PanCOPticon: Policing in the Eye of 21st Century Surveillance Technology

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Abstract of Thesis

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This thesis uses a cumulative view of police theory and methodology as a foundation for an investigation into the role of surveillance technology in a large-scale metropolitan police department. Using Foucault's notion of panopticism as a guide, original research will show how the use of technological surveillance by police superiors resulted or failed to result in a panoptic influence over officer behavior. The internal "policing of the police" stemming from these innovations in department technology will also be discussed. Instances where a panoptic influence of technology was seen to occur influenced an officer's modification of professional behavior and the exercise of their personal discretion. Cases where a panoptic threat was absent is associated with an officer's use of evasion tactics that successfully reduce or eliminate the observational threat of surveillance. Also important are instances where officers discussed the possibility that the department was capable of gaining access to details occurring in the context of their personal lives. Lastly, the study discusses the implications resulting from police surveillance of police from the standpoint of rank and a decline of personal interactions among high and low ranking officers.
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgments........................................................................................................... iii  
Abstract of Thesis ........................................................................................................ iv  
Table of Contents.......................................................................................................... v  

Chapter 1: Policing of the Police- A Panoptic Perspective of Surveillance Technology and the Monitoring of Officer Behavior.................................................1  

Chapter 2: Officers in the Panopticon: Confirming the Panoptic Functioning of Police Technology........................................................................................................20  

Chapter 3: Officers Outside the Panopticon: Tactics for Eliminating Panoptic Threat.........................................................................................................................39  

Chapter 4: Panoptic Functioning and the Impact of Officer Rank...............................56  

Chapter 5: Rise of the Machines: The Advent of the Technological PanCOPTicon.........................................................................................................................63  

References..................................................................................................................... 82
CHAPTER 1: Policing of the Police- A Panoptic Perspective of Surveillance Technology and the Monitoring of Officer Behavior

“My perspective is Foucauldian in that I use his work as a ‘tool box’ or mapping device to open up questions, follow leads, and reassemble information and interpretations. My intent is to offer an analysis of police that is faithful to police thinkers and the intellectual tradition they produced, but that at the same time evaluates their work critically.”

(McMullan 1998: 101)

Scope of Study:

This thesis uses a cumulative view of police theory and methodology as a foundation for an investigation into the role of surveillance technology in a large-scale metropolitan police department. Using Foucault's notion of panopticism as a guide, original research will show how the use of technological surveillance by police superiors resulted or failed to result in a panoptic influence over officer behavior. The internal “policing of the police” stemming from these innovations in department technology will be discussed.

Guiding Theoretical Perspective:

The work of theorists who have contributed to the literature of police surveillance and control will be used to aid in the interpretation of data. It is Foucault's examination of panopticism, however, that is the foundation upon which positions taken by the study will be built. Foucault expanded Bentham's architectural panopticon by contrasting it against a historical consideration of plague and quarantine to show its functionality as a
form of social control. These topics were likely used because of their ability to blur the boundary between “contaminated” and “healthy”, or more broadly, “us” and “them”. Surveillance technology appears to produce a similar blurriness and contributes to the growing rift among superior and lower-ranking officers. Officers who once enjoyed a large degree of autonomy and a minimum of direct supervision are now subject to constant monitoring. A growing and largely negative sentiment between the two groups is apparent. This is not helped by the study’s finding that the two groups were found to possess opposing perspectives regarding the overall value and function of technology in policing.

Foucault held that the panopticon, in any one of its possible forms, does not depict an *ideal vision* of power as much as it does a *reduction* of power to an ideal *form* (1979: 208). The police technology discussed in this study roughly constitutes what Foucault referred to as a disciplinary mechanism. The systems in place by the department were seen to be conducive to the efficient management and tracking of officers while also influencing them to act according to certain protocols. In this sense, the technology is indicative of a shift in control originally outlined by Foucault. It serves as a reminder that modern law enforcement continues to promote the thorough examination of individuals to promote individual accountability. This dynamic was observed to occur between “superiors” and “officers” in the context of the present study, and not among the popularly divided groups of “society members” and “police”.

2
Study Background and Scope:

The excerpts presented are reproduced from fieldnotes that were recorded over a six week period. Though the “ride-along” sessions occurred on a once-weekly basis, I was able to shadow for the duration of a full shift. This lead to an accumulation of a significant number of total hours spent with the department. Admittedly, the themes of surveillance and control were not originally targeted by the scope of my initial research questions. It was not long before I realized that these issues –embodied by policing technology- were too significant to ignore. Several officers encountered during my study reported spending a number of years on the force, and were thus in a position to reflect upon how these innovations have impacted their perceptions of department dynamics, functionality and also the working relationships they have with superior officials.

Organization and Content:

The study starts with a brief overview of the methodology used to organize and critique the data reproduced throughout portions of the thesis. A review of the key literary contributions to the discourse on surveillance and control in policing will be presented and used to discuss how they function to support, reconfigure, or denounce the main guiding theory of panopticism. Additional insights into the areas discussed by these authors that are regarded as being of particular help in the consideration of my own data are highlighted and discussed in later sections.

The first data section shows how officer behaviors were seen to be influenced by the presence of police technology. It is argued that the behavioral modifications resulting
from this influence further adhere to the Foucauldian definition of panopticism. The reminder of a superior’s gaze and his ability to monitor officers is argued to characteristic of the technology. Also included in this section are cases where panopticism is seen to result from personal -and not technological- surveillance measures. This functioning is attributed to an officer's tendency to associate an observational threat level with the characteristics of the superior who is heading a particular shift. The second data section shows where the opposite effect of panopticism was seen to transpire. In this section, the ways that officers were able to supplement the limitations of surveillance technology with their personal knowledge of superiors are presented. The tactics used by officers to lessen, remove, or evade the scope of technology are analyzed and portrayed as methods officers can use to conceal the true nature of their activity.

The third section revisits themes established by the previous two by analyzing them in the context of officer rank and its impact upon an officer's regard for surveillance technology. The impact of technology upon the fostering of personal working relationships among superiors and officers is also addressed. Opinions from both high and low ranking officers is included to offer differing perspectives of the perceived role and effectiveness of technology in the context of policing. It is argued that the department's instatement of technology has converted its workplace dynamics to rather impersonal and shallow interactions among superiors and officers. This is thought to offer possible motivations for the evasion tactics of officers presented in the second section.

The conclusion will draw from previous examples to address the potential
implications of surveillance technology in use by modern police departments. Guiding theories will be revisited to assess what impact this form of technology was seen and stands to have upon officer behavior. In addition, it is argued that a department’s increased reliance upon a computerization of tasks and managerial supervision stands to negatively affect officer opinions of superiors, leading to damages in the personal relationships among department employees. This discussion leads up to the concluding statement regarding the future directions and scope of policing in the 21st century.

Contribution to Discourse:

This study is valuable because it contributes to the documentation of day-to-day policing practices in a large-scale metropolitan police department. It serves as a vehicle for both high and low ranking officers to express some of their personal views, beliefs and opinions. It adds substance to the controversy surrounding law enforcement’s growing use of technology and critically considers the claim that such systems promote a proactive policing environment. This study illuminates both positive and negative implications associated with these technological innovations and raises questions for future research while also acting to offer insights to the questions that are raised here. Because technology evolves so quickly, I regard this study as being a critical assessment of the impacts arising from those innovations already in place in one police department. The computerization of numerous, once manual tasks and the micromanagement of the police force are partially associated with the incorporation of surveillance technology. This foreshadows the need for departments to ensure that any new technological measure is truly used as a tool and not a replacement for a personally manned police force.
METHODOLOGY: Ethnographic Fieldwork and the Police

“Despite a substantive body of research and theory in anthropology and sociology, auto-ethnography is only now beginning to gain the attention of management scholars. It allows for a more holistic and emotional portrayal of policing organizations and how emotions and leadership play out in a vibrant dance with culture.”

(Murphy 2007)

Study Scope:

My observation of the police department took place over a six-week period running from late January through early March 2012. A total of 6, once-weekly “ride-alongs” was conducted, with each one lasting about 8 hours. This activity resulted in a total of approximately 45 hours of direct observation and fieldnotes. I was assigned to the same patrol officer each week; however, on occasion I was also able to interact with other officers reporting to the same scenes as Officer S. The information shared by these officers was also recorded and incorporated into the study whenever possible.

The Ride-Along Process:

It should be clarified that the metropolitan police department, with which I performed my observation and research, extended the ability to participate in ride-alongs to any member of the general public interested in the program. No special permission other than the standard application process and signing of a release each week was needed to shadow the department. Officer S was assigned to me at random when I reported to the district headquarters the first day and offered to continue to oversee my
subsequent sessions in the hope that this might contribute a degree of control and holism to the research process.

This assignment to one officer was helpful for several reasons. During the six week period, I was able to establish a positive working rapport with Officer S and was able to float or follow-up on questions and experiences from previous weeks during later sessions. I accompanied Officer S as he conducted the typical duties of his shift and was granted access to all facets of his immediate work environment. I responded with him to radio calls, crime scenes and areas within the police department itself. I was able to make direct observations and record hand-written data pertaining to the “live” operation of the police surveillance technology that will later be discussed and analyzed.

**Supplemental Interview:**

Although Officer S was assigned to me at random by the department, another important component of this study was an interview held with Commander A. I researched and chose to include this individual upon narrowing the scope of my research to control, surveillance and technology in policing. I was able to interview and utilize Commander A as an ongoing source of information for the more technical questions encountered upon completing shadow sessions. Commander A’s input is an important piece of the study since one of the central focal points is an examination of the attitudes toward technology among both high and low-ranking officers. The interview lasted for approximately 45 minutes and was held over the phone in mid-March 2012.

**Data Organization and Assembly:**
Upon completing the 6 sessions, I compiled all handwritten fieldnote data gathered during the 6 weeks and personally coded for instances of panoptic visibility, modification of officer/superior behaviors and several other categories related to the themes of control and surveillance. I then interviewed Commander A with questions that were designed to explore these aspects of policing from a superior officer's perspective.

**LITERATURE REVIEW: Panopticism and the Traditions of Police Control and Surveillance**

Prior to discussing the actual data of the study it is critical to more thoroughly examine Foucault's theory of panopticism. By establishing how this theory was originally defined and thought to function within societies, the process of confirming its presence or absence among subsequent data will be less complicated. In *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault revisits Jeremy Bentham's original architectural depiction of the panopticon and applies it to his own discussions pertaining to forms of social control.

**Bentham’s Original Panopticon:**

Bentham first wrote of his structural panopticon in 1787 and defined it in largely spatial terminology. He conceived an architectural arrangement where a central tower commanded a complete view of peripheral rooms/spaces that were described as surrounding its outer perimeter. From the central tower, Bentham posited that a single individual could exercise influential control over the entire population of those inhabiting the hundreds of cells around him.
Bentham asserted that it was the omnipresent threat felt by those in the cells -that they could be seen by an official at any given time- that “scared” them into appropriate behavior. He further held that such surveillance was only capable of controlling social behaviors if its scope was constant and yet simultaneously unverifiable (Foucault 1979: 202). It was hailed as being an ingenious reduction of power, in that it produced a rapid spread of desired behavior among large groups of people despite being exercised by an incredibly small (and often a singular) number of enforcers.

**Foucault: Panopticism as Social Control**

Foucault, on the other hand, shifted the panopticon's presence from viewing it as an architectural structure to highlighting it in spatial terms by examining social boundaries. Foucault did this by analyzing the historical responses of the 17th century that occurred during times of plagues and other rapidly spreading diseases. Whereas Bentham focused upon physical structures and their relation to one another, Foucault's emphasis was upon space. During times of quarantine, he detailed how individuals were subjected to tedious surveillance and containment measures while outsiders were simultaneously prevented from permeating the town's borders. Ultimately, this resulted in the town constituting a kind of “frozen space”, where “each individual is fixed in his place, if he moves he does so at the risk of his life, contagion or punishment.” (Foucault 1979: 196).

Also comprising crucial societal niches in a spatial panopticon were Foucault's “syndics” and “intendants” who were regarded as being the “observers/enforcers” of plague-induced panopticism. The syndic essentially maintained order in the town by
exercising strict surveillance of all activities; however, it was the intendant who had the highest degree of power in this example. Answering to the intendant, the syndic would survey the streets and physically lock people in their houses but later gave the key (and arguably, ultimate authority) to the intendant who retained it until it was deemed to be safe to release families from confinement.

Further, the intendants would “every day, visit the quarter in his charge, inquire as to whether the syndics have carried out their tasks; observing their actions.” (1979: 196). Also indicative of the hierarchical chain of command between the two was the constant reporting “from syndics to intendants” and from “intendants to the magistrate/mayor.” (1979:197). In essence, every role was legitimized and further kept in check by the regular answering of one role to the other. With respect to space, the use of extensions and/or allocators used to perform necessary interactions (such as distributing food to those in their houses) without risking contamination by those providing the services, are of utmost importance. As Foucault explains, canals running from streets into dwellings permitted all to remain “locked up in their cages, everyone at their windows, answering to their name and showing themselves when asked.” (1979: 196). In sum, such “extensions” permitted task completion in lieu of personal interaction and re-emphasized those in control (distributors) and those who were subordinate (receivers).

This command of power “without division” and the “constant location” of each individual lead to Foucault's model of the disciplinary mechanism (1979: 198). Specifically, this term refers to a tool or function that permits “the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assures the capillary functioning of power.” (1979: 199). Such functions in
turn were thought to lead to a manifestation of surveillance, control and a ramification of power that “immobilized through an extensive power that bore in a distinct way over individual bodies- the utopia of the perfectly governed city.” (1979: 200).

Foucault concludes his chapter on panopticism by cataloguing how the state's increased investment in the observation of its people accumulated a large number of reports and registers that contributed to an immense police text. This was indicative of an attempt to regulate society through the medium of documentary organization (Foucault 1979). Whereas Bentham's original emphasis outlined physical structure and architectural arrangement of space, Foucault stretched the context of panopticism further by showing how it was inherent to these permanent accounts of individual behaviors. Rather than reiterating the importance of structural arrangements, Foucault outlined panopticism in terms of spatial locations of individuals that became of growing interest to both the state as well as its police. The pinnacle of Foucault’s panopticon was its ability to instill the change and modification of behavior in lieu of an overt force. The true goal of panopticism is to influence individuals to internalize discipline to the degree that they automatically conform their behaviors to models of control.

**Theorists of Police Tradition: Surveillance and Control**

Having defined Foucault's original concept of panopticism, a historical analysis of the traditions of police surveillance and control comprises the focus of the ensuing authors informing this study. In his article, *The Arresting Eye: Discourse, Surveillance and Disciplinary Administration*, John McMullan chronologically analyzes the theoretical writings of three early theorists of policing: Fielding, Colquhoun and
Chadwick. McMullan highlights their literary inputs as being pivotal in the creation of a “new grammar” of police power; envisioning a force that has become progressively concerned with the “mapping and administration of society” in an attempt to “comprehend it panoptically.” (McMullan 1998: 97).

Fielding: Policing in 18th Century London

Beginning with a review of the work of Fielding, it is important to keep in mind that he was among the first advocates calling for the thorough documentation of problems faced by 18th century London police departments. He was also an early advocate for the unification of small-scale parish forces into a singular police power. Like Foucault, Fielding approached discipline in terms of binary oppositions; most commonly viewing society through a lens of rich and poor individuals. It was the latter of these two categories to which Fielding attributed an increasing contribution to crime, inspiring him to suggest that such individuals “be enclosed within a more powerful system of surveillance and control” by modern police practices (McMullan 1996: 102).

Also similar to the anticipatory nature of panopticism saw to deter unwanted behaviors in Foucault's large-scale societal examples, Fielding sketched a picture of modern policing as a preventative machine. He stated that the tradition, when approached from this perspective, would “extend a fixed surveillance over people and things” and would allow for the “scrutinized description and diagnosis of the details of an individual's life.” (Fielding 1757: 61). Additionally, he reiterated the detrimental societal impact of the poor masses, suggesting that they required “a civilizing effect of restraint and supervision as well as swift and solemn punishment.” (1757: 61).
The extent to which Fielding believed in preventative justice is evident in one of his most popularly cited sentiments: “It is better to prevent even one man from being a rogue than apprehending and bringing forty to justice.” (1757: 68). Also unique to his literary contributions was his belief that police control should be partially extended to members of the general public. He believed in making the enforcement of law and code appealing not only to officers but to the public at large by instilling incentives that would inspire the latter to supplement law enforcement's efforts at ensuring the ideal functioning of society. He referred to this process as one that might “link society to an apparatus for the pursuit of crime and criminals.” (72).

Fielding asserted that the control and prevention of criminal activity through a utilization of public shaming, enforcement and notoriety be further reinforced by a production of detailed columns of criminals and their offenses. He believed in publicly displaying these details, hoping that their access to the general public would act as a further deterrent of criminal behavior. He believed that a “private and preventative police rather than a merely reactive watch and constabulary” would ensure a more “persistent scrutiny and restraint over society; guaranteeing that productive labor was occurring.” (75). In sum, Fielding's vision of police surveillance was an example of what Foucault referred to in his own work as the “non-governmental government” of a population, where private individuals and agencies endeavored to “develop and use tactics of operation” to handle “new social problems while regulating control and coordinating the targets created.” (Foucault 1979).
Another early police thinker was Colquhoun, who shared Fielding's desire to bring a more paternalistic force to fruition. Writing of police mostly during the early 1800s, Colquhoun suggested that this endeavor would result from alterations in police methodologies that would render them as being inherently more scientific in scope. He wrote that this “new science” must not merely focus upon detaining and retroactively punishing criminal actions, but also upon “the prevention and detection of crimes to regulate the well ordering and comfort of civil society.” (Colquhoun 1800: 38). An important consideration to keep in mind is that Colquhoun was a disciple of Jeremy Bentham, the originator of the panopticon. This arguably influenced his subsequent emphasis upon a preventative police that would contribute to an aura of deterrence within society, discouraging unwanted behaviors before they occurred.

Another societal focus of this theorist was his observations regarding growing populations. He negatively credited the rapid expansion of societies with being conducive to granting “refuge and secrecy to villains”, and similar to Fielding's discourse, suggested eradicating towns of their impoverished and idle populations who he saw as detrimental members of society. This is where a scientific approach was seen as being a valuable tool to be embraced by later generations of police. Again recognizing the value of tedious written accounts, Colquhoun was an advocate for the extensive gathering and filing of criminal/suspect behavior. He believed that officers needed more well-rounded training in the area of surveillance, as he asserted that observation was crucial to the detection of problems and development of tactics for combating them (1800: 155).

Colquhoun called for the retention of some police officers already in place, but
suggested that others consider merging to foster a centralized system of control (1800:218). In this respect, Colquhoun's literary contributions to the field of policing pushed both Bentham's and Fielding's notions of prevention and instatement farther than the latter two. As Foucault also did of Bentham's panopticon in the 20th century, Colquhoun more precisely fleshed out the concept as a goal of his new and scientific police methodology. He saw the value in prevention and panoptic surveillance tactics exercised by police among the masses as an effective way to inspire and preserve the “harmonious structure” of society, claiming that it would strengthen feelings of safety among law-abiding citizens while simultaneously “instilling fear in evil doers” targeted by “the merciless assault of the general police machine.” (1800: 222).

Chadwick: The Observation, Tracking and Segmentation of Subjects

The last work contributing to early police thought was put forth by Chadwick in the mid-19th century. Like Fielding, Colquhoun and Bentham, Chadwick also advocated for the increased utilization of surveillance and observational techniques by evolving police departments. Similar to Colquhoun, Chadwick also adhered to the notion that “trouble populations”, such as the destitute and un-educated, required the majority of these efforts to incorporate them back into ordered society. Where he differs from other theorists was his advocacy for a restriction of policing to state officials, rather than suggesting that the overarching society (and general public) be integrated to supplement official efforts. Echoing the sentiments of police science, Chadwick posited that departments must “become more systematic, centralized and integrated” if they were to ensure the security and “moral guidance” of society (Chadwick 1839: 336). He regarded
a proactive police as being capable of commanding a perpetual view over both steady and vagrant populations of an area. In keeping with the ideas of earlier theorists, Chadwick also regarded extensive profiling and the recording of offender behaviors to be a necessary and worthwhile police effort.

His work parallels against Foucault’s later work on panopticism, emphasizing that a preventative force would only come to fruition through “observing, locating and segmenting its subject.” (1839:255). Also similar to Foucault, the opus of Chadwick’s work was to rally for a policing eye that was to be both conservative and suspicious - but above all else- it was to be a penetrating one as well (Foucault 1977:170). Panopticism is traceable in his statement that it was of the utmost importance that an offender “ought not to know from what quarter he may expect an enemy, in what part he may safely lurk and deposit his spoil.” (Chadwick 1839:255). As a result, much of his work recommended that officers “mirror” those they sought to target; claiming that an unpredictable and flexible force would enhance its ability to more efficiently control order in society.

Chadwick stretched this idea further in his discussions of the need for a “centralized police force” that was also to be largely de-contextualized from surrounding societal influences. By taking measures to de-familiarize officers and citizens, the force would gain the added benefit of anonymity. As McMullan reflected, the pivotal contribution of Chadwick’s theory was its call for a conversion of the “public-private dichotomy” to one that was inward in scope; requiring that “each citizen render his or her own life into discourse.” (McMullan 1996: 118). Chadwick’s vision of police science parallels the notion of disciplinary power: with the desired end result being the production of “docile societal bodies” (Foucault 1979: 308). Although other theorists
saw the potential benefit of extending surveillance and control from departments to surrounding members of the general public, Chadwick believed that a strong central core of enforcement would be on track with the creation of a kind of “political utopia” of public power (McMullan 1996: 121).

Kietzmann and Angell: Modern Applications of Panopticism

A more recent example of a panoptic analysis of the themes of control and surveillance in policing is seen in The Panopticon Revisited, where Kietzmann and Angell outline the three generations of modern surveillance. The first is aimed at “directing social behavior through a reactive approach by authority,” and emphasizes the role of “punishment, or the threat there of.” (2010: 136). An example of this initiative is seen in (often fake) cameras that have been mounted to highway shoulders, as well as the increasingly common police tactic of “mock” speed traps. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this infant stage of surveillance is its tendency to lead “paradoxically, to increased accident or speeding rates” when their fraudulence is discovered by the very individuals the systems are created to keep in check (136).

The second generation, unlike the first, was created to do more than simply “curb behavior through the presence of investigative” measures (136). On the contrary, this surveillance disguises any and all “behavior-changing intentions” behind an ostensibly positive exterior; toting the promise of positive outcomes for participants (136). Although this version of observational control is not a current trademark of modern policing, its ability to “combine private information with previously hard to obtain public details” deems it a likely prospect in future discussions of police technology (136). Specific
examples of this include the common corporate practice of awarding “frequent buyer” bonuses and the targeted online advertising tailored to individuals according to their past buying patterns. This form arguably exists to a degree in modern policing and is seen in some department’s use of “computer-based dispatch”. This is a technological advancement capable of detecting patterns in an officer's previous report history that are then used to “make decisions” about assignments for new cases in an active dispatch area.

Despite the advanced nature of second generation surveillance, it is not yet immune to the pitfalls of its successor. Specifically, “the actual investigative power and reach of second generation systems is becoming obvious to the general public,” resulting in a “diminished effectiveness of the system” (136). The cries of concern reverberating from the public do not appear to be completely unwarranted. As the authors go on to note, “some critics claim such methods are an attempt by the government to create a modern panopticon,” where an innocent majority are increasingly subjected to tactics aimed at “controlling mechanisms and seeking to prevent rather than correct” criminal behaviors (136). These unsettling implications are so precisely because of their plausibility. The adoption of invasive surveillance systems could be argued to represent attempts by superiors at preventing officer misconduct and/or indiscretion through a threat of observation and extended superior control.

The most invasive, and for all intensive purposes most disturbing, generation is seen in the third form. Whereas the first generation was defined as deterring behaviors through an unspecialized facade or threat of observation, and the second combines the realms of private and public details, the third harnesses the full advantages of spy technology. As Kietzmann and Angell point out, modern society has embraced
information systems and devices to the extent that they have become a regular part of many people's lives. This reveals a potential for the public to “substantially increase the area to be observed” by more generalized forms of surveillance (136). The authors suggest that this spread of self-imposed surveillance to mainstream society could produce a nation where individuals are “convinced to police and spy on themselves.” (137). Considering how much of the technology recruited by modern police departments are in their infancy, the authors imply that the human policeman might stand to be outdated by his technological competition.

Having addressed historical and recent discourse on the themes of panopticism, surveillance and control, the following section presents cases in original data that confirmed the presence of panopticism functioning through the use of surveillance technology by a metropolitan police department. It shows how some of these innovations conformed to Foucault’s original notion of panopticism and how the threat felt by officers resulted in their direct modification of on-duty behavior. The potential for officers to be seen by managerial staff through the latter’s exercise of technological surveillance denotes a significant shift in day-to-day policing practices.
CHAPTER 2: Officers in the Panopticon: Confirming the Panoptic Functioning of Police Technology

“The original panopticon was designed as a top-down surveillance system, motivated by an elitist mindset that society’s unacceptable could be trained to accept societal norms and prevalent ideology-the ruling elite.”

(Lim 2007: 11)

This section examines where a superior officer's use of surveillance produced a panoptic influence over lower-ranking officers that inspired a modification of the latter’s behavior. Technology detailed in this section has been justified in the past by the department's claim that it is conducive to proactive policing. Initially gaining popularity in the wake of terrorism, this policing approach has allowed the department to more closely observe the activities of its own officers in addition to those of civilians. The policing of the police that is permitted by department technology is the focal point of data presented in this section. The panoptic influence these systems had on officers supports the findings of similar studies of workplace surveillance and control (Bloss, 2009; Davis, 2004; Collins, 2005; see also Whitaker, 2003).

Officers in the Panopticon: The Impact of GPS Surveillance

With more than 10 years with the police force, Officer S reported that measures such as GPS have dramatically impacted day-to-day policing since beginning his career. The conduction of officer activity and the ability to use discretion were pointed to as areas that are now drastically different. The changes Officer S detects were attributed
with the department’s introduction of surveillance technology. The extent of a superior’s symbolic and permanent visibility was made apparent one day after Officer S finished reporting his daily activity over the radio to a dispatcher back at the station (a “radio check”). Officer S spoke of officer subjection to monitoring in his following discussion about the role of GPS:

“Officer S points to a small car icon on the cruiser’s computer screen and says ‘That’s us [our cruiser]! As if it’s not enough to run our radio checks, they [superiors] have to see officers at all times, too.’ Officer S tells me that every squad car has a tracking device attached to it so superiors always know where officers are’.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/12)

During my observation, I noticed that the computer screen installed in the cruiser displayed a satellite image of Officer S' active patrol area where each additional cruiser on duty was also displayed according to location. The cruiser was designated on the map by an icon moving in real time around a simulated recreation of the district. At any given moment, a superior back at the district station would be capable of determining the exact whereabouts of his vehicle.

GPS in the example above coincides with a radio-check mandated by dispatch that was carried out by an individual from headquarters. In addition to being spatially tracked by GPS, officers are still required to maintain constant radio contact with dispatch. The radio-check appeared to act as a “double check” to the GPS system as a means to further manage and account for officers. As Officer S added, radio-checks are seen as being a kind of supplement to a one-dimensional GPS system. A shortfall of the
latter of these forms of technology is its inability to gather information about anything other than an officer’s location and report status.

Radio-checks are significant because they require that officers “run their numbers”. “Numbers” refer to a count of events, such as: how many times an officer stopped to get coffee, frequented a bank or business to contribute to visibility, filed incident reports, wrote tickets, etc. Although historically radio contact between officers and dispatch is nothing new, the degree to which Officer S is now tracked and subjected to surveillance ostensibly is. In a relatively short span of time, the picture of officer behavior painted by the dual managerial tactics described above has quickly become a new reality.

GPS is but one innovation marking the department’s shift from a low to high degree of technological dependence. In the past, a greater amount of professional freedom was enjoyed by officers and was permitted by the department's technologically light reliance upon such systems. Today, evidence supports that policing continues to move towards measures that enhance “professional transparency” that in this case is achieved through workplace surveillance. The rapid evolution so characteristic of technology has allowed it to shift its focus from capturing public activities to those of police departments and individual officers. The use GPS appears to attest to the department’s dedication to boosting its networking and response capabilities. Some aspects of GPS and related surveillance tools arguably teeter on the edge of invading officer privacy. According to Bloss, this has been documented by court cases over recent years that have sought to extend fundamental privacy protections to officers in
their roles as public employees (2002).

Officer S spoke of GPS as *supplementing* the personal observational tactics of the past, such as the report process between officers and dispatch. Confirmed by other studies of control, the constant monitoring of employee activity is often construed as a way for superiors to “cover their bases”; making them privy to information that was completely inaccessible only a few short years ago (Rahaman, Neu & Everett, 2010 and Bevir, 1999). In a similar manner, departments have leaned towards technologically heavy environments because it aids in equipping responsible superiors with a clearer picture of officer behavior.

**Officers in the Panopticon: The Extensive Broadcast of Officer Action**

In keeping with the theme of panopticism, it is important to emphasize that any threat from surveillance technology must be perceived as a permanent component of the daily work environment. The officer working in a truly panoptic system is constantly reminded of the source from which he is being observed (Foucault, 1979). The cruiser icon in the above example acts as a symbolic reminder of the officer’s constant monitoring by the department, as well as his *potential* to be monitored. An additional and significant aspect of GPS is its ability to extend the scope of surveillance outward into surrounding departments in the metropolitan area. This range grants a visibility of officers to the superiors of their own district, but also to the superiors of *surrounding* districts as well:

I ask Officer S what he thinks is going on in District 5A right now [known in the metropolitan area as being
high-crime], as there are no pending calls in our own and we are simply 'waiting around'.

Officer S tells me that there is “probably a way to find out,” and carefully saves a newly-created report before switching to a screen on the computer that displays ‘Pending Runs’ for a district area.

Soon thereafter, a window pops up asking him to select the district for which he wishes to view active radio calls. He selects 5A and presses ‘OK’. The computer sits still; unchanging for several minutes while processing the target area.

When it finally brings up the information, we see that there are 3 pending reports in 5A – apparently it is a busy day over there despite an utter lack of activity in our own district.

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/12)

GPS' broad field of vision further exaggerates any threat of surveillance already felt by lower-ranking officers. Officer action has been shown to be subject to monitoring by their immediate superiors who manage the patrol area. The superiors of neighboring districts, however, would also be able to use the same networking system to access the whereabouts and report information for all officers in the metropolitan area. This would be similar to a hypothetical Foucauldian scenario where the wardens of an extended network of prisons have access to the status of prisoners housed within all surrounding institutions in addition to their own. This widens the web of supervision and managerial influence by a significant degree. If the threat of surveillance by immediate superiors is not intimidating enough to inspire officers to conduct themselves accordingly, it is arguably reinforced by an extension of surveillance that transmits information to superiors of surrounding districts.
That this technology is flaunted as being beneficial to officers because it provides them with networking capabilities downplays the fact that it also serves to subject them to a higher degree of surveillance by amongst an extended network of superiors. This is of note because of the tendency of the officers I met to “hop districts” over the years. Even Officer S had worked for a department in a neighboring district for 4 years prior to relocating to the one he actively patrols today. Because of the integrated nature of GPS, despite an officer’s changing of districts he fails to remove himself from the perpetual gaze of a former superior or boss. This is evident in Officer S’ experience, later telling me that he switched departments precisely because he no longer wished to work under a superior whom he was convinced “had it out for him”. Despite no longer needing to worry about reporting to this official or working under their direct supervision, Officer S was still technically prone to some degree of surveillance/monitoring by this supervisor should they wish to exercise it.

Officers in the Panopticon: Adjusting Behavior to Fit a Technological Format and Control Through Accountability

Policing systems have been seen to disguise or downplay many “profiling and behavior-changing intentions” behind a “seemingly beneficial and/or desirable outcome” (Kietzmann & Angell 2010: 136). Goold’s article on the role of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in police practice in Great Britain posits that observational technology “comes to resemble Bentham’s Panopticon” more and more (2003: 201). He states that it is “a form of ‘controlling the controllers’” as well as an attempt to “police
the police.” (2003: 199). Having documented one of the ways that a symbolic reminder of superior visibility was reinforced, it is necessary to show how this leads to the direct modification of officer behavior.

A less drastic but noteworthy technological innovation of policing is seen in the computerization of officer reports. As the following data shows, this measure was observed to limit the ability of an officer to exercise his discretionary power. During one ride-along session, Officer S and I reported to the scene of an accident involving two motor vehicles. Although neither of the men involved was seriously injured, the damage to both cars was severe and the driver at fault for the accident was young and visibly shaken.

As Officer S returned to the cruiser with the men’s information, I saw him begin to issue a ticket to the driver at fault for the traffic violation that caused the accident. I was surprised to see Officer S doing this. Characteristically what one might call the “good cop”, I had not known or seen Officer S to issue a ticket unless he perceived the violator as being generally rude. When I asked him why he was choosing to slap a ticket on the poor kid -who was quite certainly already having a really bad day- he responded that:

He really wished he could opt out of writing the young man a ticket, but that his [Officer S’] “hands are basically tied” because of the “procedure required” by the reporting system for filing accidents by [the department].

Officer S said that he used to be able to exercise his discretion in issuing tickets for auto accidents if the involved members were generally cooperative and pleasant
to deal with, but now officers have a lot less control over such scenarios.

Officer S attributed this to the fact that the computer report requires an officer to fill in a check-box that indicates if a ticket was issued to the driver at fault.

Officer S tells me that *not* issuing a ticket [and thus, not checking the box on the report] might be ‘flagged’ by a superior who might review the report later on, and that they could see it as a potential performance issue.

Officer S says additionally, many insurance companies have been known to “make a fuss” if officers don’t issue one; telling me that for informational purposes, he is usually forced to write one in case someone at an insurance agency needs to follow up with the department about the accident.

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/16/2012.)

The panoptic threat embodied by the instantaneous relaying of officer actions to superiors is further supported by this example. In the past, Officer S expressed feeling more willing and able to be lenient with individuals involved in motor vehicle accidents. Today, the format of the computerized report Officer S is required to complete contributes to a decreasing appeal in choosing to exercise discretionary power. Here, the report acted as a static documentation attesting to Officer S’ chosen course of action. This mandates that he essentially “account for his actions” (i.e. his discretion in choosing to issue a ticket or not) and upon submitting the report he instantly subjects himself to review by a superior.

Officer S opted to act against his personal opinion that resulted in a direct adjustment of his behavior to better comply with the format of *technology* despite it going
against his policing *discretion*. To be certain, there are more contributing factors influencing Officer S’ decision than purely technological formatting issues. Society has fostered a culture that is obsessed with the filing of lawsuits and suing. The instantaneous documentation that links an officer with an incident report relays information about the officer's course of action and carries it back to superiors. This contributes to a panoptic alteration of officer behavior.

This form of technology permits department superiors to closely monitor all employees under their supervision, not unlike the warden in Foucault's panoptic prison (1979). As previously argued, the benefits to be gained from the department’s use of these systems tend to mask or downplay underlying potentials for the technology to *negatively* impact officers. As the previous example confirms, officers can and do adjust their actions. Officer S did so to ensure that his actions would be viewed as being both professionally valid and warranted given the circumstances of the vehicle accident. Officer S’ personal desire *not* to issue the young man a ticket was outweighed by his knowledge that failing to do so would be recorded in the report and made privy to review by superiors. This resulted in Officer S opting to write the young man a ticket, and thus, complete the report while adhering to strict department procedure.

**Officers in the Panopticon: The (Dreaded) “IS Report” Database**

As was said several decades ago of police department dynamics, police are highly sensitive to orders from above and to potential official disapproval of behavior (Bordua and Reiss 1966). Coupling this with the modern visibility of officer actions, officers
must accept that whatever they enter or fail to enter into a report will be monitored by superior staff. This serves as a launching point for an investigation into computerized “IS” reports. According to the explanation obtained from Officer S, IS reports:

Are like an online database of “stuff we [officers] have done wrong in the past.” Information about incomplete or incorrectly filed reports, failures to complete procedures according to department policy, or things of a similar nature is usually what inspires a superior to “write you up.” Once it gets entered into your “electronic file”, they [superiors/the department] can “pretty much pull it out and use it against you at any point after that.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012.)

In addition to the real-time surveillance offered by GPS, the computerization of IS reports expands a superiors’ panoptic knowledge to the past actions of officers. Drawing from Goold, he noted a similar parallel in the police practice of archiving surveillance videos of on-duty officers in Great Britain. He recounts how one officer “joked that the padlock on the tape storage cupboard was not there to protect the tapes from the possibility of theft from intruders, but rather from theft by police officers.” (2003: 200).

This implies that officers felt a heightened threat from the CCTV video database that detailed their prior behavior. Officer S’ similar desire of not wanting to “contribute to the accumulation of physical evidence against himself” is evident in his definition of IS reports. His decision to modify present behavior to enhance the credibility of future action was fueled by his desire not to substantiate information that the department might already have on his performances. In sum, Officer S had to assume that any of the decisions he made and logged in a report had the potential to be used against him by a
superior at a future time.

Officers in the Panopticon: Infiltration into the Personal Realm

Technology often acts as a medium through which a transcendence of information from a professional to a personal sphere is made possible, or vice versa. With respect to police technology, this potential was first alluded to by an officer I encountered on the last of my observation sessions. Although most officers I spoke to appeared to share a “collective commiseration” for their constant surveillance while on duty, this officer pushed the idea farther by implying that the “sight” of the department might not be strictly limited to the scope of their professional activities.

I met “Officer Q” while accompanying Officer S to the scene of a radio call where Officer Q and her partner responded as a backup unit. During a lull in the incident, Officer Q mentioned in casual conversation with Officer S that she was forced to leave the department for a few years because of a “situation” where her activities while “off the clock” were “somehow relayed” back to department officials:

Officer Q tells Officer S that she was “originally eligible for full retirement in September 20__ but it was pushed back”. Officer Q elaborates, saying that back [a few years ago], she was on duty when she received word from someone in her family that her son had been shot in the head with a .22.

Officer Q says she rushed back to headquarters to tell them what happened so she could get to the hospital. Officer Q says that later that day, she met up with a friend and she was “just absolutely distraught”, and “didn’t know if my son was going to live or die at that point,” and that “yeah, you know, I had a drink in front of me-just one.”
Later that evening, she was driving home and “crying her eyes out”. She says she was “not driving in a straight line”, but “not because she was drunk or anything,” but because “her boy was shot” and she was “just beside herself.” Officer Q pauses for a second and adds, “don’t you think I get pulled over on my way home for ‘erratic driving’ and when the officer pulled her over, she reportedly said “I’m [an officer] and my son was shot today.”

Officer Q allegedly told the other officer “yes, I had a drink,” but that she was “not swerving around because of that,” but because she could not “see straight with how hard she was crying.” Officer Q says that the officer only had to look at her to “know I was telling the truth” and then “let her go”.

She says a few days later, she heard from a higher up at MPD that she “failed to notify them within 5 days of her violation”. Officer Q reportedly told the official that she was simply pulled over for “erratic driving” [not a DUI] and was let go without a ticket; adding that, “according to what she learned in the academy,” a minor violation like traffic citations “don’t require reporting to superiors anyway,” even if she had been issued one.

Only “criminal violations require informing the higher ups.” Officer Q commented “how the department even found out about the whole thing was beyond” her, but “they did”. She grew serious and said, “they got eyes everywhere, as far as I’m concerned.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012.)

Officer Q appeared to be paranoid about the ability of the department to monitor her activities. Stating “as far as I’m concerned, they [the department] got eyes everywhere,” Officer Q recommended that Officer S “put in his 8 hours and get the hell out of here.” This attests to her belief that the department was capable of gathering information about her, and not just during those times she was on active duty. This case confirms the
apex of panopticism: internalized discipline as an automatic conformance to models of control.

Officer Q insinuated that the range of surveillance had been expanded; giving superior’s access to the details of her activity while *off the clock*. This experience caused her a great degree of apprehension and continued to influence the way she conducted herself while under department surveillance or simply conducting activities in her personal time. The explanation behind how the department actually found out about her erratic driving was never confirmed or clarified. It is possible, however, that the scenario of IS reports might shed some light upon the source of the tip off.

It was already detailed, for example, how Officer S felt “too anxious” *not* to issue a ticket in the vehicle accident example. This was attributed to the fact that he would have to leave the ticket checkbox unmarked on the computerized version of the report. In the example of Officer Q, however, it is shown that this same feeling of “uneasiness” and the fear of information becoming accessible to superiors transcended the working environment and into the context of her personal life. Perhaps in the process of the reporting officer’s attempt to provide the necessary information needed to document the events of his shift, the department was off-handedly granted access to the details surrounding Officer Q’s personal and potentially brow-raising actions while off duty. Although the source responsible for ousting Officer Q's erratic driving was never confirmed, it appeared to have a very real and lasting impact on her. Her concluding statement that “the department has eyes everywhere” is a testament to the panoptic notion of a fear-induced conduction of behavior and activity.
This example serves further supports the notion that police surveillance is capable of inducing a panoptic state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power (Foucault, 1979). It also attests to the perceived ability of the department to gain access to the details of an officer's personal life. This explains Officer Q's “paranoia” that a permanent surveillance by the department was possible, even while she was off duty. If the scope of technology were to be widened in this way, it would continue to encourage behavioral modification by officers while off-duty.

**Officers in the Panopticon: Superior Reputation as an Indicator of Surveillance Threat**

Section two will present eight cases from fieldnotes where a Commander reputed as being notoriously lax was heading the shift; diminishing the panoptic influence of officer surveillance. The excerpts presented in both of the instances below, however, were observed on days where a notoriously strict Commander was on duty. These cases are remarkable in that officers were observed to panoptically modify their behaviors due to their personal knowledge of a superior and not solely because of their use of surveillance technology.

I begin to wonder if the “by the book” Commander on duty this morning might not be the reason behind the rather subdued/absent morning gathering of officers in the front office area.

This suspicion is later confirmed by Officer S who says this superior “doesn’t like officers sitting around” after roll-call, so they have to pretend to be busybodies’ until the Commander goes up to his own office for the day.

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/16/2012)
The absence of the lively pre-shift interactions among officers that I had grown accustomed to seeing while waiting for Officer S in the front area of the department was directly related to the officers’ knowledge that the Commander on duty would not tolerate this kind of behavior. This instance of panoptic behavioral modification by officers was inspired by their potential visibility to a strict superior. However, this case stands out because the panoptic functioning of the situation is fueled not by technology but by personal managing techniques.

Whereas the previous examples of this section sought to expose how police technology was used by superiors to track and influence officer behavior, the following cases show how the threat of personal surveillance and management by superiors inspires a similar behavioral alteration. As will be shown, the threat stemming from personal surveillance arguably results in the more effective and proactive functioning of police officers:

I notice two officers up by the front desk where [a man] had been speaking to Officer S. They are joking around, but suddenly begin speaking very quietly, and I hear the first officer ask the other if he would be “interested in swapping vehicles today.”

I wonder if the second officer was assigned one of the better cars for the dayshift, and if the first was trying to get him to cave and switch it with her presumably less desirable cruiser. The second officer nervously seems to scan the front section of the office (even though at this point it is only the warrant-pendee and myself waiting around) and continues to nervously resist the request to switch.

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/16/2012)
It appeared as though the officer hesitating to swap vehicles with the second officer was nervous that the exchange might be discovered by the Commander on duty that day. The crucial difference embodied by this example is that panopticism operates because of a *human* -and not a technological- influence. Additional evidence that personal surveillance methods are better able to produce a threat factor that directly leads to more proactive police behaviors is presented by the following excerpt. This event transpired on my final shift shortly after a false alarm had been investigated by Officer S and Officer Q:

Officer Q comes up to Officer S and asks, “Did anyone request a check in from us, or what?” to which Officer S responds, ‘No, there was no call back information, everything looks intact so I say we sit here and wait it out until end of shift.’

Officer Q hesitates and mentions that she will “park farther down the street and keep watch” [while they ‘call stretch’] because she heard that the “Sergeant was out patrolling today and he could swing by to see if they were actively on the scene.” Officer S agrees, saying that that’s a good point and that he will keep a lookout for the Sergeant, too.”

(Christner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012.)

Though this occurred during my final shadowing session, this was one of the first instances where I saw threatening visibility stem from a personal –and not technological- monitoring source. The personal method in this case was the Sergeant’s physical and very literal potential to show up on the scene of officer activity. Unlike the superior heading the
first few shifts, this official appeared to command a much more pronounced ability to influence how officers chose to act.

Officers in the Panopticon: Part I Review

The first example of Officer S’ issuing of a ticket during a motor vehicle accident supports a panoptic functioning of police technology. The threat Officer S felt by being monitored and subjected to review by superiors resulted in a direct modification in how Officer S chose to exercise his personal discretion. Similarly, the computerization of incident reports detailed how a department employing a “multiplicity of individuals” upon whom particular “tasks or behaviors must be imposed” ensures control and order by requiring technological formats to once manual tasks (Foucault, 1979). Manual reports arguably allowed for more opportunities in which officers might edit or leave out certain pieces of information. Today, an officer is not able to submit a report without filling in certain required pieces of information. In the event that he attempts to do this, it is quickly “flagged” and returned for additional editing to the officer by a superior who is reviewing the report.

The second example discussed an officer's perceived scope of surveillance and the ensuing threat that was felt from it. The factor of threat was widened by the department’s consolidation of officer actions into computerized “databases”. Real-time panoptic surveillance leads to a direct modification of officer behavior. The ability of superiors to gain access to a database of past officer activities is significant to an officer's decision making process. Systems such as GPS were shown to allow superiors to view an officer’s current actions at any given time. Officers were observed to mold their behaviors to fit a
computerized reporting format. The computerization of reports was ultimately seen to increase a superior’s ability to detect the performance patterns of individual officers.

The glimpse permitted by computerized databases into past and present officer activities amplifies the effect of threatening visibility. Growing computerized databases lend additional incentives for officers to fix, arrest, or regulate their movements according to what is preferred by a technological format. It also serves to convey more specific information about the day-to-day activities of officers who have traditionally “wandered about in unpredictable ways,” and equips superiors with an ability to “calculate the distributions” of officer whereabouts (Foucault 1979: 219). As was previously said of policing in the 1960’s, it is a field that is “highly decentralized” and an “operation that involves the deployment of large numbers of men alone or in small units where control by actual command is difficult.” (1966 Bordua and Reiss). The computerization of incident reports further expands a superior’s scope by increasing their ability to exercise more commanding control over officers.

The final example of Officer Q also confirmed the panoptic effect of police surveillance. Even if the department did not find out about her personal situation through an “infiltrating panoptic surveillance” tool, that the officer didn’t place this kind of monitoring past the abilities of the department's current technology remains. Together, these examples have confirmed that the threat and potential of being observed is a growing, and potentially harsh, reality for police officers. The ability of computerized databases to equip superiors with a view into an officer's past working behavior serves to widen the scope of surveillance technology beyond the boundaries of real time and into the past.
CHAPTER 3: Officers Outside the Panopticon - Tactics for Eliminating Panoptic Threat

“Unrestrained surveillance of employees by employers deprives the former of the basic human right to privacy, dignity and autonomy. Employees are not simply machines that need monitors to ensure they are working properly.”

(Bupp 2001:79)

This section documents where the opposite effect of panopticism that was confirmed by section one was seen to occur in policing. The ways that officers were able to couple their personal knowledge of superiors with the limitations of surveillance technology are presented. The officer's application of personal and technological knowledge created methods to reduce or completely eliminate the panoptic threat stemming from observation by department officials. These tactics achieved this by lessening, removing, or evading the scope of technology and were analyzed as being representative of methods used to conceal the true nature of officer activities while on duty.

Officers Outside the Panopticon: The One-Sided Blindness of Technology

The ability of a panoptic system to produce employee-to-employee “invisibility” has been argued to promote an orderly functioning of the workplace. In his writings on the prison system, Foucault asserted that this contributed to a more pronounced ability for a system to protect itself from conspiracy by bands of prisoners. By isolating prisoners from contact with others, the possibility of revolt or rebellion was essentially removed (Foucault 1979: 200). Similarly, this dynamic can be applied to an examination of the
ways that superior officials were seen to command a constant view of officer activity without the latter group being able to view the activities of superiors.

The myopic nature of police surveillance reveals its one-sided blindness. Officers, who have already been established as being unable to view the activities of superiors, are unable to obtain the superior’s degree of knowledge about the activities of fellow officers. The condition of invisibility has been used to discuss the isolation of monitored prisoners from fellow inmates residing within a panoptically arranged prison. Foucault credited the warden’s ability to exert control over prisoner groups as reinforcing the panoptic system’s ability to limit any associations occurring between prisoners with other prisoners. He further stated that this eliminated the potential for conspiracy against the observer, thus ensuring his power and control over prisoners.

Policing is a field that does not typically present the opportunity for an officer to engage in immediate personal contact with other officers for the majority of a shift. This is especially true if an officer is not assigned to work with a partner, as was the case with Officer S. Keeping this in mind, it is possible to draw a parallel between officers and the prisoners of Foucault’s example. Although officers may remain invisible from one another for much or all of a shift, their consolidated representation as a symbolic fleet is relayed via technology to superiors in the format of GPS cruiser icons. The superior’s access to this a barrage of virtual GPS icons presented opportunities for officers to abstractly “co-conspire” and ultimately evade the focus of technological surveillance.

The compilation and display of several GPS icons to a superior convert the
system's one-sided surveillance into a “managerial blind spot”. As other studies have noted, “panoptic surveillance” of workplace activities often results in the creation of evasion techniques and coping mechanisms that are developed by the monitored employees (Bogard, 2006; Brivot & Gendron, 2011; Haggerty & Ericson, 2000; see also Miller & Rose, 1990). In my own observations, officer tactics were created to take advantage of the technology’s weaknesses and to shield the true nature of officer behaviors in a manner akin to a “herd effect”.

**Officers Outside the Panopticon: Safety in Numbers**

In essence, each of the officers tracked and observed by the department rather abstractly aligns with the example of a “single zebra” within a “larger herd”. Individual officers are able to “get lost” in the herd of other officers who are also subject to surveillance by superiors. During my observations, it became apparent that officers knew that a superior was positioned in front of a computer screen detailing their own individual location, but also those of *all currently patrolling officers* as well.

Unless the superior was thought to have a particular “bone” to pick with an officer on a personal level, or was otherwise reputed as being strict, I observed that Officer S seemed to perceive no real reason for modifying his behavior. This resulted in a rather abundant absence of those cases documented by the previous section, where pronounced effort was made by an officer to ensure that their actions be interpreted as more acceptable by the surveillance measure in use. An officer's cumulative and confident knowledge of a superior, coupled with an assumption that their own GPS icon would not
stand to warrant more attention than another's, lead to occasions where the officer could act as an “invisible agent”. In the examples involving Officer S, he is able to achieve this in part because of the “herd effect” stemming from department technology.

The department’s ability to monitor officers through surveillance was occasionally seen to produce this form of hyper-visibility. A superior’s ability to track many officers through surveillance simultaneously permitted the shrinking importance of any one officer’s activity. Similar to Bupp’s findings on the results of over-monitoring in the workplace, the hyper-tracking of officers also tolerates this occasional invisibility to a superior's focus. During these instances, officers were capable of concealing the true nature of their professional working behavior (Bupp, 2001).

To stretch panopticism further, invisibility becomes significant in these cases not because of its potential to prevent rebellion by co-conspiring individuals. Rather, it becomes important because of its potential to enhance the possibility for an officer to evade the system through the technology’s inability to relay the nature of officer actions in the context of a larger group. Ultimately, this contributes to a distraction away from the behavior of any single officer.

**Officers Outside the Panopticon: Passive “Icing” as Proactive Policing**

The first instance of the “herd effect” is seen in the officer tactic of “icing”. Referred to in this way by Officer S, icing can be viewed as a characteristically “passive” police tactic that is not fully traceable by the myopic view of technology. Simply put, icing refers to an officer doing little more than staking out a location to park his cruiser
for a varying amount of time. On a computer screen, an officer who is actively icing could be regarded as one who is “proactively preventing” crime by contributing to police presence and/or visibility in the community. In reality, this tactic was seen to permit officers to complete other tasks –sometimes personal ones- or simply ‘wait around’ for calls from dispatch. An example of this is seen in the following excerpt:

“Officer S and I pull into a parking lot by a local school. Officer S says that he likes to ‘ice’ back in this area when he has to type up reports after an incident. He tells me that this merely looks like ‘icing’ [ie setting up camp, remaining sedentary at one position for a length of time] at a particular location to anyone looking at his icon on the computer screen.

He adds that technically, this could be viewed as an instance of proactive police ‘visibility’, which is considered to be a proactive approach used by departments to deter crime. He says that many students walk from this part of the campus to class and that it’s always a good idea to contribute to police visibility in settings like this one.

On top of it, he doesn’t have to worry about ‘running around looking for violations’ in between responding to the calls he is required to handle when told to do so by the dispatcher. Personally, he likes to use these opportunities to catch up on episodes of “Air Emergency” whenever possible.

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/2012)

When viewed from the cumulative perspective of an active police shift, the individual working environment of an officer coupled with their symbolic representation as a GPS icon renders them as being largely “invisible” to the focus of superiors and
officers alike. This is permitted by an officer's visual representation as an icon that is channeled back to the superior through GPS and also by the distraction of other officer icons. The ease with which officials are able to monitor officers occasionally results in the managerial blind spot documented by the example above.

To any superior checking in on Officer S through GPS, it would simply appear that he was proactively contributing to visibility in the patrol area. One is tempted to think that a strict superior might proactively monitor officers and make note of those who appear to do little to no active patrolling during their shifts. In reality, this does not appear to be the case for some superiors. As a result, officers are able to take advantage of the one-dimensional view of surveillance by disguising passive policing tactics under the guise of proactive or preventative measures.

Additionally, these instances allowed Officer S to indulge in activities that benefitted him personally. He was seen to use this time to finish up otherwise time consuming reports from incidents, watch shows online on the cruiser computer, search the internet, or make calls on his personal cell phone. The examples of section one documented cases where an officer’s knowledge or threat of visibility by superiors resulted in a modification of behavior that was “better suited” to a technological format. The above instance, however, shows not a modification of behavior in an attempt to conform to technology, but a permission of officer behavior granted by a loop-hole in the technology. Officer S was hardly the only officer I encountered during my time at the department who took advantage of opportunities to, more or less, passively police under the shroud of proactive visibility. He elaborated upon this rather common practice
among the officers at the department a few sessions after the first event occurred:

“Officer S explains that, being a 10+ year veteran of the force, he sees that new officers learn pretty quickly after graduating the academy that the majority of police work is ‘nowhere near as exciting as you thought it might be while you were preparing to become an officer’.

He says that it is not unusual for younger ‘rookie’ cops to ‘be more proactive for a year or two’, but when they realize that ‘going after traffic stops or violations or runs for suspicious activity lands you nothing but a mass of computer reports and paperwork’, it just becomes easier to be an ‘ice unit’ and be ‘visible somewhere in between responding to radio calls.’”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012)

It can be argued that the negative threat of visibility shared by all officers permits the benefit of the heightened invisibility of singular actions by individual officers. Pairing this situation with an officer’s personal knowledge of superior officials managing the shift, the likelihood that an official will choose to actively exercise their power to monitor officers with any kind of malicious or strict intentions appears to be significantly lessened. It is the impact stemming from the potential for invisibility, the shielding of the true nature of officer action, that serves to benefit officers traditionally kept in check by the technology. As the novelty of any threat attached to monitoring technology wears off, officers appear to devise ways to use their knowledge of the system’s shortcomings to add to their advantage.

Officers Outside the Panopticon: “Stretching Calls” as Passive Policing
Another pitfall of technological surveillance is its susceptibility to the officer tactic of “stretching calls”. Basically, this practice consists of an officer “icing out” on the scene of a previously handled report from dispatch without actually clearing it. The officer does this to prevent becoming eligible for assignment to other calls. The reports most conducive to this process were frequent scenarios where -for example- a citizen’s burglar alarm was activated and automatically alerted the station. The dispatcher at the department would subsequently radio an officer to inspect the scene. Of course after completing several ride-alongs, I came to realize that these false alarms were both very common and quite annoying from a policing perspective.

Officers were able to reap the benefits of these otherwise irritating calls by using them as opportunities to stretch out their ineligibility to be assigned to other reports by dispatch. From the perspective of a superior monitoring the responding officer via GPS, it would merely look like the officer was actively on the scene conducting business as necessary (i.e. checking with residents, scoping out the property, etc). One specific instance of call stretching occurred after Officer S and I finished handling a dispute between a rather disgruntled apartment manager and a mailman attempting to deliver the building’s mail. Although Officer S and the other two female officers who had also reported to the scene had finished all the required processing of complainants and had recorded all information needed for the incident report, I noted that they remained on the scene without clearing it with the dispatcher in order to make them re-eligible for call assignment. After about 20 minutes or so:
Officer S received a call from dispatch, asking him if he and the other officers ‘still on the scene’ of the manager dispute would be finishing anytime soon because there was an ‘activated burglar alarm’ close to their location that was ‘going off and needed to be checked.’

Officer S picked up the radio and told the dispatcher that the three of them had ‘just cleared the scene, and would be heading over in the direction of the report.

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012)

The blind spot discussed earlier in the section is seen again in the technology’s inability to present dispatchers and superior staff with the actual nature of the actions they are observing. The true shortcoming of current observational technology is brought to the foreground by such scenarios. Considering the one-dimensional view of officers depicted by surveillance technology along with the sheer number of GPS icons available to superiors during the average shift illuminates yet another pitfall.

An officer is aware that there are several other patrol vehicles being monitored at the same time that he himself is subject to superior surveillance. The officer’s ability to gauge the likelihood that a specific superior heading the shift might actually choose to exercise his surveillance capability exposes how the officer’s personal knowledge of the superior diminishes any threat felt from surveillance. Thus, the effectiveness of threatening visibility present in the cases of the first section falls flat in these examples. Both icing and stretching calls are tactics that detail some of the coping strategies officers use as a means of offsetting the threat of technological observation to engage in personally beneficial activities.
Perhaps the most interesting aspect of both icing and call stretching as coping mechanisms for dealing with technology is the driving motivation fueling their increased use by the department’s officers. Officer S went into considerable detail about his personal opinions as to why the use of these strategies is becoming a common practice among officers, telling me:

“…that these are some of the only ways officers can ‘offset’ some of the ‘injustices’ reinforced and utilized by department higher ups (like those who issue IS reports on officers just to have ‘dirt’ on them) against us. So, we can circumvent this to an extent by using our discretion during calls…”

I mention that I thought he adhered to the belief that officers in the department lack a lot of freedom in terms of exercising their discretion, to which he replies, ‘Officers might not be able to control what we are told to do, or precisely how we are able to go about doing it. But as officers we can control how much we do.’ He says that this is why the department, in his opinion, is such a ‘reactive and not ‘proactive’ example of policing.

The people Officer S refers to as ‘disgruntled officers’ can always choose to lengthen the span of their active calls by not clearing them right away after processing them [call stretching]. Or, they can choose not to be proactive by targeting violations in between dispatch calls [icing as passive policing].”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012)

This potential for a temporary *invisibility* of officers from surveillance was not a
situation available to Foucault’s prisoners. Nor was the ability for a prisoner to use their personal knowledge of a superior as a means of offsetting the threat of observation. As a working theoretical model, the panopticon presents as a strong dynamic capable of influencing behavioral modification. As an officer’s initial reservations or worries about being watched by the department’s technology or superiors begins to wane and comprises another reality of the job, the original influential power exerted by the system appears to dramatically decrease.

As is evident in both the tactics of icing and call stretching, officers are able to capitalize on their “human advantage” and offset the threat of observational monitoring by superiors.

Officers Outside the Panopticon: Superior Characteristics and Threat Assessment

In addition to being able to benefit from the myopic blindness of the technology, Officer S was seen to personally assess and weigh the superior’s managerial tendencies when gauging the true threat he might be facing on a particular shift. In order to outsmart the system and prevent a true functioning of panopticism, it was necessary for Officer S to outsmart the superior behind the technology. As the data presented will show, Officer S was able to separate commanders or sergeants who might actually be watching him closely from those who were more likely to be quite lax and not notice instances of passive policing tactics.

A true divergence from panopticism is seen in instances where superior surveillance of officers failed to “instill a belief that the very presence of [the potential for observation]
would result in a virtual conformance to authority: in short, that being caught red-handed would lead to punishment.” (Kietzmann & Angell 2010: 135). The data presented documents how Officer S’ personal knowledge of the superior doing the monitoring on a particular shift decreased the intimidation of observation. It should be noted that the Commander heading the shifts from which the following data was taken was the same in all cases, resulting in similar observations across this particular span of time.

**DATA CLUSTER: Officer Knowledge of Superiors as an Eliminator of Panoptic Threat**

“Officer S proceeds down 2 or 3 streets until he reaches a ‘back alley’ of sorts behind [a local school]. He does a ‘U’-turn until he secures the cruiser in a position facing the student parking lot, which faces the back of a local club. This is his usual ‘ice spot’ where he ‘hangs out’ in-between responding to radio calls.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/2012)

“At this point, Officer S has finished writing up the report in between talking to me, and he continues to remain parked in the student parking lot area until or unless he receives another call from dispatch.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/2012)

‘Officer S says he doesn’t typically ‘go after’ or ‘seek out’ violations like he used to ‘back in the day’. He says he would not be happy if he were to be partnered up with a newly incorporated officer since, after so many years on the force, he is generally content to exercise ‘more lenient police discretion’ whenever it is possible.’

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/2012)

“Officer S says that he still technically has to write up the report of what just happened anyway, so he will go
ahead and let another officer patrolling the area take care of the second ‘smash and grab. [Vehicular break in and theft]’

He returns the cruiser to the Howard University parking lot to log the second report, which will save him time in the long run since he won’t have to worry about filing it upon the conclusion of his shift.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 1/27/2012)

“Officer S then tells the principal [of the school where laptops were stolen] that he will begin filing the official police report from the car out front of the building and wait there until the officer from Crime Scene is able to come to process additional information about the theft.

I am somewhat surprised that Officer S does not want to further process the scene for details; opting instead to ‘hang out in the car’ until the other detective arrives.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/3/2012)

“I ask Officer S if he still needs to file a report on the findings from the ‘shot spotters’ [devices that detect sounds similar to gunshots and automatically alert the department] since it was the construction nearby that obviously was the source of the alarm. Officer S frowns in frustration when he confirms that he still must do a report anyway.

Officer S circles back to the cul-de-sac by the local school’s parking lot and parks the cruiser as he brings up the reporting screen to file the findings. This ends up being an effective way for him to ‘save time’ by ‘icing’ and filing the report before the end of his shift.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/10/2012)

“Another call comes through over the radio, and I
cannot help but think ‘finally!’ I look at the clock and realize that it has been almost 2 hours since the last radio call; meaning that the same amount of time has consisted of Officer S and I doing pretty much nothing except sitting in the ‘icing’ parking lot watching Air Emergency episodes on the cruiser computer.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/10/2012)

“By the time Officer S and I leave the scene, it is almost the end of Officer S’s shift. When he returns to his ‘ice unit’ area, he brings up the reporting screen to file the findings from the accidents in hopes that he can complete it quickly so he won’t have to spend extra time completing it back at the station.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/10/2012)

Officer S’ personal understanding of this particular Commander on duty during these eight instances enabled Officer S to benefit from his degree of cumulative insignificance. This was made possible by his knowledge of the superior’s characteristic leniency in utilizing surveillance measures, as well as the presence of other officers on active duty during the shifts that served to distract attention away from his own passivity.

Although there is technically nothing wrong with an officer using icing, which arguably does contribute to some degree to police visibility in and of itself, one can’t help but wonder whether a superior would be dismayed to learn of the degree of passive policing appearing to take place on a typical shift. This is an especially valid question in light of the fact that this particular department’s superiors appeared to pride themselves on it promoting a characteristically proactive philosophy and seemed to believe that their officers believed in acting in accordance with that mission.
Another departure from traditional panoptic observation is seen when officers have access to knowing which superiors are on duty through the use of department technology. I was made aware of this fact one day when the following event transpired:

“Officer S switched to another screen on the computer that listed all of the Sergeants currently on duty for the shift. I am somewhat surprised to see that there are 8 listed.

He tells me that it is common for there to be so many on duty at once. He says it bothers him because everyone knows that the role of Sergeants is essentially a ‘desk job’; requiring them to be at their desks rather than on active patrol.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/3/2012)

This outlines an important factor of officers taking advantage of the technology to aid in making decisions about how they chose to go about performing work tasks. In many ways, an officer’s access to information about superiors heading their shifts allows for the reverse intention of panoptic surveillance to occur. This is referred to in other studies as “inverted panopticism” which aims to show how “the many” are capable of observing “the few” (Green, 1999; Lim, 2007; see also Mathiesen, 1997). In the context of my own observations, these scenarios show how the officers who arguably constitute “the many” are able to flip their role as the observed and instead view superiors -“the few”.

Officers Outside the Panopticon: Part II Review
The first tactic of officer “icing” indicates that surveillance technology, in and of itself, is not fully capable of promoting proactive policing through a panoptic threat of observation by superiors. Whereas the first section detailed cases where officers were basically “intimidated” into changing their behaviors or application of discretion, the methods used by officers in this section show how this intimidation is offset by the shortcomings of current technology.

Similarly, the tactic of “call stretching” detailed how officers further benefitted from surveillance pitfalls by using it to outsmart the superiors behind the technology. By prolonging the time in-between clearing calls, officers were able to appear as though they were still actively processing cases. This allowed their workloads to be significantly reduced throughout the course of a shift. Observing superiors monitoring activity from the headquarters would have no way of knowing that officers were doing anything other than taking down information or interviewing individuals at the scene.

Some of the motivations behind the creation and use of these officer tactics were alluded to by Officer S. His statement that officers employ such methods to “get back at superiors” for “the injustices” experienced by officers implies that the department's growing use of technology as a managerial tool has lead to decreased rapport among superiors and officers. This is potentially associated with the fact that technology has reduced the need for superiors to engage in personal or active management techniques. Data addressing workplace dynamics and how rank affects an officer's regard for surveillance technology will be addressed in more detail in the final section of the study.

The final instances detailing how Officer S was able to rely upon his personal knowledge of the superior heading a shift to gauge the severity of observational threat were
also significant. Although the emphasis of the study is upon the panoptic influence of technology and the threat produced by superiors' use of surveillance, the examples of Officer S relying upon his own perceptions of individual superiors illustrate how the pitfalls of technology are further exaggerated when paired with an officer's awareness of a superior's management style. The final section examines the role of personal factors in technology to a more intensive degree; investigating the ways in which officer rank or superior status serve to impact individual perceptions of the role and functionality of police technology.
“While it is a safe bet that our collective passion for social transparency and the egalitarian distribution of knowledge will never find true fulfillment in the proliferation of surveillance, the desire for surveillance has had a paradoxical side effect: inexorably transforming the world, not into the stage immortalized by Shakespeare, but into a real time social psychology experiment in which we are increasingly both test subjects and detached clinical observers.”

(Pecora 2002:358)

This third and final data section will revisit themes introduced in the previous two by analyzing them in the context of officer rank. The impact of rank upon an officer's regard for surveillance technology and the fostering of personal relationships among superiors and officers are also addressed. Opinions from both high and low ranking officers are included to provide differing perspectives of the technology of policing. It is argued that the department's instatement of technology has converted it to a rather impersonal working environment where interactions among superiors and officers have drastically declined. This portion also offers insight into the motivations driving the creation of officer evasion tactics that were presented by the second section.

Officer Rank: Superior Opinions of Police Technology

During my interview with one of the Commanders of the district, I asked him to detail some of the positive and negative results seen by the department’s shift towards technology. He initially replied with an overwhelmingly positive regard for such measures, although later he did allude to some potential downsides:
“In terms of getting information from a managing standpoint, everything is so much quicker now-instantaneous, even. There is so much information, most police officers have blackberries and are connected to each other, the station and community at large. It is an overarching network.

In addition to being an internal network, it also extends outward so that coordination with authorities in neighboring areas is also possible. With respect to how these innovations impact individual officers, this is where I would say that some of the more negative opinions of it come into play.

Some officers are wary of the technology, because on top of it allowing for an active connection to the community, each other, and neighboring areas, it also infringes upon their personal privacy while on the job.

If an officer is parked somewhere for whatever reason, we will know about it. There was definitely a period of change and resistance that was seen when such technology, like the GPS tracking of cruisers, was implemented. This kind of surveillance of officers on patrol was instated recently- around a year and a half ago.”

(Commander A. Personal (Phone) Interview. 3/16/2012).

Here, the factor of rank and how it serves to influence the perception of the benefits associated with technology are documented. A high-ranking official, the Commander repeatedly insisted that the technological innovations seen by the department were positive. He praised the technology’s ability to make information available “instantaneously”, although he did reflect that by nature it “infringed upon the personal privacy” of individual officers to a degree (Joel, 2010). The latter statement appeared to be added on as an afterthought. It did not appear that the feeling of invasion felt by officers was seen to comprise a major concern to be addressed by superiors.
When I asked Commander A if technology had changed the process of managing officers in a day-to-day sense, he replied:

“In my opinion, technology has impacted management related roles at the department for the better. Now many tasks can be completed more quickly; in the past, if a change needed to be made to a report [I think of Officer S’ many emails from superiors requesting report edits that were sent from the station during his shifts] or something of that nature, you would need to physically schedule time to meet with the officer and have the change made.

Now, you can just send an email or do a quick edit and this can be done from the office. Or, for that matter, from home. I can sit at home and email out changes from there. That definitely was not possible in the past. Superiors are better able to help the people [of the community] by keeping officers out on the streets and not in a superior’s office.”

(Commander A. Personal (Phone) Interview. 3/16/2012).

Commander A regards technology's speediness and ability to reduce the need for face-to-face meetings with officers for things like reviewing or editing reports as being largely positive attributes. From an officer's standpoint, however, this might represent a potentially negative impact. This is especially the case when a superior's inability to spend time fostering positive working relationships with officers is taken into account.

The department's reliance upon the speed and ability of technology to keep officers “on the streets and out of the office” removes a majority of the need for officers and superiors to interact on any kind of personal or regular basis. This contributes to an impersonal department that furthers divides any pre-existing rifts between high and low-ranking officers.

Officer Rank: Lower-Ranking Officer Impressions of Superiors
Of the panoptic system, Bentham wrote that “it does not matter who exercises the power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, perhaps then his family, his friends, his visitors, even his servants.” (Bentham 1787: 45). This lends additional credibility to Officer S’ opinion that, more and more, superior roles seem to be awarded to individuals not because of their proven ability to exercise leadership among peers, but because of their ability to fulfill basic office-related or managerial functions:

“I ask Officer S how one would go about 'becoming a Lieutenant or a Sergeant', and he says that it’s really a matter of being a good 'test taker'.

I mention the ANC community meeting I had been to earlier in the week, where the new Lieutenant was introduced by a Sergeant- both of whom were there to serve as 'faces' for the department that night.

Without going into too much detail, Officer S says that this new Lieutenant is a good example of what he means by 'being a good test taker'.

He tells me the Lieutenant only has something like 3 years or so of street experience and yet now he is telling veteran officers [like Officer S] with much more experience and knowledge than this what to do on a daily basis.

He doesn’t seem too keen on the Sergeant who had introduced him, either- saying that he also isn’t someone who has a ton of day to day experience under his belt.”

(Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 2/3/2012)

Officer S might agree that an individual's occupation of a high-ranking position is not indicative of their high-level of positive regard or respect by officers in the department. Like Bentham’s suggestion that the panoptic machine might be manned by anyone, Officer
S’ implies that high-ranking police positions are typically occupied by individuals who have earned it because of their proven abilities as a test taker. This substantially impacts a superior’s ability to gain the respect of the officers they manage. In addition, the tone of this allusion echoes the impersonal and detached aura of the department that appears to be stemming from the technological management tools that are being relied upon by modern police departments.

The officials in the examples of Officer S’ appear to command a low level of personal regard (at least from Officer S). The technological tools the official uses on a daily basis to oversee officers are not conducive to the building of positive relationships between himself and lower ranking officers. In fact, such technology arguably constitutes a kind of functional extension of the superior official himself. The tool of panoptic surveillance available to superiors as a management tactic allows them to monitor officers in a way that is both remote and largely impersonal. The superior, like the technology, is utterly distanced and simultaneously distancing from officers whenever he chooses to manage through technological -and not personal- methods. This is perhaps best emphasized by Foucault’s statement that the panopticon (or here, the technology) is a way of making power relations function (through) a function (Foucault 1979). Panoptic monitoring technology used by superiors to control and manage their subordinates ensures that this occurs in a way that is inherently different from the management paradigm of the past that instead relied upon more personal methods.

Officer Rank: The Impact of Surveillance Technology on Superior-Officer Relationships

59
When I asked Commander A if he felt that increased technology had lent itself to the development of improved working relationships, he responded that:

“Technology has been tremendously helpful in my opinion overall. The department now has access to information and activities that were previously not accessible; like anonymous texting of crime tips, not to mention emails and list servs. It increases awareness among the community, and helps us to gauge potential problem areas, or areas that where we are doing well.

We are also able to generate and receive instantaneous responses. I don’t know if you noticed while you [me] were subscribed to the list serv, but I respond personally whenever I can to feeds [posts by the community or e-mails from civilians]. This extends to me a certain degree of interaction with the community.

However, there is a down side. These interactions are obviously not face to face. Like the challenge for the department to maintain positive personal relationships with officers.

Admittedly, we don’t see face to face [with officers] as much as we did prior to the tech innovations—superiors also don’t get as many opportunities to be out and about and seen by community members.”

(Commander A. Personal (Phone) Interview. 3/16/2012).

Commander A appeared to be pleased with the department’s ability to extend networks into the community and among officers through the help of technological innovations. He did, however, add that such extensions manage personal relationships despite the technology being impersonal by nature. These innovations convert the process of personal relationship building into a task to be completed by technological, functional tools. This is confirmed by Commander A’s comment that superiors and officers are not
“meeting face to face as much” as they did prior to the newer technological innovations. As such, a debate as to whether the lessening degree of personal interactions between officers is justified by their superior’s increased ability to monitor and inspire proactivity among them is inevitable.

Officer Rank: Part III Review

This section used data excerpts from personal interviews with both high and low ranking officers to assess how rank and status influenced their opinions of technology. As was made clear by the interview with Commander A, superior officials appear to exude a much more positive regard for technology. This was supported by Commander A’s praise of the speed and efficiency with which policing technology was seen to operate. He pointed to its ability to keep officers “on the streets” and “out of his office” as one of its main contributions to a proactive policing environment.

Officer S, on the other hand, expressed an opposing opinion for much of the technology. Data from previous examples confirm his opinion as being representative of the sentiments of other lower-ranking officers as well. The picture of department leadership painted by Officer S’ comments in this section suggest that the decline of personal interactions with superiors on a regular basis has resulted in a growing rift between department officials and lower-ranking officers. The extent to which Officer S and Commander A’s opinions of technology differed, and their reasoning used to justify their positions, lends evidence to this fact.
Chapter 5: Rise of the Machines- The Advent of the Technological PanCOPticon

“I’m just here to watch the Titanic sink. I have a little more than 10 years before retirement, and I think I’ll be on my way out just in time to see it. The department, the way it’s going…it’ll be sinking by then.”

(Officer S. Castner, Kristin. Field Notes. 3/1/2012)

Surveillance technology arguably constitutes the new barrier dividing the “us” and “them” discussions of modern policing. Technology has successfully redefined this dynamic and has acted as a catalyst in extending this divide to split the roles of high and low-ranking officers. Historically, theorists of policing implied that a division separated departments from the surrounding society; construing the two as being inherently different by their very nature. This study, however, has contributed to the literature that suggests a modern rift in policing is fueled by the advent of departmental technology, surveillance and control.

To review, the first section sought to address the ways that superior ranking officers were seen to exert a panoptic view and/or influence over officers. Cases documenting the panoptic aspect of technological surveillance discussed how a superior's use of GPS technology granted them access to both the real time location and status of officers. These scenarios support the argument that such measures are beneficial from the standpoint of superiors, as they are provided with a proactive management tool with which they might promote a “more efficient” police force. Surveillance technology was seen to comprise a degree of threatening visibility so crucial to any panoptic system. Lower-ranking officers
were influenced to addend behaviors in the situations presented; arguably due to their awareness that a superior was privy to knowing their exact location, report and clearance times.

The second part of the study detailed those instances where a *reversal* of the panoptic trend transpired. The traditional functioning of police surveillance recorded by the first section was subsequently observed to fall apart under the circumstances of the cases discussed. Here, the myopic nature of police surveillance technology was highlighted in addition to its one-dimensional view of officer activity. The tactics of icing and call stretching were documented by conversations with Officer S, and were of particular significance due to their ability to be utilized by an officer despite his exposure to the threatening visibility of superiors. Thus, the original tendency of an officer to modify his behavior was essentially absent from these examples. The inability of a superior to command an influence over officers was largely attributed to current pitfalls of surveillance technology, as well as its inability to render a holistic view to those relying upon it.

What an officer was actually *doing* at a location was not immediately apparent- nor accessible- to superiors solely from their access to an officer’s GPS depiction on a computer screen. This became more significant in light of the fact that the “observing eye” of the original conception of the panopticon was a *human* one. Not unlike the observations of Zizek contained within his book on lateral surveillance, it appears as though the appeal of seeing with one’s own eyes (in this case, superiors’) rather than a lateral and detached monitoring of worker activities presents the more efficient management technique (Zizek, 1999; see also Dirsmith, Fischer & Samuel, 2005 and Froud, Williams, Haslam, Johal, &
Williams, 1998). How reliable -or perceptive- a technological eye proves to be in comparison to that of a superior’s becomes a topic of growing importance in future research.

Despite recent advances that permit a more detailed view of officer activity, the facts remain that “police tasks at the lower level are usually ill-defined and accomplished in areas of low visibility” and that officers are often “dispatched in ways that bypass a formal chain of command where control over work resides largely in the hands of those who perform it.” (Van Maanen 1983: 277). This again confirms the inability of surveillance technology to capture the true nature of officer action. Previously shown to be beneficial to officers by permitting them a degree of invisibility, this shortcoming was further made possible by the herd dynamic embodied by the nature of the GPS system. The relaying of officers as a barrage of GPS icons is representative of what other studies might point to as a “hidden effect” of an imperfect technology; ultimately contributing to the decreasing significance of any one officer’s presence (Arnold, 1998; Cooper, 1998; see also Ezzamel, Willmott & Worthington, 2004).

It was asserted in portions of both section one and two that it is the threat of personal and not technological surveillance by a superior that enables him to exercise a panoptic influence over officers. Personal surveillance measures used by superiors were seen to equip them with a more thorough and holistic influence over officer action and behavior. Although the primary motivation of the second section was to show where a panoptic component of police technology was seen to fall short, it also outlined those
instances where its functionality occurred because of the threat of personal monitoring by a strict official.

It was suggested by the study that the most severe delineation of groups in modern policing arguably exists within departments and not between officers and the society at large. The impact of panopticism presented by cases included in section one detailed how the themes of control and surveillance have infiltrated into managerial techniques used by superiors on officers. This constitutes a shift in the historical aim of police to achieve social control to one that emphasizes employee tracking, deterrence and accountability. Leman-Langlois statement comes to mind, reflecting that “it is often the police themselves who could become the tools of automated surveillance rather than the other way around.” (Leman Langlois 2002: 53). Despite the department's praise of police technology as being conducive to a proactive philosophy, it appears that officers are more likely to be constrained by the technology's format or use it to disguise largely passive policing tactics.

Striking a balance between the function and functionality of police technology is both helpful and necessary. Data presented by the study suggest that equilibrium between the two does not yet exist. Technology, at times, resembled a “shadow side” to a once very personal policing environment. The frustrations voiced by Officer S in the first section suggests that officers might harbor growing resentments for the department that seeks to “generate dirt” on them; adding to an endless “file of things they have done wrong”. The implication of increased monitoring and control tactics exercised by departments is directly opposed to the idea that –by doing so- a district is more likely to promote and contribute to a proactive force. Evidence of this was discussed in section
two, where it was the very technology that permitted an officer’s reactive and blatantly passive policing tactics.

The ability of technology to infiltrate the personal sphere of an officer was implied in section two by Officer Q. If there is any validity to this allegation, it would result in a further widening of police technology’s view into the activities of the personal lives of officers. In a definitional sense, this would be indicative of the “third generation panoptic surveillance” contained within the discourse portion of the study. This is reminiscent of Foucault’s assertion that panopticism leads to internalized discipline in the absence of overt force, or in this case, surveillance by the department.

Third generation surveillance technology is considered to be distinctive due to its tendency to result in a population “being convinced to police and spy on itself” (Kietzmann & Angell 2010:137). It is reflective of a monitoring technique that fully utilizes the benefits of spy technology; increasingly facilitated by the fact that “information systems and devices” have become regular staples in a majority of the population’s lives. As the author pointed out, this presents the potential for an area to be “substantially increased with respect to the area capable of being observed.” (2010: 136). Although the present use of such technological surveillance measures by police departments (and specifically, the district I shadowed) is unconfirmed, it raises an important question for future research.

In section three, instances from fieldnote data were presented and subsequently lend additional evidence to Johnson’s posit that increased levels of face-to-face interactions
among officers and superiors not only “increases the amount of actual supervision in the field”, but also the “potential to discover misconduct.” (Johnson 2007). These instances exposed a shift in the panoptic threat of surveillance as stemming from a technological to a personal source. A superior’s personal managing of officer activity enforcement, as opposed to limiting his knowledge of activities to what can be presented to him through the department’s technology, results in a lesser amount of time that the officer spends on non-job-related or passive tasks (Johnson 2007).

Written in 2007, Johnson reported in his own study of police departments that frequent impersonal forms of contact (e-mails sent during shifts, radio communication, and GPS surveillance from the official’s office) from supervisors to officers did not result in a higher incidence of proactive or efficient policing behaviors. To the contrary, he reports that such panoptic forms of behavior monitoring actually “tended to increase the amount of time that officers spent on personal business while on the job”. His account becomes important to discussions of whether the more recent trend of departments to decrease or substitute “personal surveillance” measures impacts the occurrences of what Johnson refers to as “workplace loafing”.

Also the case in instances within my own research, Johnson observed that superiors who “spent large amounts of time physically patrolling the beats they supervised, leading to frequent face to face contact with officers in the field, appeared to more readily influence officer behavior.” (Johnson 2007). This was confirmed on several occasions that transpired during my final ride-along session. The superior managing the shift that day, as I later learned, was reputed by officers as being “by the book” and rather strict. I noticed that
many of the tactics typically used by Officer S, such as call stretching and icing, were essentially absent for most of this last session- or at least noticeably modified to account for the “threat” of being “found out” by this particular official.

Johnson additionally observed that officers who were physically checked up on by superiors in the manner depicted by the above data were significantly more likely to resolve an incident with an arrest or more formal actions (Johnson 2007). The officer tactic of call stretching that I had seen officers use so many times before to erase the threat of panoptic surveillance comes to the fore yet again. Johnson reports that a superior’s personal supervision of officers in the field is seen to reduce the degree to which officers delayed returning to service to take more calls (Johnson 2007). As the instance reported from my own notes above would indicate, the appeal of passive call stretching became a much less attractive option to officers when the threat of personal surveillance by a superior was a reality.

There undoubtedly exist a large number of officials, like Commander A, who credit technological innovations as constituting a powerful new generation of policing. It is important, however, that departments take measures to ensure that such tools are catering to the realities of policing and not mandating that officers conform to suit the technology. As previously warned by Lyon, the ability of technology to permit the management of individuals from an increasing distance threatens to result in the “fading face and disappearing body” of workers from the standpoint of a superior (Lyon 2002: 244). Similar to the sentiments of Gumpert & Drucker, the reliance upon technological networks to manage personal and professional relationships often contributes to a
dissociation between individuals that threatens to damage the quality of a workplace (2001: 116; see also Pecora 2002).

If or until officers are actually “outdated” by the advent of technological policing measures, there remains a significant threat attached to the significant decrease in face-to-face interactions occurring among department officials and officers. Commander A perhaps unknowingly praised this aspect when he commented that it was convenient to be able to “edit reports from his computer at home” and simultaneously remove the need for personal interactions with officers. The possibility that this might shift Chadwick’s notion of department anonymity to officers of a department appeared to be acknowledged only as a passing afterthought. Although early theorists argued that a degree of detachment of departments from surrounding community members was beneficial, the same cannot be said of extending this dissociation among officers and superiors.

There are several implications suggested by the study of police technology. Its tendency to reduce the need for face-to-face interactions among officers is among one of the main concerns. Panoptic devices were additionally observed to reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number upon whom it is exercised. In this sense, technological tools could eventually stand to replace much of the need for officers and superiors alike. In terms of efficiency and depending upon how that term is defined, it appears that an increased ability of superiors to manage and monitor officers threatens to reduce the number of officials needed to fulfill shift duties.

It is not my intention to imply that the pitfalls I observed stemming from the
department’s increased use of technology were in any way consciously intended. I do believe, however, that the current decline of open conversations appearing to categorize the department requires that a broader spotlight be used to expose the current downfalls of these innovations. This is especially warranted given the rapid pace typical of technological advancement. Personally, I believe that the shortcomings of surveillance technology stand to be corrected by an increased focus upon interpersonal relationship building and managing methods, and not by a department’s growing reliance upon technology and surveillance to enforce desired policing practices.

At this point, an even more important question must be raised: what can or should departments do with technology? The reality appears to be that a computerization of tasks is not occurring so much because of the benefit to be gained through a conversion to a technological format, but because the task can be converted. The reality is that it is the people –officers- who are being conformed and molded to a one-dimensional format of a largely impersonal technology. Despite the justification for this –that such tools increase productivity- one author reiterates that “while the actual adoption and implementation of policing technology can be said to be proactive, actual police activity will be limited to reactive prevention: incident response designed to deter.” (Leman-Langlois 2002: 54). Technology as a tool is not yet capable of supplementing or complimenting every aspect of policing.

The answer to the question should be obvious: departments must rely more upon personal modeling than technology to cultivate a proactive policing environment. Policing is a field that has not only required but relied upon its ability to communicate
and network through personal relationships and connections in the past. Ironically, it is this very human factor that appears to be replaced by many modern technological initiatives. My own observations lead to me to wonder if the department was in process of being stripped of its personal element by pressuring officers to recreate the emotionless nature of police technology. I concur with Murphy, who stated that the surest way for a superior to elicit the best performance out of officers is for the official to be seen by his officers and for them to feel inspired to do as he does (Murphy, 2007). If the officer is increasingly less able to see his superiors, and vice versa, how is such an environment to occur?

Murphy also reflects that the true power of leading by personal example is the act of using the department's mission, vision and values as the “true north,” and living those in both “word and deed” (Murphy, 2007). Unless future innovations in technology are able to devise a way for this to occur through a computer system, the continuing need for department’s to also invest in the fostering of personal interactions and relationships among its officers and superiors is obvious.

In sum, the future of technology and its place within police departments ultimately still lies within human hands. This study has endeavored to contribute an additional account to those seeking to investigate the ways the non-personal realm of technology in a traditionally personal policing environment contains a potential to result in an “interruption and/or replacement of many interpersonal physical communications.” (Pica & Carsten 2004: 2) As Foucault reflected of panoptic surveillance, “it is a royal menagerie; the
animal replaced by man.” My own observations further extend this notion, suggesting that the policing of the police through surveillance technology might possibly herald a similar replacement of animal by man: where the animal is man and the man is technology (Foucault 1979).
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84


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