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## THE GENDER BALANCE OF THE TEACHING WORKFORCE IN SCOTLAND: WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

SHEILA RIDDELL, LYN TETT, ALAN DUCKLIN, ANNE STAFFORD,  
MANDY WINTERTON, CATHERINE BURNS AND JOANNA FERRIE

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### ABSTRACT

Historically, formal barriers to gender equality in teaching were justified on the grounds that a predominance of women within the profession would be detrimental to the social and emotional development of male pupils, who needed male teachers as role models. Such arguments continue to be voiced in debates about what should be done to tackle the declining proportion of men in the teaching profession in Scotland. The research reported in this paper investigated the nature of the gender balance amongst teachers in Scottish publicly funded schools, undergraduate students' attitudes to teaching as a career and policy-makers' and practitioners' accounts of the underlying reasons for the growing gender imbalance in teaching. Practical suggestions were sought for possible courses of action to ensure greater diversity amongst the teaching workforce. In this paper it is argued that, whilst there is consensus on the need for a teaching workforce which reflects social diversity, recruiting reluctant men into teaching would be counter-productive. Rather, ways have to be found of promoting the positive aspects of teaching to both men and women, and, at a more general level, encouraging men to place greater value on the caring and empathic qualities which are increasingly required in teaching.

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a highly gendered profession, both historically and currently. Historically, the ideology of the male breadwinner shaped not only social attitudes towards teachers, but also the pay and promotion structures that distributed unequal rewards to male and female staff. Between 1915 and 1945, local authority rules obliged women teachers to resign their posts on marriage, although married women whose husbands were unable to support them were allowed to be employed on a temporary basis (Adams, 1990). Differential pay scales for men and women in teaching were established in 1919, not to be removed until 1962 (Fewell, 1990). An argument used to justify these formal barriers to gender equality was the fear that women were taking over the profession and the absence of men as role models was likely to be detrimental to male pupils. Indeed, it has long been feared that the predominance of women in primary teaching is detrimental to boys' social, emotional and academic development and positive action in favour of men is necessary to halt the growing 'feminisation' of the teaching profession (Skelton, 2002; Acker, 1983). Debates about positive action in favour of men in the teaching profession have recently resurfaced in the light of concerns about the underachievement of socially disadvantaged boys (Tinklin, *et al.*, 2001) and the growth of violence and indiscipline, also mainly involving disadvantaged boys (Mills, 2001). Whilst most commentators agree on the desirability of a socially diverse teaching profession, there is considerable hostility to the argument that, in order to provide positive role models for boys, there should be positive action in favour of men in recruitment and promotion practices (Skelton, 2001; Roulston and Mills, 2000).

Within much of Europe and North America, official government policy seeks to promote equal opportunities in the workplace, although there is a considerable degree of vagueness about what this means in practice. In Scottish education, however, far from melting away, gender divisions appear to becoming more heavily entrenched. The teacher census carried out by the Scottish Executive Education Department

in 2003 showed that there had been a fall in the percentage of teachers who were male from 30 per cent in 1998 to 26 per cent in 2003. With regard to initial teacher education (ITE), men made up only 10 per cent of entrants to primary education in 2002–03, and 39 per cent of entrants to secondary education. This gender imbalance is evident in many European countries and other parts of the developed world (Siniscalco, 2002; Drudy, *et al.*, 2005) (Table 1).

*Table 1: Percentage full-time female teachers, by sector, 1996/7 EU*

|             | <b>Primary sector</b> | <b>Lower secondary</b> | <b>Upper secondary</b> |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Belgium     | 77                    | *                      | 48                     |
| Denmark     | 60                    | 59                     | 30                     |
| Germany     | 71                    | 45                     | 24                     |
| Greece      | 57                    | 64                     | 46                     |
| Spain       | 67                    | 58                     | 50                     |
| France      | 78                    | *                      | 55                     |
| Ireland     | 79                    | *                      | 55                     |
| Italy       | 94                    | 71                     | 57                     |
| Luxembourg  | 61                    | *                      | 37                     |
| Netherlands | 53                    | 11                     | 14                     |
| Austria     | 83                    | 58                     | *                      |
| Finland     | 69                    | 68                     | 57                     |
| Sweden      | 74                    | 74                     | 42                     |
| UK          | 80                    | 53                     | 50                     |

\* Lower and upper secondary combined in upper secondary figure. Source: adapted from Siniscalco, 2002.

This research set out to investigate the nature of the gender balance in Scottish publicly funded schools, the underlying reasons for the growing imbalance and possible courses of action which might be taken to ensure greater diversity amongst the teaching workforce. In terms of its theoretical orientation, the research draws on work conducted within the sociology of employment (Crompton, 1997) and feminist theory on the negotiation of gender identity (Francis, 2006).

#### RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods included a literature and policy review; an analysis of Scottish statistics from a range of sources including the Scottish Executive, the General Teaching Council for Scotland and the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council; key informant interviews; a survey of undergraduates on social and biological science programmes in three Scottish universities; interviews with university careers service staff; and focus groups with practising teachers in primary and secondary schools. The following table summarises data gathered during the course of the research.

Table2: Summary of data sources

| Type of data                             | Source/Group   | Number   |
|--|--|--|
| Official statistics                      | Secondary analysis of Scottish Executive teacher census.   |  |
| Key informant interviews                 | Head teachers and representatives from the Scottish Executive, HMIE, local authorities, the GTCS, teacher unions, ITE course directors | 18   |
| Focus groups                             | Male and female teachers at different career stages and in different subject areas working in different parts of Scotland              | 4 schools (2 primary, 2 secondary). 2 focus groups in each secondary and one in each primary school (i.e. 6 focus groups in all) |
| Interviews with university careers staff |  | 3 (1 in each university)   |
| Undergraduate survey                     | Third year undergraduates in arts/social science and science/maths.  | Survey administered in 3 universities. Two student groups per university. 323 questionnaires returned.                           |

Full details of research methods are given in the final report to the Scottish Executive (Riddell, *et al.*, 2005).

#### UNDERLYING REASONS FOR THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN TEACHING: FINDINGS FROM EARLIER RESEARCH

In this section, we summarise briefly findings from earlier research on the gender balance in teaching.

##### *Gendered educational outcomes: channels and choices*

There is a well established body of research, conducted from the 1970s onwards, which demonstrates the way in which girls and boys are gradually channelled into traditional male and female curricular areas and occupations by educational practices. For example, learning materials and teacher interactions have each been found to reinforce the different roles and attributes traditionally associated with either sex (Croxford, 2000; Skelton and Hanson, 1989; Riddell, 1992). Miller, *et al.* (2004) identify how careers advisors often contribute to established gender segregation by encouraging pupils to pursue their existing interests rather than confronting sex-stereotyping. Other research demonstrates how wider cultural forces within families, communities, the media and peer groups shape the perspectives of young people (mediated by class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality etc) in ways that often lead to the reproduction of existing social relations, (Archer, *et al.*, 2001; Mac An Ghaill, 1996; Power, *et al.*, 2003). Inside school, messages about appropriate gender roles and expectations continue to be transmitted, often through the hidden curriculum (Connell, 1989).

### *Gendered hierarchies within teaching*

Despite the reduction in the proportion of men entering teaching, at present men continue to occupy the lion's share of promoted posts (see findings from the Scottish Executive 2003 schools census, presented below). This hierarchy is reinforced by gendered stereotypes about men's and women's roles and responsibilities for child-care, which may lead men at an early age to prioritise their careers and seek early opportunities for promotion. Women are less likely to apply for promoted posts, and the 'glass elevator' (Williams, 1992) favouring men is particularly evident in primary settings. There is a fear that the growth of managerialism in school administration since the 1990s may further entrench gender segregation in managerial positions (Mahony, 2000; Skelton, 2003). Mahony (2000) suggests that the criteria on which teachers will be judged reflect male ways of teaching, which emphasise authority, discipline and control. She discusses the managerialist demands of the current role of the head-teacher, which include responsibility for pupil achievement and staff compliance with the curricular requirements. The hierarchical management structure (as opposed to democratic and/or consensual) and the need to take responsibility for and control the work of others may be more aligned to traits possessed by men. Furthermore there is a perceived danger that in order for women to progress in such circumstances, their psychological well-being may be compromised:

If successful management is defined in masculinist terms then women will be pressured to conform to its dictates in ways which may create tensions between their values and their power to act in collaborative ways. (Mahony, 2000: 238)

Kanter (1993, cited in Mahony, 2000) shows how, as women rise in their professions, they increasingly reject whatever feminine management traits they may have held previously.

Dualism of male competitiveness versus female collegiality pervades much of this literature and there are dangers of slipping into essentialist thinking, assuming that men and women are two homogenous groups (Hay and Bradford, 2004; Skelton, 2005; Sachs and Blackmore, 1998). Managerial sex typing may over-simplify the diverse nature of managerial styles within and between the sexes. Coleman's (ibid) research found younger female heads were increasingly identifying 'male' managerial qualities as being equally possessed by women, and many male head teachers identified their own managerial style within a feminine managerialist paradigm. However, research on management styles using psychometric data (Adler, 1994, cited in Coleman, 2002) suggests that men may be less collaborative than they believe themselves to be. Coleman (2002) and Sachs and Blackmore (1998) present a more complex picture of female teachers. The fact that Sachs and Blackmore's (1998) research depicts women as highly adversarial warns against accepting simple gender dualisms.

### *Reasons for encouraging more men into teaching*

It has been argued that male teachers are needed as positive role models in order to address the problem of boys' relative under-achievement, and that a greater focus is needed on the teaching of vocational subjects relevant to boys' assumed interests. However, as noted earlier, there is a body of work which is highly critical of this argument because it essentialises men and women and implicitly denigrates women (Mills, *et al.*, 2004). In addition, it is pointed out that educational failure is associated with socio-economic status and cultural factors as well as gender and the focus on raising boys' achievement ignores these more pertinent barriers to educational equality. Weiner, *et al.* (2001), Francis (1999) and Gray and Leith (2004) all identify a variety of research showing how the school system currently and historically favours boys, particularly in terms of how teachers interact differently with male and

female pupils. This body of research shows how boys receive more attention from the teacher, and are more positively perceived than girls. Although Younger, *et al.* (1999) found similar patterns in terms of boys' domination of the classroom, they suggest there has been a change in teacher attitudes recently so that now the nature of the attention that boys receive is generally more negative whereas girls are received more positively. The research did not explore the gender of the teachers observed, rather the need for gender awareness of the teachers in their teaching strategies.

Reynolds (2001) reinforces the limitation of a simplistic assumption of male teachers' capacity to reach out to under-achieving boys. Her research confirmed Connell's (1996) position that wider gender relations have a significant impact on the masculine positions adopted by boys. Reynolds' year long primary school ethnographic research showed the importance of boys adapting their behaviours and activities to gain acceptance by the hegemonic group of boys, and also the difficulties for those boys who were unable to do this. The research concludes that the role model initiative being directed at under-achieving boys, seems only to be directed at the under-achieving boys displaying aggressive forms of masculinity, completely overlooking the non-rebellious under-achievers.

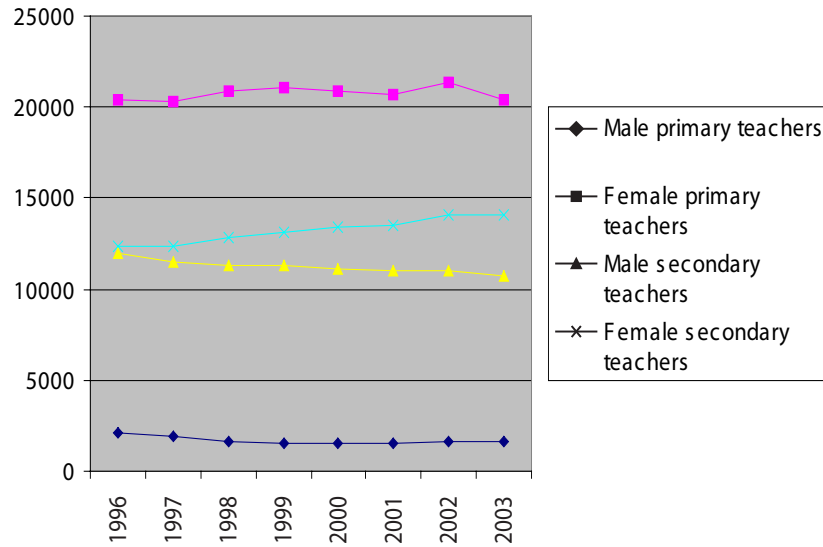
It has been argued that greater diversity in the teaching workforce is good for pupils, regardless of gender. Drudy, *et al.* (2005) points out, for example, that many parents see male teachers as beneficial, providing a more positive role model to counteract many media portrayals of men as violent and unemotional. However, there is some concern that recruitment drives aimed overtly at men might reinforce established stereotypes of masculinity, and therefore could be detrimental to achieving gender equality in education. Advertising specifically to attract men, for example, by drawing attention to the fact that men still occupy the highest paid jobs in teaching, might attract competitive careerist men, thus reinforcing unhelpful gender stereotypes (Carrington and Skelton, 2003).

Having briefly reviewed the literature on gender divisions within teaching, we now present findings with regard to the representation of women and men in teaching in Scotland, explanations suggested by a range of actors for the growing imbalance between men and women and implications for policy and practice.

#### THE GENDER AND AGE PROFILE OF SCOTTISH TEACHERS IN PUBLICLY FUNDED SCHOOLS

In 2003 in Scottish publicly funded schools, there were 49,230 teachers employed to work in 2,826 publicly funded schools teaching 406,015 pupils. Of these, 55% taught in primary schools, 44% in secondary schools and 1% in special schools. As noted earlier, the proportion of men in the Scottish teaching workforce is declining; in 1994, they comprised a third of all teachers, whereas by 2003 this had fallen to a quarter. The proportion of men and women in primary and secondary schools is very different. In every year from 1996–2003, there were almost five times as many female primary school teachers as male primary school teachers. There were also consistently more female secondary school teachers than male teachers, although the gap in the secondary sector was much smaller. However, Figure 1 shows that the gap between the numbers of male and female teachers is widening, as the absolute number of female teachers increases and the number of male teachers declines. The gap in the numbers of men and women in secondary school teaching is widening particularly rapidly.

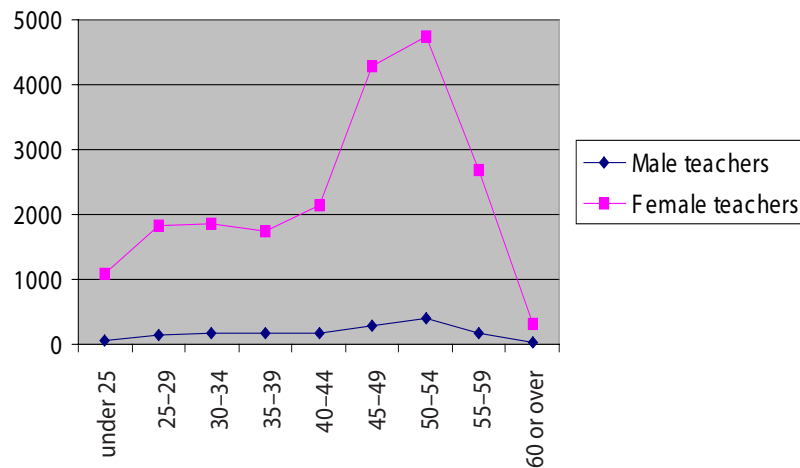
Figure 1: Teachers by gender and type of school 1996–2003  
(Scottish Executive, 2004)



No official figures were available, by gender, before 1996.

The gender profile of teachers also varies by age. Figure 2 shows that the majority of both male and female teachers are over the age of 44, and the gender gap is at its widest among the 50–54 year olds. This suggests that there is a need not only to attract more men into teaching, but also to sustain the number of women entering the profession.

Figure 2: Scottish primary school teachers in 2003, by age and gender  
(Scottish Executive, 2004)



In secondary schools, traditional gender divisions are very evident in terms of subject taught, with men making up the majority of teachers in Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History, Computing Studies and Technical Education. An analysis by age, gender and subject taught suggests that this picture is about to change radically, since women in the younger age groups make up the majority of teachers in Mathematics, Science, History and Modern Studies (see Figures 3–7). Younger female teachers also represent a higher proportion of English teachers.

Figure 3: Mathematics by age group and gender

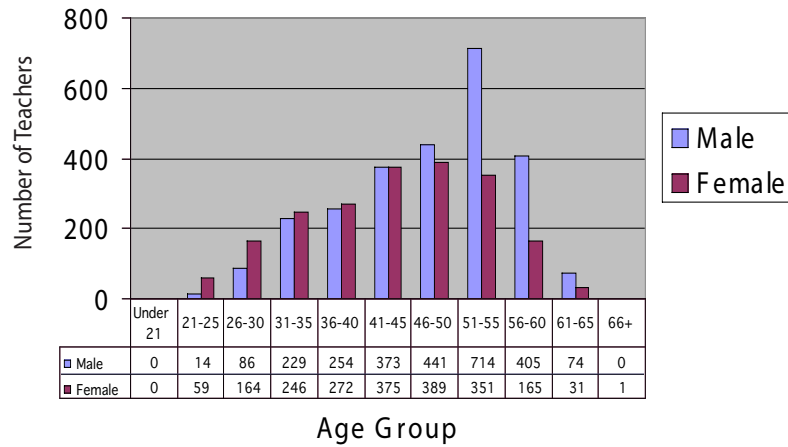


Figure 4: English by age group and gender

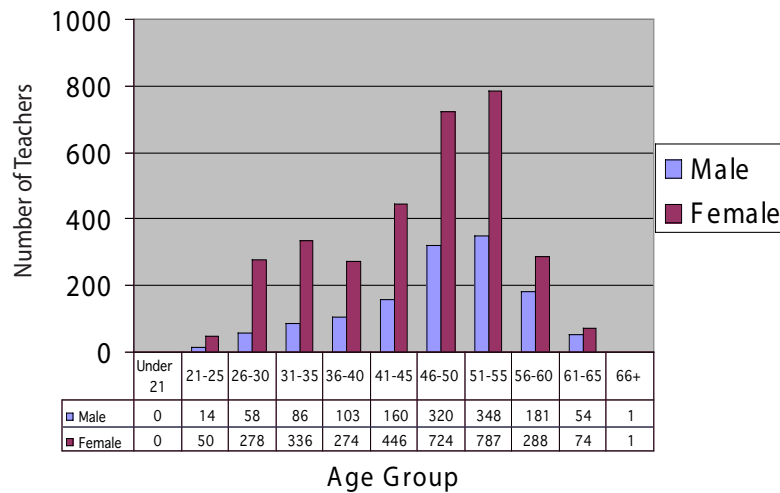




Figure 5: All Sciences Combined by age group and gender

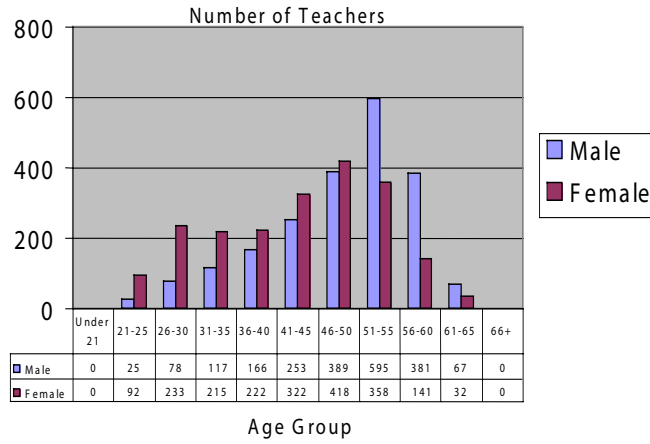


Figure 6: History by age group and gender

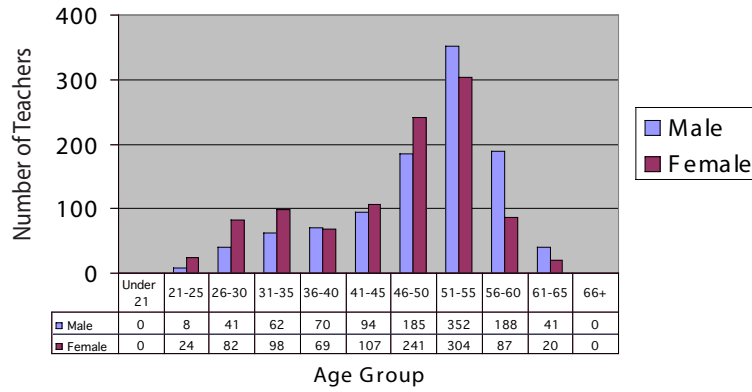
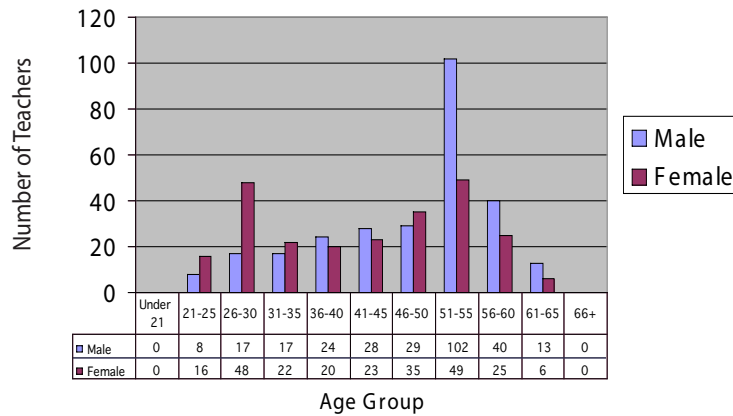


Figure 7: Modern Studies by age group and gender

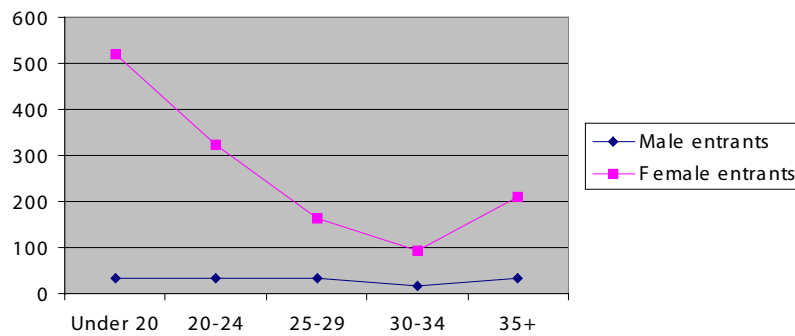


This may have implications for the culture of particular subject areas and their attraction to girls and boys. More female teachers in non-traditional subject areas such as Physics and Chemistry may make these subjects more attractive to girls, however, it is possible that for boys it will become even harder to find appealing role models.

Traditional gender hierarchies persist in Scottish schools, with men five times more likely than their female counter-parts to become head teachers in primary and secondary schools. Other social divisions are also apparent. All principals and deputies of secondary schools and head teachers of primary schools who declared their ethnicity in the 2003 Schools Census described themselves as white-UK or white-other. Given the importance of teachers as role models for pupils, there is clearly a need to take action to ensure that the social profile of teachers reflects more closely the characteristics of the Scottish population.

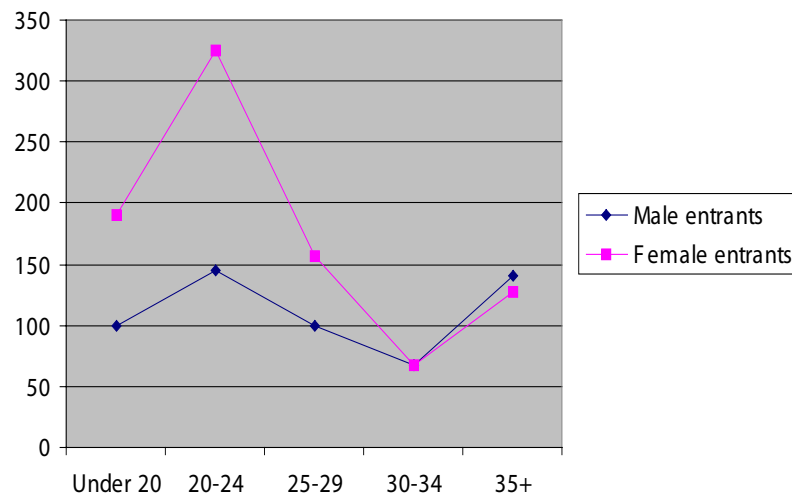
As noted above, fewer men are entering initial teacher education. On the PGCE primary programme, the majority of women are under 24 whilst men are more evenly spread across the 20–35 age groups (see Figure 8). This suggests that for women, primary teaching is a first career choice, whereas men are more likely to enter primary teaching having tried out other jobs.

*Figure 8: Primary PGCE students by age group and gender 2002/2003*



In contrast, the majority of both male and female graduates entering the PGCE secondary education programme are in the 20-24 age range, implying that graduates have enrolled for the course immediately after their first degree, or shortly thereafter (see Figure 9). By far the largest group of PGCE secondary students are women in the 20–24 age group.

Figure 9: Secondary PGCE students by age group and gender 2002/2003



The main subject of students on the BEd and PGCE programmes reflects the gender balance in the wider teaching profession. However, the proportion of male students training to teach History, Geography, Chemistry, Music and Technical Education is well below the proportion of men currently teaching these subjects in schools. Drop-out rates from teacher education courses are high overall (about 20%) and high levels of attrition, particularly in some subject areas, may indicate a problem with the course or that students lack commitment and motivation.

Most research on the gender balance in teaching has focused on the relatively low number of men in primary teaching (see above). This research draws attention to the declining proportion of men in secondary schools, raising questions about teacher supply in areas of the curriculum where men continue to make up the majority of undergraduate students at university (e.g. Physics and Maths). Issues also arise about how the declining proportion of male teachers will affect the future culture of secondary schools, with the possibility of both positive and negative effects.

#### *Undergraduates' views of teaching as a career*

The undergraduate survey provided insight into the views of potential new recruits to the profession, exploring the influences on future career choice. When asked to consider the importance of particular factors in relation to career choices, nearly 90% of respondents felt that job security and a steady income were important. About two thirds thought that having a well-paid job and a job that suited family life were important, and about a half thought that good holidays would influence their career choice. By way of contrast, less than a third felt that high social status was a major consideration. These general attitudes appear to be compatible with opting for teaching as a career (see Table 3), although, as explained below, teaching was clearly not a popular career choice.

Table 3: Factors influencing career choice in order of popularity

| For all respondents        | Male respondents           | Female respondents         |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Security and income 88% | 1. Security and income 86% | 1. Security and income 90% |
| 2. Socially useful 68%     | 2. Well-paid job 73%       | 2. Work with people 69%    |
| 3. Work with people 67%    | 3. Socially useful 69%     | 3. Socially useful 68%     |
| 4. Well-paid job 66%       | 4. Uses degree 64%         | 4. Uses degree 66%         |
| 5. Uses degree 65%         | 5. Work with people 63%    | 5. Suits family life 66%   |
| 6. Suits family life 62%   | 6. Suits family life 56%   | 6. Well paid job 65%       |
| 7. Will inspire others 55% | 7. Has good holidays 56%   | 7. Will inspire others 56% |
| 8. Has good holidays 49%   | 8. Will inspire others 55% | 8. Has good holidays 48%   |
| 9. Social status 32%       | 9. Social status 41%       | 9. Social status 27%*      |

\*p<.05

Overall, whilst 60% of respondents had considered a job in teaching, the majority appeared to have rejected this option, since only 11% said they were very likely to become a teacher. Most respondents had a rather negative view of teaching, believing that it had relatively poor pay, low social status and that discipline problems made it an unattractive career choice. However, teachers' holidays were seen as a plus and it was viewed as a family-friendly occupation.

Despite the fact that women were significantly more likely to say they were very likely to become a teacher, their general views were similar to those of men. They were significantly more likely to agree with the statement that teaching offered family friendly conditions, which may provide some insight into their reasons for opting for teaching despite an awareness of some of its less attractive features.

Those considering a career in teaching placed higher values on family friendly conditions, long holidays and working with people, and less importance on having a job with high social status. Undergraduates from the post-92 university, who were more likely to come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, were significantly more likely than those from the pre-92 universities to regard a high salary, high social status and long holidays as important. They were also more likely to think that teaching was a reasonably paid job. Overall, those from more deprived backgrounds were more likely to be considering teaching as a career and regard it as a reasonably well-paid job.

In response to specific questions about working in education, it emerged that undergraduates overall held a fairly negative view of teaching as a career. However, women and those from less advantaged neighbourhoods were more likely to see teaching as a possible career choice. This may not indicate great enthusiasm, but lack of more attractive alternatives. The views expressed in the survey suggest that young men may be particularly reluctant recruits.

Table 4: Level of agreement with statements about teaching as a career

| Statement  | All respondents agreeing | Male respondents agreeing | Female respondents agreeing |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Holidays make teaching attractive                | 249 (80%)                | 86 (80%)                  | 163 (79%)                   |
| Good job for people with family responsibilities | 165 (52%)                | 47 (44%)                  | 118 (57%)*                  |
| Reasonably well paid job                         | 127 (40%)                | 41 (38%)                  | 86 (42%)                    |
| Primary teaching more attractive                 | 121 (39%)                | 34 (31%)                  | 87 (42%)                    |
| Good career prospects                            | 111 (35%)                | 38 (35%)                  | 73 (35%)                    |
| A lot of public respect                          | 98 (31%)                 | 38 (36%)                  | 60 (29%)                    |
| Have experience of teaching                      | 87 (28%)                 | 20 (19%)                  | 67 (33%)                    |
| Discipline problems make teaching unattractive   | 209 (67%)                | 74 (69%)                  | 135 (66%)                   |
| Likely to become teacher                         | 36 (11%)                 | 7 (6%)                    | 29 (14%)                    |

\* p<0.05

These findings, discussed further below, are not particularly optimistic with regard to the future supply of teachers in Scotland, since they suggest that even those most likely to enter the profession are fairly unenthusiastic, and might opt for another type of job if this were more compatible with other aspects of life such as bringing up young children.

PROMOTING TEACHING AS A CAREER: THE VIEWS OF UNIVERSITY CAREERS OFFICERS  
 Careers officers suggested that across the board graduates were interested in public service, and women favoured careers offering a positive work life balance. Graduates generally wanted to work in an area which was relevant to their discipline. Mature students were likely to look for a job which would allow them to work locally and pay was not the major motivating factor.

Interestingly, the pull factor of jobs in IT and the electronics industry was not the main reason for the declining number of men in teaching. Rather, male graduates were likely to be under-employed in service sector occupations. The graduate labour market in Scotland was depressed rather than buoyant, but teaching had failed to fully capitalise on the relatively large number of graduates in search of employment. Compared with the private sector, the public sector appeared to put less energy into graduate recruitment and a more strategic approach would result in a better qualified and more enthusiastic teaching force.

Teacher education courses generally expected candidates to have prior experience of working with children and this might mitigate against men, who, compared with women, were less likely to have accumulated work experience with children over the years in both formal and informal settings. In addition, men on teacher education courses might be uncomfortable in a predominantly female environment.

Positive aspects of teaching included the terms and conditions of employment which might be appreciated rather more by women than men. In addition, the induction year was regarded as offering a more secure start to a teaching career. On the negative side, teaching was seen increasingly as a 'woman's job', demanding 'soft' qualities, and was therefore less appealing to men. The growing demands on

teachers to assist with pupils' social development might also deter men.

Finally, teaching suffered from a negative image. Mass media were partly responsible for the propagation of scare stories, but teachers themselves projected an overwhelmingly negative view of their own profession which was dampening the enthusiasm of new recruits.

#### ADDRESSING THE GENDER IMBALANCE IN TEACHING: THE VIEWS OF PRACTISING TEACHERS AND KEY INFORMANTS

##### *Positive and negative feature of teaching as a career*

Practising teachers in primary and secondary schools and key informants identified a number of positive features of teaching, including the opportunities provided for varied and autonomous work and contributing to the social and academic development of children and young people. A number of primary school teachers spoke of the fun which was an intrinsic part of working with children:

I think working in direct contact with the children is good fun and you are constantly learning something new everyday. You learn a lot about yourself and you learn a lot about them. (Female primary teacher)

Another positive feature was the variety of the job. One suggested:

People get stuck in a rut [in other posts] but here two days are never the same. The problems that crop up are different every day and I think that is a really strong benefit. (Male primary teacher)

The holidays and pension arrangements were a positive feature compared with jobs in the private sector and the working hours were very good for people with caring responsibilities. Opportunities for contact with the local community and other professionals were welcomed by primary teachers.

A number of secondary teachers referred to the advantages of teaching compared with their previous occupations:

...because I am so new into it, I am still very passionate about why I am going into it. Previous to this I worked in professional theatre and I just didn't feel that I was getting any satisfaction from my work helping others, and that was the big thought of getting into education so that I could say on a daily basis that the work that I was doing, the impact that it had on young people, was really worthwhile. So that's my big motivation. (Male secondary teacher)

I worked in stock brokers for five years before I came into teaching, so taking my experience from that into the classroom now, it's great. I see that it motivates pupils and it motivates me to see that. I get a lot of satisfaction from that to see someone learn from my own experience. (Male secondary teacher)

Negative features identified by secondary school teachers included the number of pupils seen on a daily basis and the amount of paperwork associated with increased regulation and accountability. Male teachers in secondary schools emphasised the low pay and lack of promotion opportunities compared with some other professions such as law and medicine. Growing pressures arising from school inclusion policies and indiscipline were mentioned by some teachers, for example:

You know there is a smashing wee person inside but they haven't been taught that... so you sometimes feel you are a policeman, a social worker, a substitute parent... Yet our hands are tied behind our back with what we can say, what we can't say, what we can do, what we can't do. We know how accountable we are in this school. (Male secondary teacher)

There's more and more expectations on school and teachers to sort society out. We are the ones that can sort out bullying, drugs, everything. So whereas respect for us as a profession has gone down, both with children and with other adults, the responsibility that we are given has increased and that's difficult. (Female secondary teacher)

However, teachers in schools serving diverse communities were less likely to see these as problems, indicating that school culture might play a part here. In relation to the public image of teaching, it was felt that a negative view of teachers' professional competence was sometimes promoted by media and politicians. In addition, in their efforts to improve pay and working conditions, trades unions tended to play up the difficulties of teachers' work.

#### *Reasons for the declining proportion of men in teaching*

Respondents were asked to give their views on why fewer men were going into teaching. Many suggested that the more women there are in a profession, the less attractive it is to men. For example a secondary head suggested that: 'If you move to the bias of one gender over another, perpetuation takes place as kids in school, for example, see a female doing a job and associate that with only that gender'. It was also noted that primary teaching had always been regarded as a job which was more suitable for women than men because of the caring and maternal qualities which women were assumed to possess. For example, a primary head suggested that:

Teaching is seen as being about 'caring', especially in the early years, so this is not attractive to men. Society is also wary about males – it's seen as not a job for a 'real' man, especially by parents.

In addition many argued that there were more limited career prospects in primary and this might deter men from applying. One respondent working in teacher education suggested that the growth of women in senior management, particularly in primary, made men feel a little less secure about their own rise through the ranks.

There was also a general view that teachers' pay did not compare favourably with that of some other occupations, and this was a more salient factor for men than women:

The comparative jobs in industry and other professions are going to pay a lot more than they do in teaching. There is no doubt about that. (Male secondary teacher)

I can walk out the door and double my salary, or triple my salary... There is not a huge incentive to be here except to teach. (Male secondary teacher)

In connection with these views, it is worth noting that there were no significant differences between male and female undergraduates in their views of the importance of pay as a factor in career choice.

Whilst female teachers were wary about generalising, they felt that women were possibly more attuned to meeting pupils' social and emotional needs, an increasingly important part of the job:

I think it's just that men look for different things in a career don't they, and it's possible that a lot of the traits that you need for teaching are predominantly female traits... I think caring, sensitivity, understanding, also wanting to put something back and to feel that you are doing something meaningful at your work, which I think is definitely less important for men. They probably want results, whereas women want to feel that they are doing something that really matters. (Female secondary teacher)

But I would say as a rule generally it would appear that female teachers are much more likely to engage with kids and talk to them about something going on at home than male teachers who are much more likely, generally, it's a generalisation, not to do that in the same way. (Female secondary teacher)

The ideal situation, it was suggested, was a balance so both sexes have role models and this challenged residual stereotypes about the roles of men and women in society. Having men in teaching also has the potential to challenge people's ideas about maleness and masculinity so that different types of role models, especially for young males, were set up:

Children need to see male role models that are both supportive and challenging. So they need to see men in a caring and dynamic role just like girls in the past needed to see women in a dynamic role because they only saw women in a caring role. Young people need to see both these qualities modelled by both sexes (Secondary Head).

A primary head also suggested that a mixed staff group generated a 'gender inter-relationship that is very good for staff'.

Several respondents were concerned about stereotyping the contributions that males and females make to society through education. They argued that it was about the ability of the person to do the job so the gender balance should not matter. One suggested:

I think that men and women have an equal contribution to make towards young people and the development of our future society in all ways and it is important that both have a contribution to make (ITE coordinator).

Whilst there was agreement that women might be more empathic than men, there was some resistance to essentialist ideas of masculinity and femininity. One respondent said: 'it's not genetic, it's how they are raised'. Ultimately, having the right personal qualities rather than one's biological sex was regarded as the most important factor in determining who would be a good teacher:

I think it's about the person, I really don't think it's anything to do with whether you are a man or whether you are a woman, I think it's about the person and I think if you have got certain qualities for teaching then you will be a good teacher... I think if the man has got the right attributes to be a teacher then it's totally appropriate that that's where he should be and very important for young boys that they do have role models. (Female secondary teacher)

In addition, gender stereotyping might have a negative impact on men who did choose to become a teacher. For example, concerns about discipline might pressurise men into fulfilling the role of disciplinarian against their wishes:

...men are quite often pushed towards the difficult class therefore they have to fulfil that stereotype of being able to deal with the difficult class. What quite often children need are men that are quiet, softly spoken and gentle. That is actually really important. (Male primary teacher)

There was general agreement that male role models were very important for both boys and girls. As one secondary head argued 'if the boys don't see clever, dynamic, interesting but supportive men in front of them then they're not going to go into teaching'. A primary head took this further and suggested:

The more diverse the workforce, the better the experience that children have. This applies to all aspects including race, age, class and so on. I would like the staff in my school to reflect the community out there.



It was suggested by a number of respondents that early intervention in helping boys to see that teaching could be for them would help. For example, boys should be encouraged to consider primary teaching whilst still at school, and might be helped to negotiate a primary school work placement. A primary head suggested that:

Primary schools could promote greater awareness of gender stereotyping in jobs as part of the equalities agenda. The focus tends to be on race and disability generally because people see these as more of an issue. Gender isn't a 'fashionable' topic in schools partly because if you have an all female staff they just don't notice gender issues, just like white people aren't aware of racism as an issue for them.

Therefore, even though it might be difficult to attract men into teaching, our respondents argued that attempts to do so should not be abandoned. However, they indicated major barriers to male recruitment, including perceived low pay and a greater emphasis on 'soft' skills such as negotiation and empathy which, it was believed, came less easily to men. A significant group of women teachers felt there was a need for a cultural shift in dominant versions of masculinity, so that less emphasis was placed on the financial rewards of work and more value was placed on emotional and relational aspects.

#### CONCLUSION

The statistical data presented above demonstrate the decline in men's participation in the teaching workforce in Scotland, with a particularly marked decline at secondary level where until relatively recently men made up about half the workforce. Findings from the undergraduate survey suggest that there is little enthusiasm for teaching as a career amongst the next generation of future recruits regardless of sex, with women choosing teaching partly because they recognise that it is a reasonably family-friendly job. If the current trend for fewer women to have children continues, or if more jobs become family-friendly, then it is evident that future teacher supply could become a real problem.

Key informants and practising teachers offered a range of explanations for the declining proportion of men in teaching, and generally agreed that there were benefits in maintaining the diversity of the teaching profession, since all pupils could benefit from the range of interests and attributes offered by women and men. Men were particularly welcome in non-traditional areas such as Home Economics and Business Studies in secondary schools, since their example might encourage pupils to think about non-traditional career choices. The belief that schools should reflect social diversity is also reflected in the review of initial teacher education conducted by the Scottish Executive (2005).

Boys from lone parent families were seen as particularly likely to benefit from meeting male teachers in school. In particular, male teachers who deliberately shunned macho versions of masculinity, emphasising instead caring and nurturing characteristics, could act as positive role models for all pupils. Mills (2001) has suggested that anti-sexist male teachers can play an important role in schools by engaging boys in group work aimed at challenging dominant versions of masculinity. At the same time, Mills is wary of some of the under-lying thinking within the men's movement, and is particularly critical of American writers such as Robert Bly (1991), who draw on 'mytho-poetic' traditions in encouraging men to access 'deep masculinities' which have allegedly been suppressed in the modern world. This is, of course, only one strand within the men's movement and, as noted above, Mills and colleagues argue strongly that men should actively engage in the work of challenging sexist and homophobic beliefs and practices in school, taking more responsibility for the welfare of both girls and boys.

It was also suggested by some respondents that caution should be exercised in

automatically regarding the declining number of men in secondary teaching as a problem. One key informant pointed out that the main concern was the quality of new recruits to the profession and gender was a secondary consideration. Another noted that primary schools in Scotland, where women represent a large majority of the teaching workforce, appeared to be operating smoothly, with improved attainment levels, better engagement with parents and fewer discipline problems than secondary. Whilst it was recognised that young people in the teenage years were likely to be more challenging in school, it was suggested that women's greater willingness to negotiate with pupils might bode well for the future.

The underlying reasons for gender divisions within the labour market continue to be debated. Crompton (1997) analysed the alliance between the state and trades unions in promoting the idea of the family wage. Surviving until the later part of the twentieth century, this ideology generally benefited men more than women. Whilst there has been a rapid growth in female employment over the past two decades, horizontal and vertical segregation of occupation persists. At the same time, some changes are evident, with middle class women entering professions which were previously dominated by men, such as law and medicine, and also making inroads into management in occupations such as banking, albeit in niche sectors such as call centres and personal finance (Crompton, 1997). The domestic division of labour also reveals a fairly fixed pattern, although it is clear that couples are more likely to share housework and childcare when the woman is in employment (Crompton, *ibid*).

Whilst the gendered division of labour has diminished, it has not entirely vanished and debates continue as to whether this is a result of material and economic factors (Hartmann, 1982; Walby, 1986) or women's and men's personal choices (Hakim, 1995; 1996). Writers like Hakim have pointed out that women's orientation to the labour market is not uniform, with women having different levels of attachment to the world of work. Some women may expect their salary to be a constituent element of a household income, whilst others may expect to be financially independent. In the same way, men's commitment to the labour market is not uniform, with some men being far more ambitious than others, and individuals' work orientation is likely to change over time, reflecting alterations in their personal circumstances. Such analysis highlights the dynamic nature of the relationship of men and women to the labour market, and the extent to which rapid change has taken place over the last few decades. It is clear that change takes place partly as a result of shifting economic and social relationships, but also as a result of changing attitudes and personal choices, which may not always be synchronised with economic cycles. In order to shift the current gender balance in teaching, it is therefore necessary to address not only the formal and informal barriers to equality which remain, but also the underlying cultural, social and emotional factors which may be far removed from economic rationalism.

In the light of the declining proportion of men in teaching and the apparent reluctance of current undergraduates to pursue a career in education, it is evident that fresh thinking is needed about how to attract and retain a teaching workforce which reflects social diversity. Rather than pursuing positive action policies aimed at men which might disadvantage women, respondents felt that the emphasis should be on getting the best recruits into teaching partly by celebrating the positive aspects of the job. Coercing reluctant men into the classroom was likely to be counter-productive, but efforts should be made to address aspects of masculinity which tended to undervalue the caring and empathic qualities which are increasingly important in teaching. At a practical level, it was believed that the following courses of action might be successful in recruiting the most able individuals, regardless of sex:

- developing positive messages about teaching through focused advertising campaigns emphasising pay and promotion as well as intrinsic job satisfaction;

- much closer working between local authorities and university careers staff to recruit the best graduates;
- countering negative media messages about teaching;
- actively engaging trades unions and teachers themselves in promoting their own profession;
- developing more imaginative ways of recruiting the best new graduates and career changers into teaching;
- paying attention to all aspects of social diversity in the recruitment and promotion of teachers, with the goals of developing a teaching workforce which reflects more closely the full spectrum of modern Scottish society.

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