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Edited by Steph Lawler and Geoff Payne

Feeding Children Inside and Outside the Home

Critical Perspectives

Edited by
**Vicki Harman, Benedetta Cappellini and
Charlotte Faircloth**

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School meal reform and feeding ordering in Portugal

Conventions and controversies

Mónica Truninger and Rosa Sousa

Introduction

Children and young people's food practices are nowadays more visible, surveyed and contested than ever before. There are unprecedented levels of public and media discussion concerning young people's practices, their exposure to marketing and advertisements, concerns around their health, education, leisure activities, internet safety, and eating. Regarding the latter, food issues have gained increasing attention from the media and conquered central stage in the policy agendas of several countries. For example, in the UK, the growing interest in children and food consumption is visible in several policy initiatives that commenced in the present century (see Graham et al., this volume). Some of these attempted to tackle the perceived unbalanced nutritional quality of school meals, to encourage children to eat better (e.g. reduced intake of sugary, fatty foods and fizzy drinks). Other than the UK, more countries are putting considerable efforts to reform school meals towards healthier and nutritionally balanced meals including sourcing organic and local produce, thus combining an agenda of health with one of sustainability (Morgan and Sonnino, 2008).

Portugal carried out a school meal reform after years of relative disinterest that characterized most of the 1990s. In 2006, new standards and guidelines for school meals were launched to tackle rising levels of excess weight and obesity among children, a problem that was worrying health experts at the time¹. Thus, children's eating practices have been perceived as 'risky' and 'problematic' for their bodies and health states (James, Kjørholt and Tingstad, 2009). Despite the media-influenced public and political visibility of children's food consumption in Portugal, there is scant attention on the principles and values that inform such school meal reform (conducive to a particular way of engaging with school meals, and ultimately, food tastes) and on the effects produced by it on the organization of school meals and children's food practices. Such effects triggered controversy, tensions and mismatches between school meals principles and practices (Truninger, Horta and Teixeira, 2014).

Informed by theoretical approaches that contribute to a 'pragmatic turn' in social sciences, which are more 'attentive to the dynamics of action' (Thévenot, 2007, p. 410) this chapter focuses on two controversies – school meal organization and children's tastes – and identifies the conventions put forward by different actors. It also looks at the ways such controversies were acquiesced through provisional compromises. The empirical material is drawn from focus groups with children, interviews with teachers, kitchen staff and local authorities, and direct observation of lunch meals in the canteens of two nursery/primary schools sited in Lisbon Metropolitan Area at two different periods in time – 2011/2012 and 2015/2016 – that is, during and after the peak of the economic crisis.

The chapter is organized in five sections. First, we review the literature on school meals and children's eating practices before conceptually exploring the notion of 'feeding ordering'. We draw on the work of Law (1994) and Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) to guide this conceptual exploration. Second, we explain the methodological procedures and describe the empirical material collected. Third, we analyse the national school meal reform over the last ten years, informed by the above conceptual framework. Fourth, we examine a case study of two schools in the municipality of Cascais and seek to understand the conventions underlying the justifications to set up a series of changes in the school food provisioning system, which gave rise to a particular feeding ordering underpinned by a bundle of conventions. We also look at the way actors of the school meals system dealt with two controversies – the school meals organization and children's tastes – and how they managed to adjust their practices and principles to suspend such controversies by making compromises. The final section provides a summary of the findings and a critical reflection on the heuristic value of employing a pragmatic sociological approach in order to analyse school meals.

School meals reform and main controversies

Schools have been identified as an important site for intervention in relation to children's eating habits. Several schools worldwide have set up school meal reforms with the hope of solving perceived problems with the health status of children. These interventions and policy measures tend to frame children's eating habits as problematic and risk-related (James, Kjørholt, Tingstad, 2009). In this policy context, eating is often defined as a medical problem, to be solved with the provision of the 'right balance' of calorie intake and output (Pike 2008; Gustafsson, 2004). Looking at Portuguese schools meals, Truninger et al. (2013) showed that there is an increasing effort by policymakers to engage (on paper) in a more holistic view of health, going beyond food as nutrition. However, in practice a biomedical understanding of school meals still pervades in the spaces where children eat. Children associate food in the canteen with nutrition and health, whereas

food associated with 'pleasure' is found in the competing retail food shops that surround the schools. Other studies found similar ways of classifying food by children in binary categories, with healthy food associated with the 'home' and 'junk' food associated with pleasure, friends and weight gain (Ludvigsen and Scott, 2009: 421).

Since the beginning of the 21st century calls for improving food in schools have been especially copious, often identifying childhood rates of obesity and excessive weight as the 'hook' for action and intervention (Best, 2017). However, changing school meals affects more than nutritional intake, touching upon the multidimensional character of food (Morgan, 2014). As stated by Andersen (2015: 3), 'the strict focus on risk and nutrition overlooks the cultural meanings that food bears, as well as the social processes that surround children's eating practices', that is, the relationships children establish with their carers and peers in school (Truninger and Teixeira, 2015). School meals are also seen as an opportunity for food education given their capacity to teach children about food, nutrition, meal norms and rules through practice, by experimenting in the canteen unfamiliar tastes and flavours (Andersen, 2015; Morgan & Sonnino 2008). However, the disciplining and nutritional features of school meals give rise to controversies when implementing such changes (see Albon, this volume). Research has found that staff has often an authoritarian approach regarding children's eating practices in schools, to retain control over children (Morrison, 1996; Pike, 2008; Dotson, Vaquera and Cunningham, 2015). Teaching staff tend to check if children bring healthy or junk food to school and judge these practices irrespective of the socio-economic or cultural context of the family (Leahy, 2010). Daniel and Gustafsson (2010) found several processes of tension between institutional constraints (school meals as 'children's services') and children food practices in the canteen while getting served, eating and going out to play (school meals as 'children's spaces'). In this case, there was a cleavage between adult-children roles and expectations towards eating school meals. There is already a solid body of work showing the strategies of resistance by children to eating school meals (Dotson, Vaquera and Cunningham, 2015; Truninger and Teixeira, 2015) and the importance of children's peers in accepting or rejecting the food on offer in schools (Andersen et al, 2016). However, it is relevant to consider the social, material and moral embeddedness of school meals, and how children and staff experience and appropriate the norms and rules set up by policies on school meals. In this chapter, we will look at some of the controversies created by the implementation of a school meal reform in Portugal. We will examine how these controversies are rooted in a multiplicity of dimensions that go beyond health and nutrition. To help in the conceptualization of a passage from a monolithic understanding of school meals (based on biomedical and nutritional features) to a plural and multiple understanding of school

meals we explore the potential of combining conventions theory and Law's concept of ordering.

Conventions theory develops in the mid-1980s from the works of French authors such as Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot, Robert Salais, Jean Pierre Dupuy, François Eymard-Duvernay, Olivier Favereau, and André Orléan. Conventions are understood as 'modes of evaluation' used by individuals to interpret action in specific and situated contexts (Ponte and Gibbon, 2005). In ambiguous situations such as the ones provoked by a controversy actors resource to particular moral evaluations (underpinned by a limited plurality of 'orders of worth') and objects (materials, artefacts) in order to cease the controversy and coordinate action with others. Thus, both human and nonhuman, people and objects, articulate and configure the so-called 'pragmatic regimes' (Thévenot, 2001b) in which two components are included: one is the moral component that shapes the legitimate principles of evaluation employed by the actors in a particular situation; the other is the involvement of objects or 'material reality' employed as 'proof' of the arguments at stake. The regime of justification encompasses criticism and disputes where arguments are framed by the highest degree of legitimacy – conventions. These are incorporated into different 'orders of worth'. Each 'order of worth' is based on common superior principles of qualification (or "common good"), which are forms of collective evaluation used in the processes of criticism, denunciation and compromise (Thévenot, 2001a). Thus, in everyday life different actors engage in disparate situations that lead them to use bundles of conventions to justify their practices, their views, or even their reasons to implement, for example, a school meal reform (Table 4.1).

The list of orders of worth on Table 4.1 is the original one proposed by Boltanski and Thévenot's early works. The authors suggested six moral orders as they can usually be found in claims and justifications of many situations in the contemporary French context. This is not a closed list and more orders can be added (e.g. the green order), but for the sake of the controversies on school meals in the Portuguese context, these six orders are sufficient to interpret the ways in which different actors engage in disputes for the quality of school meals. Each of these 'orders of worth' exists in a state of tension, because they try to resist or encroach into other "orders" (Raikes, Jensen and Ponte, 2000: 408). For example, in this claim 'school meals should be healthier, they use very cheap foods' there is a denunciation of the quality of school meals because of its price (market conventions are criticised). On the other hand, it displays the principle from which this denunciation is made (civic conventions are valued, namely the health principle that should be universal, supporting the common good of public health). Sometimes these controversies are resolved, and the government re-allocates some of its budget to provide better and healthier meals in schools. For example, the instance when Tony Blair's government decided to invest more funding into school food in the wake of Jamie Oliver's 'School

Table 4.1 Moral orders and school meals controversies

Orders of worth	Main Principle	Mode of evaluation	Controversy
Market	Competition	Price	The cost of the school meal service is too high
Industrial	Efficiency	Productivity, technical efficiency, measurable criteria	The technical procedures for school meals (size of portions, food safety norms) are too cumbersome
Civic	Collective	Equality, solidarity, collective interest (health, environment, social justice)	School meals are unhealthy. School meals are not environmentally friendly
Domestic	Tradition	Trustworthiness, familiar ties, esteem	School meals are not home-cooked food
Inspired	Inspiration	Aesthetics, flavour, taste of the meal, pleasure, emotions	School meals are tasteless, they look bland and unappetising
Opinion	Public opinion	Recognition, popularity, media	School meals are not prepared by celebrity chefs

Source: Adapted on the basis of Boltanski and Thévenot (1999: 368) and Andersen (2011: 443).

Dinners' Campaign in the UK (Pike and Kelly, 2014). Thus, compromises are established and agreed between different orders of worth. As put by Boltanski and Thévenot (1999: 374): 'In a compromise, people maintain an intentional proclivity towards the common good by cooperating to keep present beings relevant in different worlds, without trying to clarify the principle upon which their agreement is grounded'. In the example above we have a school meal policy that is composed of both market and civic conventions, where price and health are combined to offer a quality meal. It is this idea of composition that is important to link with Law's conceptual framework. We engage here with his concept of ordering, given its open-ended, provisional, messy and heterogeneously composite status. As argued by Law (1994: 1–2) 'orders are never complete. Instead they are more or less precarious and partial accomplishments that may be overturned. They are, in short, better seen as verbs than nouns'. This is why ordering (as a verb) is more appropriate to capture the plural, incompleteness and messy processes of the world, and in our case, the evolving processes of setting up changes in the school meals system in Portugal. Moreover, as explained by Law, ordering is composed of heterogeneous elements, be they human or non-human. Thus, talk, bodies, texts, technologies, canteen layouts, tables dispositions and foods are implicated in a particular 'feeding ordering'. Linking the two bodies of work, we suggest that feeding ordering is the outcome and

effect of plural ordering modes. These ordering modes encapsulate orders of worth governed by market, domestic, industrial, opinion, inspiration or civic conventions. The advantage of this analytical exploration is to qualify Law's concept of ordering with these different conventions, and to stress the incompleteness, messiness and precarious organization that the concept ordering offers to an informed convention theory analysis of school meals' justifications, controversies and compromises. Both 'ordering' and 'conventions' can be inscribed in a 'pragmatic turn', and both are theoretically situated in post-structuralist approaches where humans and non-humans are treated symmetrically. They also decentre the analytic perspective from a single/individual order (e.g. nutrition/health) to 'multiple modes of ordering', in Law's language, or, if we take Boltanski and Thévenot's lingo, to a 'limited plurality of orders of worth' (e.g. market, domestic, industrial).

Methodological procedures

The empirical material used in this chapter is drawn from two different research projects. The first entailed a three-year project entitled 'Between School and Family: Children's Food Knowledge and Eating Practices', which was carried out during the peak of the economic crisis that severely affected Portugal (2011–2014). The main aim of this project was to look at the school meal reform of 2006 and describe the effects of such reform on the organization of school meals, children's eating practices, and parents' views of family and food. We conducted 18 focus groups in eight primary and secondary schools across the country with both children (from 8–10 and 11–14 years old) and parents, together with interviews with the teachers, the catering companies, local authorities and the kitchen staff. We also conducted direct observation in canteens, school playgrounds and the school's surrounding shops. For this chapter, we use only a small portion of the material collected, namely a focus group with 10 primary school children aged between 8 and 10 years old, an interview with the city council and five interviews with the kitchen and teaching staff of a primary school located in the municipality of Cascais (Lisbon Metropolitan Area).

The second project is part of a PhD in its final stages entitled 'Public Procurement and Sustainable Development: The Case of Schools', wherein the fieldwork covers the period after the peak of the crisis, i.e., 2015/2016. This project aims to analyse public procurement initiatives, which combine health and sustainability to ensure that school meals are nutritiously balanced, source local and organic foods when possible, and reduce food waste. The data used for this chapter refers to interviews conducted with the kitchen and teaching staff from a nursery school of Cascais, the catering company that supplies the food to the school and two representatives of the city council that oversee the school catering system (totalling 5 interviews). Direct observation of the lunches in the canteens during three school visits

were also conducted. The methodological procedures were validated by the Ministry of Education, whereas the permissions for interviews, observation in the canteens, and use of visual methods (photos, videos) were granted by the directors of the schools, the parents and children through informed consent forms. The interviews were fully transcribed and analysed using NVivo 10, together with photos and video recordings. The analysis of the material followed the procedures of a thematic analysis where data were coded and the main patterns were sought considering an iterative process with the theoretical insights convoked to this analysis.

A case study of two primary schools in Cascais

The case study under analysis is situated in Cascais, a town that is sited nearby Lisbon in Portugal. In 2015, the municipality of Cascais (composed of four parishes) had 209,869 inhabitants, of which 16% were children and young people below 15 years old (PORDATA, 2017). Almost 10% of its population were immigrants. About 7.2% were unemployed, 2.2% receives the social integration income, and 2.3% were granted the unemployment allowance. In this council there were 84 state funded primary schools.

The first primary school that we contacted in 2011 is situated in a small parish of Cascais. This primary school (which includes a nursery school as well) is attended by children aged between 6 and 9 years old enrolled in the 1st to 4th grade. In the school year of 2011/2012 there were 180 students overall (15 in the nursery school). The population is of low ethnic diversity, composed of some families of average socio-economic levels, and mainly individuals with low income and poor schooling levels who have been affected by the growing unemployment rates, due to the economic crisis that affected the country between 2008 and 2014.

The second school was approached in the school year 2015/2016 and is sited on the same council but located in a different parish than the previous school. It is a nursery school with 40 children at that time. The education cycle covers children from 3 to 6 years of age. Pre-school education is inserted in a larger school grouping of primary and secondary schools. The headquarters of the grouping – a primary school – was also visited, given that the school meals for the nursery were prepared in its large central kitchen, which also supplied meals to three other schools. The nursery catchment area is characterized by a well-off white population with middle to high levels of education and low unemployment levels. In 2015, economic growth was picking up nationally which contrasted with the previous period of greater hardship among some families living in the council.

The space surrounding both schools features several commercial establishments (coffee shops, supermarkets), some of which specifically target the student population, selling them cheap excess fat and sugary meals that compete with the food served in the canteen. In both schools, most children

eat lunch at the canteen and there are strong restrictions against leaving the school during the day. School teachers often monitor the snacks and other foods children bring from home. The council manages the school food provision through a contract with a national food catering company. This company has been supplying the council's schools for more than 13 years. It prepares and cooks the meals directly in the school kitchens (when they are equipped with one) or cooks the meals in three primary school kitchens and then delivers them to the schools without in house catering services. The meals are then brought by van to these schools (the case for our nursery school). As we will see below, the way food is prepared and cooked is a bone of contention regarding children's school meals acceptance.

The school meals reform in Portugal: a brief overview

In 2006, Portugal's National Programme for Healthy Schools (Ministry of Health, 2006) was designed and launched to encourage initiatives that tackle childhood obesity. The objective of this programme was to develop schools' role and responsibility in improving food provision, to ensure that children had access to a nutritionally balanced meal with reduced fat, sugar and salt contents. In the school year 2005/2006, the Generalized Provision of School Meals Programme for Primary School Children was implemented. The programme aimed to encourage all councils of the country to take full accountability for the school meals management and provision (until then only a few councils were taking such responsibilities by fully or partially subsidizing the meals of low income families), and to ensure that all children with extracurricular activities in school could have a midday hot meal. This encouraged the councils to organize a systematic and uninterrupted food catering service, and many outsourced the school meals to private companies. One impact of this measure was the rise in the number of students using the school canteen, when before they would go home to have lunch². Some councils invested a portion of their budgets in activating previously decommissioned school kitchens or equipping new schools with good working kitchens. As we will see, this was an action followed by the Cascais council.

In 2007, school meals' guidelines were launched to guide catering and kitchen staff to prepare the meals according to capitations appropriate to the different children's ages. The menu was composed of three courses with a set of recommendations for nutritionally balanced meals: the starter entailed a fresh vegetable soup, the main course featuring one meat or fish/seafood dish offered in alternate days, accompanied by side dishes of pulses, vegetables, pasta, rice or potatoes (deep frying was highly discouraged), brown bread, and a dessert of seasonal fruit made available daily. Only once a week children were offered one of these options: jelly, ice cream, yoghurt, cooked or baked fruit with no added sugar. The only drink allowed was water.

Another important policy was the European Fruit Distribution Regime³. It was launched in 2009, soon adapted to the national legal system and implemented in the school year of 2010–2011 through the National Strategy of School Fruit Regime 2010–2013. The implementation of this strategy aimed to increase children's health protection by improving their intake and knowledge of fruits. In 2012 the General Directorate for Health oversaw the implementation of the first National Programme for the Promotion of Healthy Eating (PNPAS) with several objectives, one among them to encourage the adoption of the Mediterranean Diet among the Portuguese population and to support children in schools to eat healthy meals based on those dietary principles⁴. In 2013, more detailed instructions were introduced on authorized foods, meals composition, menu components, the use of aromatic herbs, and the reduction of salt (Truninger et al., 2015: 48). In 2017, a new referral for health education was launched in June with a large section dedicated to food education. A wider and holistic approach to food is visible, encompassing a variety of topics including nutrition, environmental issues, social justice, Mediterranean Diet, shopping and labelling and the right to food among others.

Informed by the concepts of 'conventions' and 'ordering' we can grasp how these policies encapsulated a feeding ordering underpinned by civic conventions where health concerns were prominent. However, the concerns with the meal cost⁵, food safety and hygiene technical requirements in food preparation were also visible. Market conventions (meal price) and industrial conventions (technical procedures and efficiency of the service) underlie such principles. This feeding ordering was essentially underpinned by the composition of civic (health), market (price) and industrial (efficiency) conventions. However, as more policies and initiatives were added, other concerns were pushed to the front, with domestic and civic (environment) conventions becoming more visible. For instance, the backing up of traditional and cultural food values, table manners and socializing (all embracing the ideas of commensality that feature in the Mediterranean Diet), and environmental concerns (food waste reduction). However, coordinating action in this composite and provisional feeding ordering according to such a wide bundle of conventions was not a smooth process, and controversies emerged during the implementation of this reform, as analysed in the following sections.

Feeding ordering and controversies: justifications and compromises

We examine two problems that emerged when the council of Cascais consolidated its action in the management of school meals from 2005/2006 onwards. One problem concerned the process of the meal's preparation and cooking that had to be adjusted to avoid complaints by both children and parents. The other problem (still ongoing) regarded the acceptance of some dishes, namely fish-based

meals. Children showed resistance to some school meals and several adjustments to the menus and the cooking procedures had to be made to ensure they accepted dishes better. Both problems emerged with the new feeding ordering triggered by the school meal reform. By exploring cross-fertilization between convention theory and Law's concept of 'ordering' we show the convocation of different conventions and the arrangement of compromises to suspend such controversies, that are, notwithstanding, always precarious ordering accomplishments.

From cook-chill, through temperature control to home cooked food in schools

In the school year of 2005/2006, the council of Cascais made considerable changes to their school meals provisioning system. Due to the implementation of the Generalized Provision of School Meals Programme for Primary School Children the council was obliged to provide school meals to all children enrolled in the nurseries and primary schools under its jurisdiction, whereas before it mainly focused its attention on the provision of meals to children of low income families. With such obligation, it completely restructured the service of school meals, investing in equipping and refurbishing previously decommissioned school kitchens. In the schools where the material infrastructure would not allow such refurbishments, the food was delivered in insulated shipping containers. That is, it was prepared and transported in vans from three central kitchens (sited in schools with large kitchens), where care and monitoring was given to maintain the temperature throughout the entire journey. The council outsourced the catering services to a private national company that provided meals not only for schools, but also hospitals. In the first phase, some schools were supplied with cook-chill meals, that is, meals that were prepared in a central kitchen, fast chilled, transported cold to the school, and stored in the fridge of the school pantry room. On the day of service the meals were reheated and served to the children. In the primary school under analysis this system operated for some time, until the council invested in equipping the premises with a local kitchen after several complaints by the school staff, children and parents. When we interviewed the head teacher in 2012, he remembered that time:

In its first phase, the meals were pre-cooked, it was not like it is now where we have a local kitchen. It was another company that supplied the meals, not the current one. The food was pre-frozen and then reheated here (...) because this kitchen was not working ... there were problems with the kitchen structure. When the current company won the bid, the work started in the kitchen and we have now the meals prepared by this company on our own kitchen. Before, we had a lot of complaints by the

children and the parents because the food was not tasty... now the service is much better.

(Head teacher, primary school, July 2012)

Investing in refurbishing school kitchens or equipping new schools with their own kitchens has been a priority of the council from 2005. They justify this strategy on two counts: the food tastes like home cooked food; and it is better aligned with their overall strategy of providing healthy quality meals to children.

Another important thing in our strategy, which is also something that has been taken on board with the experience of the cook-chill: all new schools have a local kitchen, and this has been increasing ... We know that there is much more pleasure and better taste in eating food that is prepared and cooked as close as possible to the little ones ...

(Representatives of the Cascais council, November, 2011)

We had the cook-chill system before. And they all hated the cook-chill. When the council changed administration this new councilman was more understanding regarding the school meals, and we tried to replace this system in some schools with the transport of hot meals. The main problem with the cook-chill system was the taste of food ... and it baffled us and also the teachers that the food came in a sealed bag. To see the food in bags was very odd (...) I remember one time I went there and it was rice and beans. The beans looked like popcorn. The rice was dry. Everything had exploded ... it was not well re-heated (...) there were complaints on a daily basis.

(Representatives of the Cascais council, February, 2016)

The process of food preparation had strong implications for the council's change in strategy to provide quality healthy meals. To avoid the children's rejection of the meals, they decided to replace the cook-chill system with two alternatives: transporting the food hot and equipping schools with local kitchens. The first option was employed when there were no facilities to cook in the school. In these cases (namely the nursery school under study) the meals were prepared off site and distributed by vans on the day, in thermal containers to keep the temperature stable. In this process, maintaining the temperature and complying with the food hygiene and safety technical norms, comprised in the school meals' regulations, was crucial to the company, to avoid any public health issue (e.g. food poisoning). As explained by the nutritionist and quality control technician of the company that oversaw the meals' supply to 52 schools in Cascais:

There are several kitchens that make the confection. There is a shuttle that transports hot meals to smaller schools (...) as long as the

temperatures are maintained, as long as we can guarantee a safe meal, it works rather well. Before we had the hot transport, we had the pre-cooked meals that go to the oven and are served. This type of meal does not taste like a home cooked meal. There were many complaints. Since we changed to hot transport or prepared the food directly in local kitchens the complaints diminished drastically. In the hot transport, sometimes it is difficult for the cooks to get the right time of stopping the cooking process ... because the food continues to cook inside the thermal containers ... it is an art to stop the cooking just in time ... Another problem with the temperature is when we have a temperature break during the transport. There is always some equipment that allows the regeneration if there is a temperature break but it is something that we want to avoid.

(Quality technician and nutritionist of catering company, 2016)

In this case maintaining a stable temperature was important to achieve food safety and to ensure compliance with technical procedures for transporting hot food. The justifications advanced were clearly underpinned by industrial conventions due to the amount of care invested in maintaining the efficiency of this system. Interestingly, in house catering services were praised for achieving better taste and quality; producing meals with a home-cooked taste. This relates to the second option followed by the council: to invest in building new kitchens to ensure that school meals were prepared on site and on the day of service. This ensured that the time between meal preparation and consumption was as short as possible, improving the taste, flavor, and overall aesthetics of the meal. The company's head-cook working in the primary school kitchen explained that she tended to cook in the school as she usually does at home. Despite having to comply with strict norms and regulations regarding capitations, salt content and meal portions, she made sure that the emotional investment in cooking the meal in the school premises was the same as when she cooks for her family at home. Despite the strict standards and the large amount of meals to prepare in this school (180 meals a day), the cook considers the work she does similar to that she does at home.

We learn very easily [the new norms] because here we cook as if we were at home, isn't it? The food we make here is exactly like I make in my house ... I'm not doing anything different, I do everything the same. And so it's the same, the salads are the same, it's all the same. There are only those things that we do different here ... for example, we have to be careful to always wash our hands ... but the food here is very similar to the one we cook at home.

(Interview with the school cook, June, 2012)

This way, the cook managed to make a compromise between the technical procedures demanded by the school meals' guidelines (underpinned by

industrial conventions), and the skills, competences and emotional investment entailed when producing school meals with a taste of home-cooked food (underpinned by domestic conventions). The feeding ordering that emerged with the school meal reform where health, food safety and taste were paramount generated a set of effects that transformed the previous school meal provisioning logistics of Cascais council (e.g. mode of transport, mode of preparing and serving the meals). The former cook-chill school meal provision encountered resistance by children and teachers on taste grounds. With the emergence and enactment of the new feeding ordering, the Cascais council made a series of changes in the logistics of preparing and serving meals (e.g. transporting the food hot and equipping schools with local kitchens). In this emergent feeding ordering constituted by heterogeneous elements of humans and nonhumans (e.g. kitchen staff, new or refurbished local kitchens, cleaning and food safety procedures, thermometers and temperature loggers, and so on) a set of compromises were settled. Notably between the industrial (e.g. food safety) and domestic conventions (school food tasting like home cooked food) making it possible for children to accept school meals. However, it is important to bear in mind that this ordering mode is always contingent and provisional, as we address in the following section.

Children's resistance to school meals and the making of compromises

When we conducted fieldwork in the primary school back in 2011/2012, fish was already an issue in children's tastes. Teachers, kitchen staff, the council's representatives, and the primary school children we interviewed, all agreed: fish is disliked at school. The following is a conversation held in the focus group with children about the likes and dislikes of school meal dishes.

I: What dishes do you like in school?

MARIA: I like everything but sometimes I don't like the soup. I don't like fish either, I just like fish fingers and the pads ... meat pads. Sometimes I like the salad when it's seasoned.

I: And you Ana?

ANA: Fish ... when the fish comes with bones I don't eat it.

(Focus group with primary school children, 2012)

Children in the focus group complained about fish bones reporting that on fish day they used to eat the sides and leave the fish on the plate. In the group interview, children showed a strong taste for meat. When we returned to Cascais in the school year 2015/2016, the situation remained the same: fish resistance persisted.

In the nursery of Cascais we observed the process of serving the meals and how children engaged with the dish on offer on the day: fish pie. This nursery consists of two classes of 20 children each. Meals are prepared outside the premises in a school relatively close to the one under analysis and are transported hot in vans. When they arrive at the school the catering technicians start serving the contents of the thermal containers on the plates (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). On the day of the visit, in addition to the vegetable soup, the menu consisted of a fish pie, broccoli at the side, and for desert an apple. No soft drinks were allowed in the meals, only water was available at the table, complying with the national school meal policy.

Before the children's arrival at around 11.45am, tables are set with the food contents already served, and are arranged in a circular way, to facilitate chatting around the table. This is one of the strategies to encourage the ideals conveyed by the Mediterranean Diet where commensality and talking around the table is highly valued (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). However, despite the efforts of the staff to ensure a good socializing atmosphere with this spatial arrangement, the meal time is relatively short and synchronized. Children want to eat fast and play, and not spend time around the table (see also Daniel and Gustafsson, 2010).

Because these are children of 6 years-old or less, energy supplies are smaller, so foods such as bread are cut in portions and placed at the centre of the table. During lunch, children eat the food under the teacher's supervision, who assists with cutting the fruit. Some encouragement to eat the meal is offered. That day most children ate school meals because fish was prepared in a way to facilitate acceptance. Fish without bones and shredded in a fish pie is better accepted than a portion of fish on the plate, as explained by the head-cook:

I: What are the foods that children like the least?

HEAD-COOK: It's the fish. Whatever fish it is. Except for fish fingers that we put in the oven. This year we introduced a fish that was no longer served for 3 or 4 years, which is Pollock fillets and they accepted very well ... salmon in salads it also goes well ... we have little food waste on salmon and pollock days. Fish like tuna, or mackerel they also like. But if for example we serve a piece of hake as we had last year then it is difficult ... it is the bones, they have to remove the spine ... we have to shred the fish, like today in a pie, otherwise we have a lot of waste on fish days.

(Interview with the head cook, 2016)

Shredding fish for a pie for example, is one of several adjustments the cooks learned to make during the past years to make sure children eat fish. In this case, a plethora of heterogeneous human and nonhuman elements such as shredded fish without bones (instead of an entire piece of fish with bones), the skills and competences of the cooks to prepare a pie that appeals to



Figure 4.1 Food service in nursery school
Source: Rosa Sousa, 2016.

children's tastes, attentive human eyes to spot and remove the fish bones, and the tools and kitchen equipment for such preparation are all entangled to sustain a mode of ordering where inspiration conventions are encroached. Thus, bringing to the fore the aesthetics of food, such as flavor and texture. However, in this



Figure 4.2 Food service in nursery school
Source: Rosa Sousa, 2016.



Figure 4.3 Children eating around the table
Source: Rosa Sousa, 2016.



Figure 4.4 Children eating around the table
Source: Rosa Sousa, 2016.

ordering mode aesthetic conventions can also be encroached by civic and market conventions, for example, when food waste is at stake. Both for civic and economic concerns food waste is an issue on fish days. Thus, adjustments to the menus are made (e.g. reducing fish variety) to make sure children eat fish and food is not wasted. Moreover, by reducing fish variety the kitchen staff and the catering company also make compromises between what is written in the contract (which abides by the school meal directives and its technical features) and the daily resistance to fish, its bones and general aesthetics that is felt in the canteen. As explained by the nutritionist of the catering company:

The menus are based on the school meals norms, but then we need to make some adjustments according to the complaints we received (...). For example, if we have a fish that is in the contract that is not well accepted by the children, we change for another one – like mackerel that they usually like, to make sure they eat fish. The fish variety sometimes is reduced because children struggle to eat all types of fish that we offer ... so we tend to give the fish they like. Normally this type of adaptation is almost always in the fish.

(Quality technician and nutritionist of the catering company, 2016)

In this case, a compromise between industrial conventions (a legal contract with technical procedures) and inspiration conventions (the taste, texture and general aesthetics of the fish as perceived by the children) must be arranged to suspend tension in the canteen. We can observe that inspiration conventions can also be encroached by industrial conventions, both being part of this multiply-constituted mode of ordering. The common good of this mode of ordering revolves around the principle that children need to eat fish due to health reasons (according to the school meals policies), then adjustments and compromises are put in place to ensure civic conventions (health) are enacted. As it was possible to show through our empirical examples, different modes of ordering underpinned by a bundle of conventions (inspiration, health, industrial, market, civic) clashed and adjusted to one another, setting up always precarious and provisional compromises.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at the school meal reform that started in 2005/2006 in Portugal and the composite character of the feeding ordering produced by its new policies. If in the beginning there was a strong focus on a monolithic element of school meals – health concerns were reduced to the nutritional components of food so as to address the risks of childhood obesity and excess weight – a decade later a wider spectrum of values and principles are visible. Thus, several conventions have emerged and circulated over the last 10 years to encourage children to eat in particular ways, and to organize the school meals and the sociotechnical apparatus in the kitchen and canteens according to notions of eating well. These have followed multidisciplinary knowledge and expertise (e.g. nutritional, biomedicine), and have provided foods that convey the principles around safety, hygiene, nutrition, public health, economic saving, food culture, environment, waste, food insecurity among others. However, such proliferation of principles and values would trigger tensions and controversies in the practical implementation of the school meal reform, precisely because school meals are socially, culturally and physically embedded in various ways and cannot be reduced to its nutritional features.

Through qualitative analysis of interviews with teaching, kitchen staff, council's representatives and observations of mealtimes in two schools (one nursery and a primary school) in Cascais, we could examine two controversies. One involved the organization of the school meal through different catering services (cook-chill, insulated shipping containers and in-house catering) and the perception of meal's quality. The other gave an account of children's resistance to fish dishes, and the continuous adjustments made by the cooks to ensure children ate fish. We found that such adjustments are made of compromises between modes of ordering school meals. Such compromises suspend the controversy for a while, but are always precarious and incomplete.

The advantage of pulling together Law's concept of ordering with convention theory was, on the one hand, to stress such incompleteness, messiness and precariousness found in school meals modes of ordering. On the other hand, convention theory offered depth and richness to the qualification of the feeding ordering that emerged from the school meal reform, by unveiling not its monolithic character, but rather its heterogeneity and plurality in the conventions that were mobilized to support different orders of worth.

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Notes

- 1 Nowadays, this problem continues to be a source of, despite current efforts to tackle childhood excess weight and obesity through several health and education governmental programs. The second national food survey (Lopes et al., 2017) applied in 2015/2016 reports that obesity hits 7.7% of children under 10 years old and 8.7% of adolescents between 10 and 17 years old. Moreover, 68.9% of children and 65.9% of adolescents do not comply with the WHO recommended fruit and vegetables portions per day (400 gr, i.e., 5-a-DAY).
- 2 According to an evaluation report on the implementation of this programme, in its first year (2005/2006) about 22 million meals were served to primary school children in the whole country. In the year 2011/2012, this number more than doubled reaching over 47 million school meals served nationally (Ministry of Education and Science, 2013).
- 3 Regulation (CE) n. 288/2009, European Commission.
- 4 See www.alimentacaosaudavel.dgs.pt/en/pnpas-2/ accessed on 1st March 2017.
- 5 In the school year 2015/2016 the full price of the meal was €3 per head. However, the price that parents pay is half of this, at €1,50. The Government covers part of this cost while the parents pay the remaining cost. For low income families or families on social benefits free school meals are available, which are fully covered by the State.

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“Don't bring me any chickens with sad wings”

Discipline, surveillance, and “communal work” in peri-urban childcare centres in Cochabamba, Bolivia

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Introduction

This chapter focuses on school feeding programmes within child centres for low-income families in the peri-urban region of Cochabamba. Child centres in this region provide up to two meals and two snacks during school days, making them an important source of food in areas experiencing high rates of poverty and malnutrition. However, while child feeding is an important function of child centres in many parts of the world, the social processes surrounding these activities are understudied in the literature. In this chapter, we explore the perspectives of directors and food preparers who are in charge of meal planning and preparation, in order to better understand the social and institutional contexts within which child feeding takes place.

Drawing on surveillance as a conceptual framework, we argue that the Bolivian child centre food programmes examined in this research employ the disciplinary power of the state (Foucault, 1977) to police and modify both administrators' and parents' behaviour. In this system, administrators are instructed to increase or decrease the weight of children based on the results of medical monitoring of the children's bodies. In state-supported child centres, mothers become the subjects of control and surveillance via “communal work” projects, undertaken jointly by the government, centre staff, and mothers.

In practice these partnerships are a form of surveillance and control over both administrators and mothers. Mothers' involvement in the feeding program is tightly controlled by school staff, who manage their participation by imposing expectations, declaring judgments of success and failure, and displaying an overall mistrust of mothers' feeding practices.

While these practices provide conduits for state surveillance and control, they do not guarantee positive human development outcomes. The state