Panopticism, Teacher Surveillance and the 'Unseen'

Abstract

This paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of the 'panopticon' in educational research, problematising its validity and offering a fresh conceptualisation of teacher surveillance. The school as a 'panopticon' is a well-established concept which helpfully enables a consideration of aspects of high-stakes accountability. The present paper explores the question of how contemporary teachers perceive themselves to be subject to scrutiny and the consequences of this surveillance. It is argued that whilst the panopticon (and its variants) remain very valid notions for understanding performativity in contemporary schools, that a complementary metaphor can be offered which enables a fuller consideration of the 'unseen' behaviours induced by a high accountability environment.

Introduction

'…that constant overlooking eye' (Molly, 9yrs' service)

This article begins by outlining the broad context of panoptic performativity in schools, exploring concepts associated with neoliberalism, managerialism and New Public Management, before locating these ideas within the historical policy context in England and within wider geo-political trends. A specific examination of relevant literature on teacher surveillance follows, particularly in respect to the idea of the panopticon and notable associated variants, such as post-panopticism, the glass panopticon and the oligopticon, inclusive of the problematisation of some of these concepts. These concepts associated with panopticism are examined in relation to empirical data garnered through semi-structured interviews and survey open responses, exploring the extent to which teachers perceive themselves to be subject to various forms of surveillance and the ways in which they respond to this performative scrutiny. The notion of the panopticon proves to be of considerable relevance to this data, inclusive of a range of associated ideas such as post-panopticism, but a newly significant concept, 'the searchlight' is then identified, with discussion following of its implications for the 'unseen' in schools. This concept enables the fuller consideration of hidden or unobserved behaviours outwith the immediate performative 'gaze', particularly in terms of illustrating the ineffective or counter-productive nature of much teacher surveillance.

Accountability and Teacher Surveillance

The pervasiveness of high-stakes accountability in the English educational context has been well-documented (Stevenson, 2017; Courtney, 2016; Ball, 2003; Anderson, 2000), being characterised by features such as a punitive inspection regime, national school league tables, intensive performance management of teachers and pervasive testing of pupils/students. It is underpinned by the marketisation of education (Venugopal, 2015; Brenner et al., 2009; Fisher, 2009; Levin, 2005) which is defined by the 'success' and 'failure' of competitor-participants – school leaders, teachers and pupils (Carr, 2015a). Allied here is the concept of managerialism, an organisational philosophy emphasising hierarchical oversight by a professional class of managers, characterised by bureaucratic measurement, intensive accountability and controlling diktat (Freidson, 2004). Indeed, it is this union of managerialism and neoliberalism which has been the hallmark of New Public Management (NPM) (Verger and Curran, 2014; Tolofari, 2005). Tolofari (2005) has detailed the deleterious impact on the education sector of 'NPM...[which is] characterised by marketisation, privatisation, managerialism, performance measurement and accountability' (p.75). Similarly, Apple (2004) describes an alliance or a 'power bloc...[which]...combines…neoliberal marketized solutions...[and] the ideology of...accountability, measurement, management' (p.15). Such trends, whether variously characterised by terms such as neoliberalism, managerialism or NPM, are observable at the European level (Arriazu Muñoz, 2015) and internationally (Apple, 2011; Davies and Bansel, 2007).

By way of historical contextualisation of this trend in England, it is possible to begin with the Education Reform Act (1988), introducing curriculum control and the teaching of mandated content. The Education (Schools) Act (1992) enabled the creation of Ofsted and the intensification of school inspection, alongside the introduction of school league tables. The Excellence in Schools White Paper (1997) was crucial in introducing 'target culture' and the School Standards and Framework Act (1998) bolstered the powers of Ofsted. In 2000, the Performance Management Framework entailed the creation of a performance 'threshold' for future pay progression. Performance management reforms in 2006 then triggered intensive documentation of performance data and widespread 'grading' of lessons. In 2010, this trend intensified further, 'making schools more accountable to their communities, harnessing detailed performance data' (DoE, 2010, p.7). In 2012, new 'Teacher Standards' were developed with the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations and accompanied by the 2013 introduction of performance pay and subsequent revisions to the present day (DoE, 2019).

However, this is a localised example of a wider geo-political trend. Similar tropes in respect to New Public Management (NPM) can be observed across other contexts, inclusive of features such as 'widespread use of data, infrastructures, comparative-competitive frameworks, test-based accountabilities' (Wilkins et al., 2019, p.147). Yet Wilkins et al. (2019) are keen to emphasise that 'NPM' is somewhat procrustean in nature, being adaptable or 'translatable' to the specific conditions in a given context (for example, the extent to which there is decentralisation of governance in a particular country), whilst retaining the core characteristics of neoliberal performativity. It is therefore 'interoperable' (Sellar and Gulson, 2018), meaning that the notion of the panopticon (and related variants) may well be applicable in a range of educational contexts internationally, but we should be conscious of 'the complex patterning and layering of NPM within different geo-political settings owing to the historical development of their unique political-administrative structures' (Wilkins et al., 2019, p.158).

The Panopticon and Variants

As a consequence of this pervasive agenda in schools, Ball (2003), influenced by Foucault's theorisation of power, has delineated a culture of teacher performativity, where the effects of market ideology in combination with managerialist doctrine have resulted in the intensive surveillance of teachers. A crucial concept here is Foucault's (1977) metaphor of the 'panopticon' as an expression of social surveillance, based on an original design for an 'inspection house' by Jeremy Bentham (1791). This design features a central observation post encircled by backlit 'cells'. The central post is designed so that the observers cannot be seen, meaning that the observed must always assume they are being watched. Perryman (2006) draws on the notion of the educational 'panopticon' in order to express the experiences of teachers working in a neoliberal environment, describing a culture of surveillance which negatively influences a teacher's capacity to work effectively as a professional. Defining 'performativity' as being 'about performing the normal within a particular discourse' (Perryman, 2006, p.151), she delineates panoptic performativity as the perpetual sense of being scrutinised against these 'accepted' norms.

However, other conceptions of surveillance may be relevant. For example, Latour (2005) offers the notion of the 'oligopticon' as an alternate conception of surveillance. This might be articulated as a kind of 'keyhole' surveillance, whereby 'what they do see, they see well' (Latour, 2005, p181). Manley et al. show how this can manifest itself as 'data as a mode of surveillance' (2012, p.306). In an educational context, this might take the form of national data tracking systems which purports to

offer a perpetual 'keyhole' on each school's performance. However, this data is to some extent based on that which schools generate themselves and then submit (and which may therefore be subject to modification or fabrication because of performance pressures), casting doubt on whether what is 'seen' is in fact seen 'well'.

Drawing on the notion of the panopticon, Page (2015) offers an alternative conceptualisation of performativity using the metaphor of 'glass'. He differentiates between the visibility and invisibility of performance management. On the one hand, this can be the highly 'visible', characterised by management practices such as 'learning walks' (no-notice classroom observations), constant data tracking and school leaders interviewing children/students about teacher performance. In respect to the 'glass' metaphor, the important point is that the observer is as visible as the observed – but in the sense that the observer *wants* to be seen. This differentiates it from the panopticon, which has an 'unobserved' observer. Another difference that follows here is that with the panopticon there is the *potential* for being observed, whereas the metaphor of glass and the visible observer implies that the act of surveillance is *actually happening*. Yet invisibility is also an important notion for Page (2015), describing as he does the times when the glass becomes 'opaque' due to the secrecy or confidentiality that attends the performance management of teachers deemed to be 'failing'.

Of potentially greater utility still in the contemporary context is the concept of 'post-panopticism' (Courtney, 2016). The original notion of the panopticon arguably has a more fixed sense of the norms to which individuals must conform. However, Courtney argues that in a post-panoptic environment, these norms 'are purposively in flux, transient and fuzzy' (2016, p.629). The 'purposive' element is key here, as the intention is to thereby create a culture of failure in which individuals are unable to dissemble: 'the goal of post-panopticism is to expose subjects' inevitable failure to comply' (Courtney, 2016, p.629). In other words, it does not merely wish to control a stable 'captive' population, but rather to keep it perpetually off-balance, punishing it for a failure to comply with ever-changing and unachievable criteria enforced through external judgement. Importantly, in relation to the earlier discussion of neoliberal marketisation, Courtney (2016) also notes that impact of such a regime is variable, depending on a school's position within the 'market'. However, other work by Page (2017a) offers a different sense of post-panopticism, that of simulation in response to surveillance which goes beyond fabrication and becomes 'hyper-real', where 'reality' is normalised as adherence to the rules of the game of surveillance. In other words, 'There is no significant essentialist real in teaching…there is only the simulation' (Page 2017a, p.9). In this differing conception of post-panopticism, the purpose is perhaps not to disrupt, as with Courtney (2016), but rather for the observer and observed alike to work to ensure the simulation conforms to the required model.

Yet it may be, as Gad and Lauritsen (2009) argue, that the notion of perpetual visibility proves fraught and there are practices that evade surveillance. They argue it 'can easily involve resistance from creative actors' (Gad and Lauritsen, 2009, p.56). They describe a surveillance culture that can, in practical terms, prove partial and sporadic, being unevenly distributed over contexts and involving a range of participants. Similarly, Page (2018) describes the concept of 'conspicuous practice', whereby teachers 'agentively participate in their own surveillance' (p.385), either through fearful compliance, normalised acculturation or active resistance. In this conception of surveillance, teachers perform conspicuously for the observer in order to satisfy their scrutinising gaze. This is related to Gad and Lauritsen (2009) as it includes the possibility that through 'conspicuous practice' on the part of teachers, the 'eye' can be manipulated or deceived. Yet the manner of such resistance might also be less conspicuous, with Ball and Olmedo's (2013) concept of a resistant inner subjectivity of relevance here. This is the way in which subjectivity can be seen as 'a site of struggle and resistance', particularly important given 'the extent that neoliberal governmentalities have become increasingly focused upon the production of subjectivity' (p.85). The idea of 'resistance' also brings to bear de Certeau's (1988) distinction between 'strategy' and 'tactics'. From this perspective, 'strategies…conceal beneath objective calculations their connection with the power that sustains them from within the stronghold of its own "proper" place or institution' (de Certeau, 1988, xx); in other words, within the present context, 'strategy' is the purview of the powerful, the institutional or wider systemic policy context of educational performativity. In response to such 'strategy', de Certeau describes the practices which 'are tactical in character…"ways of operating": victories of the "weak" over the "strong"' (1988, xix); these 'tactics' are the forms of resistance within the sphere of the teacher who is subject to the demands of 'performance'. As such, it may be that there are conceptualisations of performative behaviour which extend beyond the all-seeing panopticon.

Equally, the question arises as to the extent to which the notion of the panopticon (and variants) would be applicable in a range of 'surveillance contexts'. As Galič et al. (2017) note, panopticism (and related forms of post-panopticism) can be found across disciplines of study, inclusive of areas such as security studies, data studies and prison studies. In relation to the present paper, both Gad and Lauritsen (2009) and Manley et al. (2012) are examples of the transferability of these ideas between disciplines, with their respective ideas on resistance to surveillance and the application of the oligopticon being readily relevant to the discipline of education. However, as Ball et al. (2012, p.2) note, there are 'contingencies' which can 'play out in the development of any surveillance practice'. By extension, the instantiation of these specific surveillance practices can be said in turn to influence their theorisation. Due to the organisational nature of schools, such theorisation may lean more towards conceptualisations of the panopticon which provide insight into the nature of such

institutionally-situated surveillance. Therefore, disciplines which examine surveillance in specific institutions would perhaps be closer to the ways in which the panopticon is mobilised and understood in education. This might, for example, be inclusive of fields such as prison studies or policing (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997). This is not to say that such surveillance is solely 'architectural' in nature, as in confined to specific institutional contexts, not least because the panopticon is inclusive of the idea of internalisation, and also because notions such as the oligopticon capture the virtual 'dataveillance' (Clarke, 1988) that can occur in contexts such as schools. Such 'dataveillance', however, would be distinct from the more saturating and pervasive electronic surveillance examined in disciplines such as security studies, where the role of technology can be much more significant and notions such as Whitaker's (1999) idea of a 'participatory panopticon' might come into play. Similarly, in data studies, interest in the idea of consumer surveillance (Turow, 2006) would lead to greater relevance for Lyon's (2007) 'panopticommodity'. This is not to say that such ideas might not be applicable in the discipline of education, but rather to observe that there may be disciplinary nuances, where some notions of panoptic surveillance are more prominent than others. Clearly, however, such differences can be understood as parts of an interconnected overall web of societal surveillance, or a 'a series of interlinked, distributed…institutions, systems, bureaucracies and social connections' (Ball et al., 2012, p.1).

To summarise, as Ball (2003) has noted, such a metaphor has ready application to the context of modern schooling, where teachers are subject to intensive scrutiny. Similarly, Perryman (2006) describes a culture of panoptic performativity, whereby teachers damagingly internalise this sense of perpetual examination. Others have sought to modify this metaphor to reflect the changing ways in which such surveillance manifests itself in modern educational contexts, whether this be Courtney's (2016) 'post-panopticism' (where the purpose is not merely to control a stable 'captive' population, but rather to keep it perpetually off-balance, punishing it for a failure to comply with intentionally unachievable rules) or Latour's (2009) 'oligopticon' (keyhole surveillance, for example in the form of centralised data-tracking), or Page's (2015) notion of a 'glass' panopticon (where the observer wants to be seen to 'scrutinise' others). Whilst many of these studies relate to the high accountability context in England, it is worth noting the applicability of such ideas elsewhere; for example, Liu and Onwuegbuzie (2011), in the Chinese context, describe a pervasive, centralised, 'surveillance-based' school inspection system. However, the commonality that each of these conceptualisations shares is the sense of 'permanent visibility' on the part of the observed subject. Indeed, in an educational context, the apparent pervasiveness of this has led Page (2017b) to posit vertical, horizontal and interpersonal forms of surveillance. Yet, as Gad and Lauritsen (2009) argue, in a study apart from the field of education, 'the position of the 'god-eye' is unachievable' (Gad and

Lauritsen, 2009, p.56), meaning that the notion of perpetual visibility proves fraught and there are practices that evade surveillance, meaning that the panopticon is not all-seeing, or that the eye can be satisfactorily deceived (Page, 2018). It is here that a freshly significant concept, 'the searchlight' comes to bear, with its implications for understanding the 'unseen' in a high accountability environment such as that of contemporary schooling in England, and this will be explored as the article progresses.

The Perspectives of Working Teachers

Courtney and Gunter (2015) and Stevenson and Gilliland (2015) have described the widespread silencing or marginalisation of teacher voice that can occur within schools in respect to questions of performativity. Given the specifically performance management-related nature of the enquiry, methods were employed which were intended to enable direct engagement with working teachers, bypassing school management hierarchies. The intention was to elicit frank disclosure of teachers' views in respect of performance management, from the perspective of the managed, rather than the manager. Means of approach which did not entail the consent of school leaders or their assistance in dissemination were considered to better foster teachers' participation and candour (as is perhaps evinced by respondents' remarks in the following analysis).

As a first data strand, a survey was distributed through the use of an Initial Teacher Education university alumni email database, garnering views on performance management. The use of this database was regarded as an ethical and practical approach, as a survey distribution involving school permissions would entail pursuing the involvement and consent of managers to approach 'the managed'. This survey had 323 respondents, 59 of whom elected to complete the open response section which is analysed here. The open response prompt was phrased as 'Please use the box below to add any other thoughts that you wish' and was appended to a Likert-scale survey which measured teachers' perceptions of the motivational effects of performance management (this quantitative element is considered in a separate paper).

As a second data strand, teachers were approached for interview by similarly circuitous means, outwith their school's locus of managerial control. These individuals were to be identified through the present researcher's informal networks and conditional on there being no managerial or personal relationship with the researcher and on the basis of a direct approach. The possibility of garnering perspectives on teacher surveillance across different school types and education phases was also considered desirable and therefore influenced the approaches made to particular individuals. Consequently, the seven teachers interviewed were from primary and secondary age

phases, had differing years' service and varied school type (for instance, academy, comprehensive, local authority primary). The use of semi-structured interviews was designed to allow for teachers to take conversations in a range of directions in relation to those aspects of performance management that they wished to discuss. As Gill et al. (2008) assert, semi-structured interviews facilitate 'discovery or elaboration of information that is important to the participant' (Gill et al., 2008, p.291). As an initial structure, Brenner (2006) describes a funnel shape that can be used in effective interviews, moving from a broad generality, through to specifics, as follows:

'What makes you want to develop further as a teacher?'

'To what extent are your motivations to develop shaped by the school you work in?'

'Does performance management motivate you to be a better teacher?'

Importantly, however, such an approach should be sufficiently flexible to allow for the 'contents to be reordered, digressions and expansions made, new avenues to be included' (Cohen at al. 2007, p182). This proved to be of particular value, as participants were keen to focus upon performativity, with the notion of surveillance (and its evasion) proving salient.

The six stage approach to inductive thematic analysis offered by Braun and Clarke (2006) was pursued, with Nowell et al.'s (2017) trustworthiness criteria adhered to. An approach of convergent triangulation was adopted (Creswell and Clark, 2011), whereby data collection and analysis of the interviews and the survey open responses occurred in parallel and were then synthesised. Such a process inevitably involves iterations of analysis; the linear parallel processes offered by Creswell and Clark (2011) offer helpful clarity of structure, but the enacted reality is more complex.

Participant characteristics are given as: Role, Years' Service, School Type, Age Phase, Gender. For additional information on context-specific terminology, TLR holder denotes a specific paid responsibility in school (numeracy coordinator, for example); pre-threshold denotes the first 6 years of service, lower performance threshold; post-threshold: more than 6 years of service, upper performance threshold; NQT: newly qualified teacher. Pseudonyms and characteristics are given below:

(Susan) TLR Holder, 8yrs, Independent Academy, Secondary, Female

(Angela) Pre-Threshold, 5yrs, Not Currently Teaching, Primary, Female

(Daniel) Pre-Threshold, 3yrs, Community School, Secondary, Male

(Nicola) Post-Threshold, 10yrs, Multi-Academy Trust, Primary, Female

(Amy) Pre-Threshold, 2yrs, Independent Academy, Primary, Female

(Billy) Pre-Threshold, 3yrs, Independent Academy, Secondary, Male

(Mary) NQT, 1yr, Local Authority, Primary, Female

(Roberta) NQT, 1yr, Local Authority (Before Leaving Profession), Primary, Female

(Annalisa) NQT, 1yr, Faith School (Before Leaving Profession), Primary, Female

(Molly) Post-threshold, 9yrs, Independent Academy, Secondary, Female

(John) Post-threshold, 10yrs, Independent Academy, Primary, Male

(Andrew) Pre-threshold, 3yrs, Local Authority Comprehensive, Secondary, Male

(Louisa) Pre-threshold, 4yrs, Local Authority Comprehensive, Secondary, Female

(Nancy) Pre-threshold, 6yrs, Local Authority, Primary, Female

(Julie) Department Manager, 10yrs, Comprehensive, Secondary, Female

'Spying', 'Numbers' and 'Misdirection'

The inductive thematic analysis resulted in the generation of three key themes, with these appearing to be salient largely irrespective of gender, years' service, school type or school role, as can be seen from the range of respondent characteristics in the analysis below (with some exceptions, which will be noted).

The three main themes generated from the data were those of 'Spying', 'Numbers' and 'Misdirection' and will be analysed in turn.

'Spying'

The first and most straightforward theme generated from the combined interview and open response data was that of 'spying'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants referred to a school culture characterised by surveillance, scrutiny and the absence of trust.

The system is flawed and based on mistrust, ridiculous targets and spying. (Susan)

One of the reasons I left [the profession] was the undue pressure and suspicious attitude of management team of my colleagues and no matter how hard we tried to impress them or hoops we jumped through. (Angela)

These comments are expressive of a more general trend amongst respondents in respect to a lack of trust and widespread managerialist espionage, aligning with established notions of the panopticon. Additionally, the sense of 'no matter how hard we tried' and 'ridiculous targets' are of particular interest as this to some extent speaks to the intentionally 'fuzzy norms' of Courtney's (2016) post-panopticism. Similarly, the sense of continuously pervasive surveillance would align with Perryman (2004) and Page (2017b; 2015), with this being overtly referenced by some participants:

I believe that teachers need to be trusted more, rather than constantly being scrutinised. (John)

The performance management system makes us feel constantly scrutinised and undervalued. (Nicola)

Such references to an unremitting sense of scrutiny would support the notion of perpetual surveillance to be found in different conceptions of the 'panopticon'. However, other data suggested this was not always the case, with a perception that to some extent scrutiny was perceived as variable. One manifestation of this was in the form of scrutiny which was targeted or selective:

I think I would be de-motivated if somebody was to pop into my classroom and question me, 'well why are they doing that' and 'what is the point or what's the reasoning behind that'...and I know that's happened in school to other members of staff but not to me. (Amy)

With the marking of my books in class, drop-ins, I don't tend to get many of them because I assume...they have faith in me. Whereas other teachers I know get 'random' drop-ins more often than others. I think it's because they don't have that faith in them. (Billy)

On the one hand, such variation in degrees of trust and associated scrutiny might be rationalised by managers as a consequence of the range in ability that might occur in any group of differently developing professionals. Alternatively, it might be expressive of inconsistency on the part of school managers, or a lack of transparency as to managerial processes (see the reference to 'more 'random' drop-ins', for example). Such a sense of variable scrutiny perhaps problematises slightly the notion of a perpetual surveillance panopticon, due to preferential treatment for particular 'inmates' (to extend the prison metaphor) or an overseeing 'eye' that is not perceived to be everywhere at once.

'Numbers'

A second theme, 'Numbers', described the furtive activities encouraged by performativity. One way in which this was manifest was in the form of what has come to be popularly known as 'assessment

fraud'. This element of the 'Numbers' theme was not present in data from the semi-structured interviews, and instead confined to the survey open responses. This is perhaps as a consequence of the nature of the activities involved, with a survey perhaps affording an additional layer of anonymity and the absence of a social situation, thereby leading to more frank disclosure. Teachers described being compelled by school leaders to manufacture spurious assessment data for the purposes of performance. This sense of manipulation of the 'numbers' was aptly summarised by one participant:

Having witnessed the run up to performance management, I saw was people quickly sorting out the numbers to meet arbitrary months old targets…seemed incredibly inefficient and open to manipulation. (Mary)

These remarks by teachers are relevant to the conceptualisation of the panopticon because they describe that which goes 'unseen'. In other words, there appear to be activities which occur beyond the scope of continuous teacher surveillance, but which nonetheless occur in the name of performativity. This can perhaps best be expressed in terms of a newer metaphor: a searchlight. This metaphor is expressive of the activities which occur 'in the dark' when the searchlight's beam (in this case, the school inspectorate) is elsewhere. Performance data is manufactured or fabricated in order to dissimulate at the point the beam's glare returns.

It appears that the performativity measures to which teachers are subject can result in the adoption of fraudulent practices that compromise teachers' sense of integrity. One participant characteristic deserves particular mention here: the reporting teachers in this instance are all early career NQTs, which may partly explain both their candour and surprise. Similarly, the early career teacher retention crisis in England (NAO, 2016) may also be relevant; both participants quoted below explicitly cited such a dishonesty in the name of performativity as a factor in leaving the profession:

It's all about the data and manipulating the data in a dishonest manner. (Roberta)

A system where I was not free to teach in the best way for the children in my class. Where I was forced to change my recorded levels for children to meet what the headteacher wanted on paper. (Annalisa)

Managerial incitement is an interesting factor here which warrants pause. The school leader in this sense might be seen to alternate between warder or inmate, perhaps at times occupying the role of trustee (a prisoner with additional privileges). The extent to which managers magnify or obscure

surveillance may be variable, as smaller panopticons operate within larger panopticons. If the smaller panopticon of an individual school sits within the larger panopticon of the inspection system, this implies that the school leader is at once the observer and the observed. A school leader may perceive it in their own best interests to act as an additional 'magnifying lens' – in other words, they facilitate performativity, perhaps because this demonstrates their compliance with the neoliberal orthodoxy, or alternatively, as it directs the performative gaze away from themselves and onto others. Alternatively, they may wish to obscure aspects of surveillance in order to present their school in the best possible light in terms of 'performance', selecting and presenting 'evidence'. Conversely, it might be that some school leaders would wish to obscure surveillance in order to shield classroom teachers from performativity, perhaps directing the gaze instead onto themselves as managers. The role is also not fixed in the sense that, contingent upon the 'searchlight', a school leader's behaviour might change depending on their position in relation to the performative gaze, or whether they were within 'the beam's glare'.

However, the theme of 'Numbers' was not confined solely to teachers feeling compelled to produce entirely spurious data. Another aspect seemed distinct in that it did not entail outright fabrication, but nonetheless was part of the same theme in the sense of being focused on the production of performance data. This aspect, characterised by the continuous evidencing of practice through performative bureaucracy, was salient for a range of interviewees. This is an aspect of the data that might in part be expressive of the notion of the panopticon in the sense of the perpetual demonstration of 'good behaviour' to an external eye. Similarly, the notion of the oligopticon may also be relevant here due to the sense of a continuous narrow gaze, in this case focused upon 'data-tracking':

I feel it's just a tick box process actually. (Molly)

I think just because I can tick a box. (Daniel)

There's more of the box-ticking bureaucratic side. (Andrew)

These frequent descriptions of bureaucratic evidentiary requirements appeared to be recurrent across school age-phases and contexts and seemed to differentiate between the evidencing of 'real' progression and 'data' progression. In terms of the concept of the panopticon, this is relevant as it suggests an extent to which teacher surveillance is focused upon instrumentalist activities:

...that goes back to seeing the children as progressing as little people and not just as green to red or red to green or whatever it is on your spreadsheet. I don't like spreadsheets [laughs]...Because I feel like all I ever do is colour in spreadsheets and put numbers in spreadsheets, and who is it for? Cos it's not for the children, and I don't really think it's for me either, it's for the powers above, and what do they do with it?...That baffles me completely...I feel like all I do is test children, fill in spreadsheets, test them again to fill in the spreadsheet, and that's sad. (Amy)

This sense of 'What do they do with it?' is of additional interest from the perspective of the panopticon, as it raises the question of the function of surveillance. It might be conjectured, for example, that the function of the 'eye' is to *look*, rather than *see* - with the perpetual sense of there simply being the potential for punitive action, so long as conformity is maintained. This perception of 'evidencing' for a futile or indeterminate outcome was broader than that of documenting pupils' development, being also inclusive of a teacher's own 'development' in the form of performance management:

I haven't experienced an element of performance management that I've felt does drive me. Maybe that's a bit too honest, I don't know...I feel it's just a tick box process actually and it's not bespoke...It's just my thing of I want to deliver an education which they enjoy and shows progression, that's what drives me and not this whole ticking box routine. I find it pointless. (Molly)

The articulation of the perpetual need for conformity would accord with classic conceptions of the panopticon, though is perhaps problematic in another way. It could be argued that the production of evidence centres around the idea of preparation for school inspection. As one participant summarises, there is a perceived need for evidentiary 'fortifications' for Ofsted purposes:

Yeah absolutely, we are due our next inspection, so yeah, that does play on your mind and you think about it every day in your job. I suppose in terms of when we do get our next inspection I feel like we've got all the paperwork where it needs to be to show where these children are at. (Nancy)

This can be seen as distinct from 'assessment fraud', with the difference being that this is not falsification as such, but an effort to use data to show a particular representation at a key point, with a sense that this is prepared for whilst the overall 'gaze' is elsewhere (there may be a continuous keyhole surveillance (Latour's oligopticon) in the form grade-tracking, but this is an obscured view). Taken overall, it is perhaps suggestive of a kind of *surface-level* conformity, rather than the deeper level of a psychological internalisation of the 'all-seeing eye' that the panopticon might suggest.

This shared notion amongst interviews was raised articulately by one participant, who described his energies being directed by the process of evidence gathering:

...a lot of what I do is dictated and led by that appraisal. For example, when you've got an exam class, any class, I keep a spreadsheet for my exam classes with all the students that I'm teaching and next to them I put a little note and I put down every intervention strategy that I'm doing...there's a little part of me that does that because when it comes to appraisal and someone says, 'this child's target was a C but she got a G, why?' I can say, 'well this is everything I've done'...It's bureaucracy, the only reason I do it is so when it comes to the final, 'right let's find out if you can progress', I can say, 'well this is everything'...there's more of the box ticking bureaucratic side that I would probably not do if there was no appraisal. (Billy)

Crucially here, there is a preparatory element, building towards a given *point* of scrutiny. In other words, the 'gaze' is not perceived by the subject as perpetual in nature, or internalised as such. This again suggests the inevitable 'gaming' which would accompany performative scrutiny. This quotation represents a hinge or cross-over point with the third theme generated from the data, that of 'display'.

'Display'

'Display' can be defined as 'public performance', in the sense of acting out behaviours for a particular audience and so clearly relates to the idea of the panopticon. Importantly, however, this is 'display' or performance at a given moment, 'when the lights are on'. This is distinct from the panopticon, because the subject does not perceive there to be perpetual surveillance but can prepare for when the 'gaze' will be at is most intense, meaning that a performative display can be rehearsed or contrived:

Often an observation can be very thought out by a class teacher and it can be very structured so the observer sees what the class teacher wants them to see. For example, if they don't want them to look in their books, they won't do an activity in their books... (Amy)

This appears to describe managers (either consciously or inadvertently) incentivising teachers to present their observer with misrepresentative practice, a stance which the teacher adopts as a form of resistance to surveillance. The superficial conformity which this entails then inhibits meaningful professional development:

It's less about what CPD you've undertaken and how you've developed as a teacher and more about…getting a good observation. (Julie)

The sense here of the need to 'display' in particular ways whilst 'in the glare' can perhaps be viewed as something which motivates teachers towards instrumentalism (ie. in the wrong direction, away from the needs of those they teach or their own professional learning). The high stakes nature of this 'event' means that the focus is upon the 'other adult', rather than children/students, as the lesson reflects what the teacher perceives the observer wants to see.

I got an outstanding off my Head teacher but I've taught lessons to that class and to other classes that are being seen by other people who didn't think it was outstanding or I've taught lessons that no one has seen that I know are far better...If you know that person and know what they want then it's like OK, you can tick an exam box in the right place. (Louisa)

This performative 'moment' seemed to be a salient theme within the data and expressive of behaviours or activities which would not be fully captured by a metaphor of perpetual surveillance (or its psychological internalisation), underlining the relevance of the searchlight as a complementary conceptualisation to the panopticon. This would perhaps depart from the 'hyper-reality' of Page (2017a), where, in response to teacher surveillance, simulation becomes the overriding 'truth'. These teachers seem to retain a sense of fabrication, rather than an immersive simulated reality – this can be seen through participant teachers' contraposition of fabrication in conflict with what they perceive as 'real'. However, the theme of 'Display' does align more closely with Page's (2018) notion of 'conspicuous practice'. This hinges on the teacher's sense of the dramaturgical self in response to surveillance, and the present article offers empirical data in alignment with Page's (2018) conceptualisation. However, whilst Page (2018) posits fear, 'colonisation' (mental acculturation) and resistance as reasons for 'conspicuous practice', the participants in the present research seemed to position themselves more strongly towards the notion of resistance, in line with Ball and Olmedo's (2013) idea of resilient subjectivity. Such resistance, however, may also take the form of de Certeau's (1988) tactics, being the cloaked manoeuvres of the disempowered.

Conclusion: The Panopticon and the 'Unseen'

It is clear that varying conceptualisations of teacher surveillance are of value and that the metaphor of the panopticon continues to possess considerable relevance in this regard. However, the present study's findings suggests that a useful additional metaphor may be that of a 'searchlight', as an idea

that might complement the 'panopticon'. It is linked in the sense that both entail notions of captivity and surveillance. However, the difference is that a 'panopticon' assumes permanent visibility (or the internalised assumption of such). The searchlight metaphor is therefore useful as it allows for a fuller expression of the unseen as well as the seen. This metaphor therefore describes the furtive activities which occur as the searchlight (Ofsted, for example) sweeps elsewhere and helps to express the extent of the hidden or inconspicuous instrumentalism which occurs in the name of performativity.

Similarly, in respect to 'post-panoptic' chimerical performativity which 'disrupt(s) subjects' fabrications that had been predicated on stability' (Courtney, 2016, p.629), it would be agreed that this may be the intention and to some extent partially true. However, the present study's data would seem to align with Gad and Lauritsen (2009) and Page (2018), in the sense of participants being instrumentally motivated to participate in *successfully* evasive activities, rather than engaging authentically with professional development. Courtney (2016) does not exclude the possibility of 'successful' evasion, but the present findings would suggest this is more widespread and significant. Ball and Olmedo's (2013) concept of a resistant inner subjectivity might have considerable value here. For Ball and Olmedo (2013), subjectivity is the site where the individual 'has constituted him/herself through certain practices of power and games of truth' (p.87), and by extension, it is the arena for the 'struggle against mundane, quotidian neoliberalisations' (p.85). Ball and Olmedo's (2013) idea of inner subjectivity allows for the possibility that the internal site of resistance can be translated outwards to more overt forms of resistance. However, while the notion of teachers' behaviours in response to the performative 'searchlight' represents such an inner subjectivity and certainly constitutes active resistance, this might be distinguished from open defiance – instead, the means of resistance are more clandestine than overt. The work of de Certeau (1988) is also pertinent, with such resistance being expressive of the 'tactics' of those subject to surveillance, in opposition to the 'strategies' of the powerful who orchestrate such performativity. Indeed, de Certeau describes 'the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of discipline' (1988, xiv), with such an articulation of the clandestine tactics of resistance proving of real relevance to the notion of the performative searchlight and the 'unseen' in schools. The reference here to 'makeshift' is also perhaps particularly germane, underlining as it does the transient nature of the victories secured by the weaker party, capturing the sense of teachers' perceived need to make continuous use of such tactics.

Profoundly negative attitudes towards enforced hidden behaviours were shared by responding teachers, suggesting there are activities which evade the ever greater intensification of teacher surveillance in the English context, such as assessment fraud and data manipulation and 'teaching to

the observation'. It may be that the 'searchlight' induces or exacerbates such behaviours, rather than promoting 'good behaviour'. The particular irony here is that quality in fact diminishes under the guise of improved performance.

Therefore, the present findings suggest the 'searchlight', as an idea which complements the 'panopticon'. Both entail notions of captivity and surveillance. But a searchlight *moves*, offering periods of invisibility. The notion of a 'searchlight' adds the ability to articulate the furtiveness and duplicity which performativity engenders. The 'panopticon' can be conflated with the idea of all-seeing omniscience. Instead, the 'searchlight' metaphor allows for the inclusion and consideration of the hidden and the dissimulating in a high stakes accountability environment, emphasising the counter-productive nature of such performativity.

In terms of limitations, while the teachers interviewed varied in respect to gender, sector, school type and years' service, it was not possible to secure an interview with a teacher at a school presently in 'special measures' (judged to be failing). This was off-set by some interviewees having worked in special measures schools and some open response respondents referencing their school being in special measures. However, it would have been desirable to conduct an in-depth interview with a teacher(s) whose school was presently experiencing such intensive scrutiny of performance. Therefore, to continue the prison metaphor, panopticism in a 'high security' context would be a recommended area for future research. Similarly, another area for further enquiry may be the notion of 'panopticons within panopticons', or the extent to which managers are at once warders and inmates or a hybrid. Data in the present study hints at this and it would warrant further investigation, perhaps examining school leaders' perceptions. Finally, whilst the present paper focused primarily upon panopticism and its variants, the study also indicates that de Certeau (1988) could represent an area of further promise for future enquiries in respect to understanding how the furtive activities of teachers constitute the tactics of resistance.

References

Anderson, P. (2000) 'Renewals', *New Left Review* 1: 5-24

Apple, M., (2004) 'Creating Difference: Neo-Liberalism, Neo-Conservatism and the Politics of Educational Reform', *Educational Policy*, Vol. 18. 12-44

Apple, W. M (2011) 'Democratic education in neoliberal and neoconservative times', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 21(1), 21-31

Arriazu-Munoz, R. (2015) 'European Education Policy: A Historical and Critical Approach to Understanding the Impact of Neoliberalism in Europe.' *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS)*, Vol. 13. 19-42

Ball, K. (Ed.), Haggerty, K. (Ed.), Lyon, D. (Ed.). (2012). '*Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies'*. London: Routledge

Ball, S.J. (2003) 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity', *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215–228

Ball, S. J., & Olmedo, A. (2013). 'Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities', *Critical Studies in Education*, 54, 85–96.

Bentham, J., (1791). '*Panopticon: or, the Inspection-House'*, Dublin: Thomas Byrne

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101

Brenner, M. (2006), 'Interviewing in Educational Research', in *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research* edited by Green, J., Camilli, G., Elmore, P., Skukauskaiti, A., Grace, E.

Brenner, N., Peck, J. and Theodore, N. (2010) 'Variegated neoliberalization: Geographies, modalities, pathways', *Global Networks*, 10(2), 182–222

Carr, S.(2015a) '*Motivation, Educational Policy and Achievement: A Critical Perspective*', Abingdon: Routledge

Certeau, M. d. (1988). '*The Practice of Everyday Life*', Berkeley: University of California Press.

Clarke, R. (1988). 'Information technology and dataveillance', *Communications of the ACM*, 31(5), 498–512

Courtney, S.J. and Gunter, H.M. (2015) 'Get off my bus! School leaders, vision work and the elimination of teachers', *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, Vol. 18 (4), 395-417

Courtney, S. J., (2016). 'Post-panopticism and school inspection in England', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37:4, 623-642

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). '*Designing and conducting mixed methods research (2nd ed.)'*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davies, B. and Bansel, P., (2007) 'Neoliberalism and education', *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 20(3), 247–259

DES, (1988) Education Reform Act, London: Crown

DES, (1992) 'Education (Schools) Act', London: Crown

DFEE, (1997) 'Excellence in Schools White Paper', London: Crown

DFEE, (1998) 'School Standards and Framework Act', London: Crown

DfEE, (2000) 'Performance Management in Schools: Performance Management Framework', London: Crown

DFES, (2006) 'The Education (School Teacher Performance Management) (England) Regulations', London: Crown

DfE (2010) 'The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper', London: Crown

DfE, (2012) 'The Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012', London: Crown

DFE, (2013) 'School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2013 and Guidance on School Teachers' Pay and Conditions', London: Crown

DFE, (2019) 'Implementing your school's approach to pay departmental advice for maintained schools and local authorities', London: Crown

Fisher, M., (2009), '*Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*', Ropley, Hants: Zero Books

Foucault, M., (1977). '*Discipline and Punish*', London: Penguin (1991 reprint)

Ericson, R. and Haggerty, K., (1997). *Policing the Risk Society*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press and Oxford: Oxford University Press

Freidson, E., (2004) '*Professionalism: The Third Logic*', 4th edn. Oxford: Polity.

Gad, C., and Lauritsen, P., (2009) 'Situated Surveillance: an ethnographic study of fisheries inspection in Denmark', *Surveillance & Society*, 7(1), 49-57

Galič, M., Timan, T., & Koops, B., (2017) 'Bentham, Deleuze and beyond: An overview of surveillance theories from the panopticon to participation', *Philosophy & Technology*, 30(1), 9-37

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E. and Chadwick, B., (2008) 'Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups', *British Dental Journal*, 204(6), 291–295

Latour, B., (2005) '*Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory'*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Levin, J.S., (2005) 'The business culture of the community college: Students as consumers; students as commodities', *New Directions for Higher Education*, 2005(129), 11–26

Liu, S. and Onwuegbuzie, A., (2012) 'Chinese teachers' work stress and their turnover intention', *International Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 53, 160–170

Lyon, D. (2007). '*Surveillance studies: an overview*', Cambridge: Polity.

Manley, A., Palmer, C., Roderick, M., (2012), 'Disciplinary Power, the Oligopticon and Rhizomatic *Surveillance in Elite Sports Academies'. Surveillance & Society* 10(3), 303-319.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J., (2017). 'Thematic Analysis: Striving to Meet the Trustworthiness Criteria', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Volume 16: 1–13

Page, D., (2015) 'The visibility and invisibility of performance management in schools', *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(6), 1031–1049

Page, D., (2017a) 'The surveillance of teachers and the simulation of teaching', *Journal of Education Policy*, 32:1, 1-13

Page, D., (2017b) 'Conceptualising the surveillance of teachers', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 38:7, 991-1006

Page, D., (2018) 'Conspicuous practice: self-surveillance and commodification in English education', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 27:4, 375-390

Perryman, J., (2006) 'Panoptic Performativity and School Inspection Regimes: Disciplinary Mechanisms and Life under Special Measures'. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21 (2), 147–161

Stevenson H. and Gilliland A., (2015). 'The teachers' voice: teacher unions at the heart of a new democratic professionalism' in: Elvers J and Kneyber, R, eds., *Flip the System: changing education from the ground up*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Sellar, S., and Gulson, K. N., (2018) 'Dispositions and Situations of Education Governance: The Example of Data Infrastructure in Australian Schooling." In *Education Governance and Social Theory: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Research*, edited by A. Wilkins, and A. Olmedo, 63–79. London: Bloomsbury.

Tolofari, S., (2005) 'New public management and education', *Policy Futures in Education*, 3(1), p. 75-89

Turow, J. (2006). 'Cracking the Consumer Code: Advertising, Anxiety and Surveillance in the Digital Age', in *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, edited by K. D. Haggerty and R. V. Ericson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Venugopal, R., (2015) 'Neoliberalism as concept', *Economy and Society*, 44(2), 165–187

Verger, A. and Curran, M., (2014) 'New public management as a global education policy: Its adoption and re- contextualization in a southern European setting', *Critical Studies in Education*, 55(3), 253–271

Whitaker, R. (1999). '*The end of privacy: how total surveillance is becoming a reality*'. New York: The New Press.

Wilkins, A., Collet-Sabé, J., Gobby, B., & Hangartner, J. (2019). 'Translations of new public management: A decentred approach to school governance in four OECD countries', *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 17(2), 147-160.