SECONDARY SCHOOL IDENTITIES AND CAREER DECISION MAKING

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SYNOPSIS

Within this article we shall examine the assumption of the inevitability of applying for promotion. For this purpose we consider those who are interested in applying for promotion beyond Principal Teacher (head of subject department) level. We seek to identify the factors relating to self concept which might distinguish these teachers from those who plan to go no further up the ladder. The findings we report derive from a study of the identities of Scottish secondary school Principal Teachers and Assistant Headteachers, drawing on five elements of identity. While some elements of identity are found to vary with role, this only occurs when career intention is taken into account. A considerable proportion of both groups of staff do intend to seek further promotion, and links are drawn between these intentions and gender, age and length of time in post.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the Scottish Qualification for Headship (SQH) has generated a need to select staff who may be most likely to benefit from the experience. In addition, the SQH and concerns about the numbers of suitable applicants for headship have jointly raised questions about the motivation for seeking or avoiding promotion in schools. Explanations for not applying have been offered in terms of the relative unattractiveness of senior posts in schools times of rapid change, the high levels of public accountability of school managers and a context of critical comment about schooling. Rather less attention has been paid to the individual dimensions of career decision making and yet it is also at the individual level that decisions about careers are made. Recent consideration of the development needs of teachers, for example the emerging proposals for a framework for continuing professional development (CPD) and McCrone's (2000) recommendations on CPD reflect a recognition that individual teachers may find roles which suit or satisfy them at very different points in schools' hierarchies.

Nothing is straightforward about forming an identity, indeed identities may fluctuate and reform over a career, shifting with promotions and disappointments. Perhaps the core identity (Cooley, 1912) may remain the same, but the social group to which individuals belong will affect shifts (Tajfel, 1974). Within the secondary school environment there are marked social groups each of which maintain their own identity. Subject departments form one set of social groups but another is the result of the hierarchy of the organisation. The Senior Management Team (SMT) creates a group which develops its own view of the school with a wider perspective. Whether heads of subject departments, principal teachers (PTs) wish to pursue a career in schools which entails joining the SMT or remaining with their first interest is likely to depend on which identity best fits their views of themselves, but also on external influences, availability of AHT posts, gender, support and encouragement from others, in particular, Deputy and Head Teachers. The importance of these significant others (Mead, 1934) not only in acting as models but in promoting career aspirations is a constant factor in changing self perceptions (Draper and McMichael, 1998). Furthermore, as Ball and Goodson (1985) and Alexander, Havard, Leishman and Wight (1991) point out there are

alternative lives out of school, sometimes related to education but sometimes drawing on skills and interests which contribute to an occupational identity but in other cases are unrelated. These multiple sources of identity may determine whether or not a decision is made to attempt the move from PT to AHT, whether there is disillusionment with their school situation or whether they are gratified by the opportunities and life offered by their present posts.

The system of posts in secondary schools in Scotland is different from that in some other countries. At present the first stage of promotion in Secondary schools is usually to Assistant Principal Teacher (APT, usually of a curriculum subject), and thence to Principal Teacher (PT or Head of Department). An alternative but less common route is into a Senior Teacher post (which is normally a cross-school responsibility). The next move from PT is into the broader school management team: Assistant Headteacher (AHT), followed by Deputy (or Depute) Headteacher (DHT) and Headteacher (HT). In 1998, the most recent date for which national figures are available, the relative numbers of staff in these posts were as follows:

unpromoted teacher	10193
senior teacher	1773
assistant principal teacher	3018
principal teacher	7089
assistant headteacher	1021
deputy headteacher	389
headteacher	394

The pyramid is steep, with 7.5% of secondary teachers holding senior management posts: headteacher , deputy or assistant. The Scottish Committee of Inquiry into the Professional Conditions of Service of Teachers ("McCrone", 2000) proposed a flattening of this structure (to four grades) in line with developments in organisational structure and management thinking and practice outwith education. However, it remains to be seen how many of McCrone's recommendations will be implemented.

Within this paper we shall examine the assumption about the inevitability of applying for promotion, by considering those who are interested in applying for promotion beyond Principal Teacher (head of subject department) level and by seeking to identify factors relating to concept of self which might distinguish these teachers from those who plan to go no further up the ladder.

> You get to a stage after working with children for several years where you need variety and to be with adults as well. Way down the list is money, as it's only £2000 if you're already in a big school, though it would be £6000 if you moved from a small school to a big one. (Acting Assistant Headteacher in a large school, male)

The initial hypothesis in relation to these elements is that role and identity would be related, with either role determining identity or vice versa. Thus PTs and AHTs would vary in their views of themselves as well as of the posts they hold. If this is not the case then some of those occupying a role, for example the role of PT, may have an identity which is strongly related to career intention rather than role.

Five elements of identity have been drawn from the literature (Nias, 1989, Evetts, 1994, Ball and Goodson, 1985):

Career Orientation, taken positively or negatively, stresses the emphasis an individual gives to moving into higher levels of management;

Subject Identity expresses the degree to which individuals value their subject;

Management Identity with positive and negative items draws on items from career identity and subject identity, and emphasises management self concepts;

Out of School Identities explore the degree to which an individual has professional, management and career interests that are pursued out of school. (Alexander et al., 1991); and

a Disenchanted Identity represents regret at having chosen the present career and a wish to leave the current job and take an alternative if offered it. Here negative aspects of motivation and job satisfaction are considered. (Day and Bakioglu, 1996).

Career Intentions

Teachers vary in their career plans and intentions. Bobbitt, Faupel and Faupel (1991), for example, distinguished *movers, stayers and leavers*. Movers were those seeking promotion, stayers were those who did not and leavers were those who did not plan to stay in teaching. This model of career intention was further developed by Draper Fraser and Taylor (1998), with the addition of stoppers, teachers who had sought promotion in the past but were not planning to do so again and starters, who were planning to apply for promotion for the first time. Staff who had already been promoted, like the teachers in the present study, can only fall into three of these categories: *movers, stoppers and leavers*. It would be expected that intention to apply for promotion would relate to identity, particularly career identity, but might also be expected to be associated with management identity and to be related less to identification with subject and consequently also less to present role.

Career Intentions and Identity

Underlying our initial approach to comparisons between the two levels of school management lay the hypothesis that PTs taken as a group would differ from AHTs in being less interested in management per se and more interested in their subjects, perceiving their role as a means of encouraging youngsters to develop an enthusiasm for a particular form of study and pass examinations in it and to aspire to a career which would require at least a basic general understanding of the world. AHTs we supposed, although still affiliated with a subject and indeed teaching it for some hours a week, would have directed their aspirations and their attention more firmly onto school-wide issues, policies and administration with an ultimate intention of becoming Headteachers. These two orientations would represent merely a bias in self-concept — possibly temporary — and would not exclude future alternative views of themselves and their careers.

We therefore posed the following questions all of which have bearing on how career decisions were made:

Identity Differences and Role

- Were there differences in PTs' and AHTs' identities?
- Were these related to gender and, if so, in what way?
- Did PTs have stronger subject identities than AHTs and AHTs stronger management identities than PTs?

- Were AHTs (who are already members of the senior management team (SMT) more focussed on their careers than PTs?

- Were out of school identities common and associated with role?

- Was there a substantial contingent of the disenchanted amongst these senior teachers, and was this disenchantment more marked amongst PTs than AHTs?

Identity Differences and Career Intentions

- How did issues of identity relate to likelihood of applying for further promotion? (movers and stoppers)

Research Method and sample

The authors have carried out several previous studies on Primary and Secondary Head and Deputy Head Teachers (Draper and McMichael 1996 a&b, 1997,1998) which have influenced the approach to this study with respect to data collection, its emphasis on changing identities and the value of considering the likelihood of applications for promotion in career inquiries.

Initial investigations took the form of focus group meetings with two groups of PTs, and individual interviews with 5 AHTs. We met 2 groups of PTs from two schools, one with 4 members and the other with 3. The PTs were drawn from scientific, mathematics and arts subjects and selected by their Heads as likely to be outspoken. With them we explored (a) their views of their present jobs and their attitudes to promotion and to the role of AHTs, and (b) the types of questionnaire format that might best explore the issues raised but with a larger sample. Individual interviews with 5 AHTs used the same format as for the PT focus groups.

On the basis of data collected from these and material drawn from the literature, a questionnaire was compiled and distributed to PTs and AHTs. The questionnaire was sent to 50 schools in 8 local authorities to be distributed by Head Teachers to 3 PTs and 2 AHTs in each school. From the 150 PTs assumed to receive the questionnaire the response rate was 67%, n=100 , and from the AHTs the response rate was 69%, n=69.

Summary of respondents details:

		PTs	%	AHTs	%
Gender:	% female	43	43	25	36
Age:	Under 40	30	30	7	10
	40-49	62	62	33	48
	50+	8	8	28	41
Length of time in post:		(n=90)		(n=63)	
	under 6 yrs	37	42	28	44
	6-10	22	24	17	27
	11-15	21	23	10	16
	16+	10	11	8	13

In summary women constituted well over a third of the sample. A large majority of the PTs and just under half of the AHTs were between 40 and 49. Taken together 56 per cent fell into this age band.

This included the following topics.

1. Personal information - gender, age, present post, time in post, previous occupation if not in teaching, acting post, likelihood of application for promotion, department, number in department.

2. School information - number on school roll, number of AHTs

3. Identity statements[1] with which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement.

4. Attitudes to PTs, AHTs and Self (reported elsewhere)

5. Incentives and Disincentives affecting career decisions (reported elsewhere)

The identity statements were grouped together round elements of identity: subject, management, career, out of school and disenchantment. Examples are:

> Career identity included: I am now ready to move on to a more senior post; headship is part of my career plan; I see a senior management post as incompatible with my view of self

> Out of school identity included: Teaching is a career I run in parallel with another career/occupation/involvement outside school).

> Disenchantment comprised three negative items: If I could I would go back and change my choice of career, If offered a job outside school I would seriously consider taking it, and I would like to get away from my current job.

> Space was also left for free responses at several points within the questionnaire and this space was extensively used.

RESULTS

Identity Differences between PTs and AHTs

We first examined the question of whether there were differences between PTs and AHTs. The items taken individually gave results consistent with our hypotheses though the results were largely non-significant. For greater simplicity of comparison those items contributing to each element were summed. The lower scores indicate greater agreement (see Table 1).

Although we had assumed that there would be significant identity differences between PTs and AHTs, PTs were not in fact more subject orientated than AHTs, possibly because AHTs typically teach a part timetable and have not detached themselves from the classroom, their pupils or their subject. Similarly the expected difference on management identities did not emerge strongly, again probably because of the fact that all PTs had a management responsibility, though this varied with size of department. None of the other identity elements showed any significant differences. The identity measures clearly did not distinguish between the two role groups, nor did gender affect results. It was not until we looked at the identities of those who were aiming for promotion from PT to AHT that we found how identities did indeed differ. However it is worth noting that a disenchanted identity though not distinguishing between PTs and AHTs was an important element in many lives.

Table 1: Principal Teachers' (PTs') and Assistant Head Teachers' (AHTs')
Identity Elements

	No of items per element	PTs			AHTs			
		No.	Mean	s.d	No	Mean	s.d	
Subject	3	98	8.61	1.68	69	11.03	1.79	ns*
Management	8	92	18.39	3.4	67	15.18	2.91	ns
Career	7	94	17.19	3.84	66	16,45	3,28	ns
Out of school	3	98	8.23	2.10	67	8.81	2.36	ns
Disenchantment	3	98	8.55	2.52	68	8.29	2.69	ns

* Mann-Whitney Test

Disenchantment: implications for supply?

We found that a third of both PTs and AHTs wanted to get away from their current job and nearly half would seriously consider taking a job outside school if one were offered. It is perhaps useful to put these findings in the context of earlier work by Huberman (1993), who found that just over half of his Swiss sample, and Draper, Fraser and Taylor (1995) who found three quarters of a Scottish sample of teachers had thought of leaving teaching. The Scottish study of promoted staff found, however, that fewer of those who were promoted had considered leaving. In the present study of promoted staff, one third of the AHTs and a quarter of the PTs reported they would change their choice of career if they had a chance to start again. These figures paint a picture of disillusionment which is consistent with previous studies and which in the light of current understandings could be attributed to overwork and continuous change. Though all those interviewed as part of the pilot study expressed enthusiasm about aspects of their work at the same time many felt exhausted and worn out.

> I'm worried about becoming dead wood as a result of stress, with parents giving constant aggression and challenge and the need to defend colleagues. I feel my health starting to go trying to keep it in perspective. I'm getting better at it, but I'm more switched off. (AHT considering career switch)

It is interesting to note that in a study of teachers 'lapsing' from the profession (Sharp and Draper, 1999) numbers lapsing increased from a career length of 12 years to a peak of 26 years within teaching. As Sharp and Draper (2000) point out it may be inappropriate any longer to assume that teaching is a career lasting to retirement. Here we have shown that even experienced and senior members of the profession might leave if they believed they could. In terms of career a number may be potential leavers rather than movers or stoppers.

Out of school identity

Another interesting finding for PTs and AHTs was the degree of managerial and other professional involvement outside school. These activities are likely to contribute to personal identity. They are also important for the community. As Paterson (1998) summarises: "Being a well-educated and geographically dispersed profession, teachers offer a social resource which many voluntary organisations rely on locally as well as nationally".

Career Intentions: movers and stoppers

We divided the PTs and AHTs into *movers* and *stoppers*. To distinguish between *movers* and *stoppers* we asked respondents whether or not they would apply for promotion in the next five years.

In previous studies (Draper & McMichael, 1996a and 1996b) of Deputy Heads (DHTs) in both primary and secondary schools we had become aware of many individuals who were not likely to apply for Headships. They acknowledged a number of reasons for applying but, for them, the costs of the job seemed to outweigh the benefits. In some cases they had already applied and failed to achieve their ambitions but others had recoiled from the perceived exposure of headship to isolated defence of school policy and actions and had no intention of applying. We then pursued the question of whether a similar reluctance might apply at lower levels of responsibility, i.e. to PTs with respect to becoming AHTs and to the latter with respect to becoming DHTs.

Movers constituted 57 per cent of the 100 PTs (n=57) and 43 per cent of 63 AHT respondents (n= 27). The *stoppers* comprised 43 per cent of the 100 PTs and 57 percent of the responding AHTs. It would seem that there is a tendency, not very marked for more of the PTs than the AHTs to be *movers*, possibly as a result of a realistic appraisal of the narrowing of the promotion pyramid and possibly also because of the greater age of some of the AHTs. It seems that there are at least a number of staff who do not seek further promotion. An assumption that those who do not achieve headship are those who have not been chosen is clearly wide of the mark: some choose greatness, but others reject it!

As Table 2 shows, PT *movers* and *stoppers* differed significantly on three aspects of their self concepts: Career Identity, Management Identity, and Subject Identity. AHT movers and stoppers differed significantly on two aspects: career and subject identities. While differences between means on management identity were noticeable they were not significant. The absence of such a difference is not surprising however since AHTs are all members of the central school management team already and might all be expected to identify themselves as managers.

Table 2: Identity and Career Intention

	PTs						AHTs					
	stoppers n=43			movers n=57			stoppers n=42			movers n=27		
	no	mean	s.d	no	mean	s.d	no	mean	s.d	no	mean	s.d
Subject	41	7.93	1.52 **	57	9.12	1.59	36	10.69	1.69 *	26	11.65	1.83
Management	36	20.75	2.86 **	56	16.55	2.55	36	15.69	2.95	24	14.42	2.26
Career	38	20.24	2.94 **	54	14.66	2.59	35	18.14	2.41 **	26	14.42	2.83
Out of School	40	8.34	2.09	56	8.14	2.17	35	8.77	2.17	23	8.92	2.55
Disenchantment	40	8.42	2.40	52	8.77	2.4	36	8.08	2.62	25	8.44	2.97

* $p < 0.05$
** $p < 0.001$

These data suggest therefore that for PTs identity may be less related to role than it is to career intention. Those who aspire to entering the senior management team identify themselves as managers more than those who do not. It is interesting to note that in relation to subject identity, PTs as a group verge on difference from AHTs as a group. However, it is the stoppers in both groups who are more subject orientated. For career identity however, the two sets of movers (PT and AHT) are more similar to each other than they are to the stoppers in the same post.

In accordance with our initial expectations the *movers* were more career and management oriented, and less subject oriented than the *stoppers* . Although the number admitting to the goal of becoming Head teachers was not great, amongst the *movers* there were 13 (24%) compared with only 1 (2%) of the *stoppers* with this ambition. Some *movers* may, of course, look for alternative educational careers in the local authority, the advisory services and the inspectorate.

Factors affecting Career Intention

The questions we then asked were concerned with influences on the *movers* and *stoppers* in applying (or not) for promotion and whether the slightly larger percentage of PTs who considered themselves *movers* were on the whole more likely to be career active because they were on the whole a younger group.

- Was gender influential?

- Were age and length of time in post relevant to application likelihood?

- Since some of the two status groups had been in acting-up posts, were these temporary promotions related to their willingness to apply for promotion?

- Can profiles of *movers* and *stoppers* be constructed?

Table 3 begins the process of answering these questions, by drawing on the quantitative data collected. As will be seen below further insights can be derived from the free comment responses.

Gender, Age and length of time in post .

We examined the effects of age, length in post and gender. These may be confounded. For the PTs gender played little part in the decision to apply, over half of both men and women having decided to apply. For the AHTs the picture was somewhat different with fewer men seeking promotion, possibly because there were more men who were over 50 and had been a considerable time in post.

It is notable that 70 per cent of the male AHTs wished to stay where they were compared to only 44 per cent of the women (p<0.001). In the free responses however, gender emerged more strongly as a perceived factor influencing actual promotion than it did in respondents' decision to apply. It is women who remark on discrimination which acts as a barrier to promotion and a disincentive.

> Many of my colleagues who find they have rapid promotion to PT appear blocked in their rise to AHT by an all male SMT who are reluctant to appoint females to Acting AHT posts which can be a springboard to permanent AHT posts. On top of this there are many directorates of education that are totally dominated by males. (PT)

> The lack of women in senior management may put women off! (AHT)

> I think effective role models are very important. I did not have effective female role models at PT or AHT level and had to forge my own path. The promotion process took longer than it would have for a man. (AHT)

Table 3: Characteristics of Movers and Stoppers:
Gender, Age, Length of time in Post and Acting post

	PT Movers		PT Stoppers		AHT Movers		AHT Stoppers	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Gender								
Female	27	63	16	37	14	56	11	44
Male	32	56	25	44	13	30	12	70
Age								
< 40	21	75	9	25	7	100	0	0
40-49	33	54	29	46	17	52	16	48
50+	3	38	5	62	3	11	25	89
Length of time in post								
< 6 yrs	25	68	12	32	18	64	10	36
6-10 yrs	15	68	7	32	5	23	12	77
11-15 yrs	10	48	11	52	3	30	7	70
16+ yrs	1	10	9	90	1	13	7	87
Previous Acting post								
PTs Acting AHT	16	64	9	36				
Not Acting AHT	41	56	34	44				
AHTs Acting DHT					14	47	16	53
Not Acting DHT					12	31	27	69

Perhaps the most interesting results lay in the age effects. Both for PTs and for AHTs there was greater enthusiasm for promotion amongst the younger staff. Three quarters of the PTs and all the AHTs under 40 planned to apply. These might be seen as the *high flyers* and the more ambitious. This select group was not influenced by gender. Nevertheless, only half of the *high flyers* aimed to be Head Teachers. Age effects are seen in the following free responses:

> My response is different now to what it might have been 10-15 years ago. The post of AHT becomes more frustrating and less rewarding the longer you stay in it! Little real influence on broader issues and without the satisfaction that comes from rewarding work in your subject.

> Age is a factor in my attitudes now. I am 50+ and although still devoted to my school and my pupils, I no longer have ambitions for promotion at any cost. I enjoy what I do and feel it is within my competence. I would be *reluctant to "fight my way in" to a fresh school again.*

Acting Posts

There was belief among many PTs that securing an Acting AHT post was an important step in acquiring useful experience to support an application for further promotion. Opportunities were however seen to vary from school to school.

> I think there is a real advantage in securing an acting AHT post and that it is by chance that this occurs. In my school there has been no senior management vacancy in 8 years approximately. There has been no female member of senior management for much longer.

> It is unfair that if you get some "acting" you stand a better chance. Neither of my AHTs have been off.

Although having been in an Acting post might have been expected to lead to a high level of career commitment the PTs who had had this experience were not very much more likely to apply than those who had not, one reason being the way the experience pointed up the losses.

> I enjoyed some of the duties/role of an AHT (and miss them) but, overall, I much prefer running a subject department. Fourteen years of PT experience didn't prepare me for the AHT job (learning curve very steep) . I'm glad I did acting AHT because it made up my mind that it wasn't the direction for me.

It seems possible that promotion, though desired by many of the PTs and rather less than half the AHTs, was less desirable in fact than in imagination. This suggests that decision making after holding an acting post may be better informed and more realistic, even though the experience of acting, being short term and frequently an internal appointment may be somewhat different from a permanent promoted post. In fact, a proportionately greater number of AHTs who had been Acting DHTs (compared to those who had not) were considering promotion, but the most striking finding here is the high proportion of AHTs who had not had Acting Posts who were *stoppers* and unlikely to apply.

Profiling PT Movers and Stoppers

Those who have indicated that they are unlikely to apply appear to be fairly firmly set on avoiding a career up the management structure. The *movers* appear more ambitious in these terms. Do they differ in their self perceptions, such that a profile of *movers* can be distinguished from that of the *stoppers?*

PT *movers* identify with management, rather more than subject, and have a strong consciousness of career considerations. In a parallel paper we have shown that for *movers* the incentives of change operate strongly, and the deterrents of bureaucracy and a lowly position in the senior management appear unimportant. Though many are happy in their present posts this does not prevent their aspiring to senior management since they see themselves as ready for the responsibility. Some movers may apply not realising the scale of the demands they will meet, although one AHT was glad she had not known:

> Although I love my job, if I had known first how stretched (and stressed) I would be, and how much paper work was involved I would have been less motivated to apply. (AHT)

Movers have often held Acting Posts and are likely to be relatively young. Some *movers* may, however, look for change or promotion through alternative educational careers and their subject identity may be high.

> I would like to contribute to my subject out of school and in a full time post.

PT *stoppers*, in contrast with the *movers*, and generalising from our data, see themselves more often in subject terms, and are less conventionally ambitious, less drawn by change and both status and salary increases (admittedly not very large) and are more deterred by the burdens of being an AHT. Furthermore they may not see themselves as ready for promotion. Their aspirations are apt to be more pupil and classroom oriented, and their present post seen as providing satisfying opportunities for fulfilment: enjoyment, autonomy, variety, change, and challenge.

> I am saddened that the PT post is viewed as a step on the promotion ladder to AHT because many of my peers have chosen this level of post as a positive choice of ideal job in itself. (PT)

> The biggest concern for me in considering an AHT post is the loss of classroom contact with the students - the area I enjoy the most. (PT)

They are likely to be happy where they are and do not seek further promotion, and, for some, experience of an Acting Post has firmed up that position. Theirs appears to be a choice based on substantially different self-concepts from those of their *mover* colleagues whose identities more closely resemble those of senior management.

Profiling AHT Movers and Stoppers

AHT movers

In terms of relative frequency, the ratio of AHT to DHT posts is roughly 1 in 3 which is higher than that for PTs to AHTs (1 in 7). We might, therefore, expect most AHTs to see themselves as *movers* having assessed their chances of promotion and having already made the move into senior management, in many cases also having had an Acting DHT Post. However, the picture is not so simple. In fact, over half of the AHTs did not wish to apply for further promotion, and though their management identities were strong (and matched those of AHT and PT *movers)*, their career identities were significantly different from their *mover* colleagues

> The pace of change is too great. Enthusiasm for change does begin to fade after years of nothing but. Teacher bashing by politicians does not engender enthusiasm.

AHT *stoppers* are likely to have abandoned further pursuit of their management careers (without abandoning their management identities) and consequently are extremely unlikely to want to become Heads. They do not seek more responsibility and do not feel ready for a more senior post and are likely to be older than the *movers,* many being over 50 and a considerable time in post.

> Age is a factor in my attitudes now. I am 50+ and although still devoted to my school and my pupils, I no longer have ambitions for promotion at any cost. I enjoy what I do and feel it is within my competence. I would be reluctant to fight my way in to a fresh school again.

In fact many (about half) feel that they are happy where they are and do not wish to leave.

> This is by far the most demanding job I have had in a long and varied career, however it is the most interesting and most rewarding. (AHT)

Profiling the AHT *movers* suggests emphasising their strong management identities, their career commitment (a considerable majority wishing to become Head Teachers), and their perception of themselves as ready for more responsibility in a more senior post. They are very likely to apply if they are under 40 or have been less than six years in post, suggesting that career intentions are clear among those aspiring to the fast track.

Deciding to stop applying …

Some of those who did not plan to apply further were satisfied with their current situation and had no wish to move. This was not however the case for all stoppers. Our question regarding whether respondents were likely to apply in the next five years produced a number of complaints and revealed assaults on perceived identities within

the free responses. A number of the PTs who made personal observations had already applied at least once for promotion. Grievances ranged from the apparent denial of academic and other forms of preparedness to the suggestion that some departments, being larger were over-represented in the promotion stakes. It seemed that some PTs and AHTs were assessing their chances, sometimes with passion, sometimes with calculation, and deciding on future applications in the light of past experience

> Consideration of promotion to AHT would depend on many factors …whether certain subjects are going to survive the next 5 years is a major question for me and I would have to think of my own personal survival. If this means promotion then let it be so. (PT)

CONCLUSION

Defining the association between individual, role and identity cannot be done without recourse to the concept of career intention. Role incumbents include amongst them those who aspire to the next role up the career ladder and are seen in this study to have, at the very least, the seeds of the identity characteristics of their next career move. PTs and AHTs have different identities, but the differences are most strongly shown on the more obvious elements i.e. subject and management identities and only when career intention is taken into account. The question that remains unanswered however is to what extent identity moulds career intentions or vice versa: whether a clear view of likely career progression impacts on identity. The data suggest ways in which identities are added to or re-formed by life events such as age, length of time in post and holding an acting post and suggest that for some, particularly high flyers, career intention may have a major effect on identity and role perception. Some are substantially less disillusioned by current circumstances than their stopper colleagues. Of course, it must also be acknowledged that identity is not solely composed of work-related elements: a balanced account reflects not only career intention but also life, and roles, beyond work.

Finally, in planning for continuing professional development, those who seek to provide for the needs of middle managers cannot afford to ignore the disparate career intentions of individual PTs and AHTs.

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