussions of full-time substitutes, the administration focused exclusively on the "prohibitive cost of hiring full-time substitutes," stating that the substitute budget would have to more than double. One teacher reminded the group that there could be a limited number of permanent

substitutes as one part of a multi-faceted solution. Questions of substitutes' classification arose. Would they be in the bargaining unit, or on the same pay scale as full-time teachers? The teachers balked at these questions, but expressed that permanent substitutes were different enough in kind (the lack of preparation work and grading) that they should have a different (i.e. lower) pay scale. In the end, these complexities stalled the discussion of permanent substitutes. The group decided that the administration would investigate the legal ramifications of setting up a separate pay ladder for substitutes.

At the very last meeting, the administration announced that the substitute pay rate would be increased to a flat rate of \$90 a day (from a maximum of \$70). While the increase may appear dramatic, and the substitutes with whom I had spoken would certainly be enthusiastic about such a raise, the new rate left intact the sizeable disparity between substitute and regular teacher compensation. The administration also announced that some curricular planning meetings would be held after school, but plenty of notice would be given to facilitate smooth scheduling for the teachers. The details of how this would be paid were to be handled in the next round of contract negotiations. The district would also move forward with arranging for internal substitution on a voluntary basis once the pay was determined through contract negotiations. Items for creating a substitute handbook were being gathered from the buildings (i.e. maps and policies). No plans for pursuing permanent substitutes were announced.

Understanding the Post-Survey Process

For those who study trends in contingent employment, it may be somewhat surprising that the administration did not automatically seek the low-wage option of hiring more contingent workers (i.e. substitutes), but instead considered solutions that would require additional money beyond that spent historically on substitutes.²² The bulk of the favored suggestions involved increasing working time (and money) for regular teachers and moving away from the time of "contingent workers." How do we understand what took place? Three analytical strands will help us to understand the process: group composition, ideologies about teachers, and politics and money.

Group composition

How can we understand why teachers' working time might be explicitly increased in this school district? First, we need to explore the composition of the meet-and-discuss group. The teacher

representatives in the group consisted of 3 men and 2 women. With one exception, they all had either no children or grown children. The one woman of childbearing age left the group after the first few meetings because she could not afford the extra time commitment. This left the group with a very limited perspective on work and family issues based on their everyday experiences. They certainly did not understand teaching as “mother’s work,” in fact, it almost never occurred to the group that their solutions might cause time conflicts for parents. Because of the group composition, it is easy to see how the discussion may have initially discounted the potential scheduling conflicts parents of younger children might face. Rather than focusing on time issues for teachers, any discussion of teachers’ potential reactions involved a passing reference to a few teachers who would be happy to earn the extra money.

In fact, the very composition of the meet-and-discuss group may have been structurally driven. Individuals who “volunteer” their time may represent those who have more time to give, i.e. more experienced teachers (not prepping courses for the first time), and those with fewer non-work commitments. Indeed, in his classic study, Lortie (1975) found that men, single women, and older women demonstrated considerably more “involvement” at school including hours of work, and Drago et al. (1999) found the longest work hours for non-parents and teachers over age 50. Absent the feedback collected from the teaching work force, this group would have pushed for increased working time for full-time teachers, and would have assumed that the solutions would not be problematic for the teachers.

Ideologies: real teachers, self-less teachers, professionals

Despite survey results indicating many teachers’ resistance to increased demands on their time outside school hours, the meet-and-discuss group agreed that teachers would do whatever was necessary for their students, even at the risk of their own discomfort. The self-less teacher ideology that supported this time-transfer was two-fold: there is no substitute for the “real” teacher, and teachers are not workers, they’re professionals.

Underlying the self-less teacher ideology are notions that substitutes are incompetent. Like other part-time professionals (Epstein et al. 1999; Rogers 2000), substitutes are stigmatized as inept, uncommitted, and unprofessional. Examples of incompetent substitutes abounded in the meetings in

the form of substitute “horror stories” told by teachers and administrators alike. The most common themes were the class that got out of hand, the lesson plans that were not executed, and the learning that did not happen. Even at the very last meeting, someone mentioned a substitute who “had no idea what she was doing in there. She shouldn’t have been there.” Many of us are familiar with the stereotype of the bumbling substitute teacher. As children, many of us may have played, “get the sub.” Part of the stigma attached to substitutes, however, lies in the fact that, like temporary workers, they do not hold “a real job,” (i.e. full-time, full-school-year). They are seen as less committed to teaching and perhaps defective in some way. After all, if they were any good, they would have a real job! One administrator expressed that if substitutes were “serious” they would be more available to the district, and others stated that substitutes were not hired into regular positions because they were not the most qualified, “We can’t guarantee these people a job. They might not be any good.” One teacher did object to this characterization by stating, “If they are good enough to be in our classrooms substituting, they should be good enough to hire. Otherwise, they shouldn’t be in the classroom.”

A related ideology regards substitute teachers as secondary wage earners, which also disqualifies them as “real teachers.” Historically, the construction of women’s secondary wage earning has been used to justify low pay or poor working conditions for jobs and occupations that are female-dominated (Acker 1990; Amott and Matthaei 1991). Throughout my participant observation, I watched how the group continually constructed substitutes as secondary wage earners: either as neophytes, retirees, or parents (read mothers) who needed flexible work time. These assertions were made regardless of the actual demographic composition of the pool, and without any input from the pool of substitutes. Although the gender composition of the substitute pool did not differ substantially from that of the regular teaching force, substitutes were understood by the group to be different from regular teachers and to have different desires. Very seldom was this ideology contested in the meetings. When it was contested, it was in the form of identifying an exception to the rule, leaving the rule intact.

Recall that the interviews with substitutes revealed that the dominant reason for substitute teaching was to find a regular teaching job. By denying this reality, the dominant ideology made it unnecessary to either consider raising substitute pay or to take these workers seriously in general. Although a pay raise was considered and eventually adopted, the proposed increase does not begin to

bridge the pay gap between substitutes and regular teachers, the latter of whom continue to be compensated (not including employment benefits) at a rate at least twice the substitutes' daily rate. In the end, the adoption of the pay increase had more to do with competition from surrounding districts than the notion that substitutes needed and deserved a living wage.

Teachers' concerns about substitutes' lack of professionalism certainly contributed to the results of the meet-and-discuss process. Their early suggestions for increased recruiting demonstrated the underlying ethos of professionalism – full-time subs, better pay, substituting as training ground, and incentives toward full-time employment all represent steps toward professionalizing substitute teaching. As it became clear that professionalization of substituting was unlikely, teachers strove to maintain professionalism through their adopting increased work time.

The self-less teacher ideology also rests on the idea that regular teachers are not workers, they are personally devoted to the learning of each individual student. Much like the ideology of intensive mothering (Hays 1996), the self-less teacher ideology evokes gendered notions of what it means to be a teacher. A largely feminized occupation, teachers are portrayed as idealized mothers, giving even at the expense of themselves (Preston 1993, 1995). While the emotional and unpaid labor that mothers give has historically been discounted as work, teachers expected to mother often have had much of their work framed as “not work,” but caring, a “natural” task for of any self-sacrificing teacher/mother (Preston 1995). To complain of the personal costs of this devotion (i.e. overwork, burnout) is to be a “bad teacher/mother,” even though many of the individuals opposed to the time transfer cited family time as their reason. They wanted to be good parents to their own children.

At the same time dissenting teachers are constructed as bad mothers, they are also subjected to the ideal of the disembodied, universal worker (Acker 1990; Smyth and Shacklock 1998). Teachers' mothering is reserved for students, their own families are not acknowledged by a policy that disavows the connectedness of the private and public realms by increasing teachers' work time. “Real teachers” in other words, are free to work all day, stay at the school all evening, work over the weekend, and remain for summer activities. Real “professionals,²³” as indicated by one of the administrators, would be willing to expand their working time. Current cultural understandings stigmatize professionals who

want to work less than excessive hours expected of them *as professionals* (Epstein et al. 1999). These teachers were certainly no exception. They wanted to be good professionals.

While the ideologies of the self-less teacher and real professional may seem contradictory, the roots of their connectedness lie in the marriage bars which allowed women to teach only until marriage –women embodied by marriage and childbearing transgress the public/private split. Real professionals are personally devoted to their students because they have no outside commitments. Together these ideologies pave the way for the time transfer.

Politics and Money:

Historically, teachers have struggled to be seen as professionals with skills beyond women’s “natural” abilities (Preston 1995). In this district, we see the results of this struggle reflected in an increase in opportunities for training and conference attendance over the past ten years. The substitute shortage put pressure on teachers for additional work time or decreased professionalization.²⁴ There is a seeming conundrum here -- can the district maintain opportunities for teachers’ professional activities without overburdening the teachers? In light of the substitute shortage, it seems unlikely that the conundrum could be resolved through a shift back to a low-wage, contingent work force.²⁵

The process of confronting the substitute shortage is constrained by the highly politicized nature of education in Pennsylvania and the U.S. more generally.²⁶ The educational system has been the object of a “moral panic” that is leading to increasing commodification as funds shift from the public arena to private consumption (charter schools, school vouchers) under managerial discourses of improved efficiency, accountability, and servicing clients (Smyth and Shacklock 1998). Broad-based moral panic manifests at the local level as well. Specifically, this district was witnessing the election of new school board members, many of whom were running on “parental control” platforms that included demands for charter schools. Efforts to open the district’s first charter schools were well underway at the commencement of the meet-and-discuss group sessions.

Today, schools are subject to close scrutiny; therefore, it was not unusual in these meetings to hear about the political advantages of having “real” teachers rather than substitutes in the classroom. Excessive teacher time out of the classroom is but one of a string of criticisms of public school systems. Time-transfer measures may be used as a political tool for demonstrating district and teacher

commitment to high quality education. Time is transferred away from a group that is stigmatized as unprofessional to a group that, by virtue of taking on additional working time, proves their professionalism and reassures critics. Indeed, when the discussion turned to potential cost increases flowing from time transfer, it was typical to hear reference made to offsetting the costs with an intangible benefit such as better instruction for students.

Conclusion

Increases in working time for one group do not occur in isolation of the working time of other groups. In this study, I explored potential time transfer between a “core” group of workers (full-time teachers) and their contingent counterparts (substitutes), allowing us to peer inside a cultural paradox that allots overwork (and significant work/family conflict) to some workers and underemployment or multiple jobholding to others.²⁷ What was found was a complex relational process, constrained by labor markets and the politics of education. Regular teachers were constructed as nearly superhuman, while substitutes were seen as incompetent, resulting in a push for additional working time from regular teachers. Important opportunities for teachers’ professional enrichment have been made possible by the presence of substitute teachers. However, even with such explicit interdependence, the two groups seemed polarized, their experiences segmented into “good jobs” and “bad jobs” with regard to pay, benefits, security, opportunity, and respect. This polarization may effectively circumscribe opportunities for change.

As contingent workers continue to emerge as part of our employment landscape, it becomes less helpful to view them in isolation, and more imperative to understand where they fit into the labor process in relation to non-contingent workers. One lens through which to view contingent workers is the lens of time: time at and off of work. In this case, the time of one group of workers (teachers) is being exchanged for that of another (substitute teachers) in short supply. This case study is one example of employers’ reversing the course on the low-wage path to the use of contingent workers. Nevertheless, any time transfer back to regular teachers allows both the central problems of substitute teaching and of regular teaching to remain largely uncontested. Indeed, the strategies eventually agreed upon will tend to sharpen the division between overworked and undervalued teachers. Other options will only emerge when these problems are contested.

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Notes

¹ Substitute teacher shortages have been documented as far back as the 1920s (Baldwin 1934), with similar solutions proposed to alleviate the problem.

² This information was gleaned from a content analysis of all articles on substitute teaching appearing in major newspapers in the first half of 1999. Admittedly a non-scientific method, this information is only intended to provide context for the current study.

³ Contingent work might better be described as nonstandard work. Kalleberg et al. (1997, p. 8) define nonstandard work as work that lacks an employer, includes a third-party employer, or is characterized by temporal instability.

⁴ When the term "temporary worker" is used here it refers only to temporary agency workers, excluding direct hire temporaries.

⁵ This does not include a new direction for temporary agencies that have begun to cater to school districts with substitute shortages.

⁶ The concept of "time transfer" is similar to what Nona Glazer (1984) identified as "work transfers" from paid laborers to unpaid work typically done by women. I use the term "time transfer" to distinguish the phenomenon in which there is a shift of utilization among groups of paid workers, and because teachers' understandings of what happens has more to do with time than the amount of work. Because considerable planning effort goes into having a substitute for the day, the change in the amount of actual work done by teachers is less obvious than the time implications.

⁷ Time transfers also occur when companies downsize their labor force and remaining workers experience increased work demands and required overtime.

⁸ This is not to say that the study ignores important macro-level dynamics, but that it uses them to fill out the context in which the "negotiation" takes place.

⁹ There were many Black women who went into teaching as well; however, they were restricted to teaching Black children. Most histories of teaching as a women's profession have paid scant attention to race, thus white women's experience is what has stood for the history of women in teaching.

¹⁰ I characterize the relationship this way based not only on my own observations, but from discussions with teachers, the school superintendent, and the union president, as well as observation of the local media.

¹¹ The substitute list was not entirely updated. Several contacts indicated that they were no longer substitute teaching for the district and should not be on the list.

¹² The increase in non-classroom commitment for teachers also represents a time transfer from regular teachers to substitutes. Teachers' successful negotiation of greater paid time for professional development and curriculum planning created a greater need for substitutes "en masse" as whole departments occasionally were away for training. This was an earlier time transfer that occurred in the same district because teachers wanted greater opportunities for professional development.

¹³ Many teachers wrote comments in the open-ended area that indicated they felt the most powerful solution would be to raise substitute pay.

¹⁴ Increasing paid sick time at retirement would also represent a form of time transfer if one considers working hours over a lifetime; however, I focus on the more immediate time transfer in this case.

¹⁵ The composite measures were as follows: the first composite included all suggestions except for the permanent substitute arrangement; the second included the four direct time transfer measures (i.e. excluded paid vacation and sick time because these do not have immediate effects); and the third composite measure was the same as the second composite, but excluded the internal substitution suggestion because this question did not apply to elementary school teachers. This last composite measure yielded the largest sample size, and the gender difference was significant at the $p < .10$ level. The results of these t-tests are not shown.

¹⁶ Of course, it is possible that men and women were simply expressing what they saw as socially acceptable reasons to object for their gender. In other words, men may have found it less acceptable to write about family obligations, and women may have felt family reasons were more legitimate concerns for them.

¹⁷ Note the overlap in these categories. Many teachers expressed more than one sentiment in a single statement. I have categorized them to make them illustrative.

¹⁸ There is considerable doubt that teaching offers the kinds of flexibility that women traditionally would have found desirable. For example, flexibility during school hours is minimal. Teachers cannot come and go as they must should a family emergency arise. Neither can children accompany their parent into his/her classroom if other care arrangements have fallen through. Nevertheless, parents of school age children are likely attracted to the overlap between their on-site work hours and their children's school day and school year.

¹⁹ Substitutes were not prohibited from joining the association; however, I only came across one who had ever been a member of the union. Substitutes who joined the union paid lower dues and had circumscribed benefits. There was, however, no effort under way to organize substitutes either independently or in conjunction with regular teachers, which might partially explain the group's reluctance to pursue the permanent substitute idea.

²⁰ All substitutes interviewed were aware that the data would be used for two purposes: to inform the district, and for my own research purposes.

²¹ The questions of how and why substitutes get hired (or do not get hired) are beyond the scope of this paper. It is a complex processes, and methodologically difficult to examine without longitudinal data.

²² This, of course, requires a school district that can afford to spend even a little more money on instruction costs. Discussion revealed some uncertainty whether those funds existed; however, solutions requiring more money were reserved for collective bargaining the following winter.

²³ The term “professional” is itself a gendered construct. See Epstein et al. (1999) and Rogers (2000).

²⁴ One suggestion that arose and was quickly shot down by all parties was to decrease the need for conference attendance, computer training, and continuing education of teachers. Both the teachers present and the administration cited the need to keep the job “professional.”

²⁵ Substitutes in this district were paid either \$60 or \$70 a day (7 hours), depending on how many days they taught in the course of the school year. This amount is approximately 1/3 of what a regular teacher would make, not including benefits.

²⁶ State laws also restrict who can substitute. For example, Pennsylvania has instituted short-term emergency certification to ease the substitute shortage; however, retired teachers must be mindful that too many hours substituting might jeopardize their retirement earnings.

²⁷ Under different labor market conditions, workers experience unemployment as well as underemployment.