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"This is not America" – Cultural Mythscapes, Media Representation and the Anatomy of the Surveillance School in Australia

Emmeline Taylor

Abstract

Schools have exhibited a demonstrable predilection for surveillance technologies in recent years. Whilst much attention has been paid to the globalised diffusion of surveillance and security practices, in contrast, the ways in which artefacts of surveillance surface and take root unevenly internationally has not received much scholarly attention. Drawing on the media representation of emergent school surveillance technologies in Australia, this paper seeks to illuminate how distinctive cultural dynamics interplay with acceptability, reverence and rejection of surveillance apparatus in the educational context. Far from homogeneity in the manifestation of surveillance practices, the findings reveal that cultural context and specificity are central to understanding the materiality of surveillance apparatus and regimes.

Keywords: Surveillance, Schools, Education, Media, CCTV, GPS, Drug testing, RFID

Introduction

Despite the attention paid to the globalised diffusion of surveillance and security practices, it is curious that artefacts of surveillance have surfaced and taken root unevenly in schools internationally (Taylor, 2013). Whilst globalisation, and the information communication revolution, to which the surveillance age is irrevocably bound, have facilitated significant policy transfer, it is important to critically assess 'the ways in which local political cultures … serve to initiate, reshape, mediate or resist policy ideas and innovations' that transcend national boundaries (Jones and Newburn, 2006: 782). Some scholars have attended to the ways in which the politicization of surveillance can arbitrate its use (Fussey, 2007), but little

attention has been given to the ways in which acculturation influences the surveillance landscape in different contexts. It is precisely the divergence and unevenness of the introduction of surveillance technology in schools (in contrast to assemblage and homogeneity), and the distinct forms of experience and resistance that this generates, that concerns this paper. Drawing on the media representation of emergent school surveillance technologies in Australia, this paper seeks to illuminate how the distinctive 'mythscapes' of Australian cultural dynamics interplay with acceptability, reverence and rejection of surveillance apparatus in the education context.

The present study analyses the media depiction of surveillance practices in Australian schools to excavate clues regarding the cultural narrative of what surveillance is, how it operates and what it means for schoolchildren, schools and society. Despite the power of the media to shape, inform, reflect and instruct narratives pertaining to surveillance, 'empirical analyses of how news media frame surveillance practices and technologies are surprisingly limited' (Greenberg and Hier, 2009:462). Thus, this analysis seeks to reveal the multiple, and sometimes competing, narratives that are used to frame surveillance practices in education and provide 'insight into the political and definitional struggles that animate the policy dynamics of surveillance' (Greenberg and Hier, 2009: 462). Situating the analysis within the specific cultural context, the paper examines how, and why, different surveillance mechanisms flourish in some countries but not in others. There is a rich and diverse literature pertaining to the ways in which normative cultural values, and more specifically those relating to crime control and security mechanisms, are encoded into media representations. In approaching the 'the newspaper as cultural product' (Anderson, 1991: 33), this paper explores the symbiotic process whereby the media discourse is both shaped by prevailing cultural values and, in turn, provides different narratives and multiple frames through which

surveillance practices in education can be viewed and understood. As Hall (1980: 129) has outlined, the audience is not only the 'receiver' of media messages but also 'the source' and media texts must be viewed as part of 'the wider socio-cultural and political structure of which they are a differentiated part'.

This paper is organised into four key parts. First, a précised overview of the plethora of school surveillance technologies and practices is provided alongside some key indicators of the similarities and differences in the materiality of the Surveillance School internationally. The second section outlines the Australian mythologised cultural values and concepts encapsulated in 'The Australian Way of Life'. This is followed by details of the methodology utilised to analyse the media representation of school surveillance, before the paper turns, in the fourth section, to the findings. By shifting attention away from more typical and dominant discourses of surveillance that focus on security applications, and, instead, examining how they come to be invested with and represent specific cultural values, the paper reveals the more complex and ambiguous ways in which the sociocultural dynamics of schools and the society in which they are located animate and inhibit surveillance applications and regimes. Analysis is divided into two major narratives framing the use of surveillance in schools, namely; 'safety and security' and 'health and well-being'. The contribution of this paper is threefold; first, it offers insight into the extant and emergent use of surveillance technologies in schools in Australia which has not been explored hitherto; second, it outlines the media discourse around technologies of surveillance, and; third, it excavates the cultural setting of one country, highlighting the ways in which surveillance practices come to be understood and negotiated. More broadly, the paper provides an alternative reading to globalised depictions of surveillance that are universalising and despatialised by illuminating the cultural specificity through which surveillance regimes materialise; divergent and deviated.

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Heterogeneity and the Surveillance School

Surveillance is an inveterate feature of the modern school, but in recent years schools have emerged as 'institutional incubators' (Taylor, 2017: 69), propagating a rapacious growth in *technological* surveillance practices. The movements, bodies, thoughts, and actions of those assembled within the classroom walls are increasingly subject to routinized monitoring by imbrications of diverse surveillance mechanisms; organisational, structural and technological (Taylor, 2013). A plethora of new technologies are increasingly deployed to identify, verify, profile, sort, and track students. Software and technologies, including closed circuit television (CCTV), digital fingerprint scanners, global positioning systems (GPS), radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, learning analytics, online monitoring, health apps and wearable techs are just some of the apparatus being deployed to identify, profile, and track students (for examples, *see* Lupton and Gard, 2016; Rich, 2016; Taylor, 2012; Taylor, 2017a; Taylor, 2017b; Williamson, 2016). Moreover, the sophistication and potency of surveillance technologies have intensified as new narratives of health, enhanced learning, security and risk have wrapped around them, transporting them into the educational sphere as technological solutions to a broad range of societal issues, ranging from obesity to terrorism. Globally, schoolchildren are fast emerging as one of the most heavily surveilled non-criminal populations, but yet there has been remarkably little empirical research into this phenomenon.

In previous publications, I have outlined in detail the prevalence, use and objectives of the manifold surveillance technologies now routinely used in schools (Taylor, 2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2013, 2017a, 2017b), exploring how practices converge and coalesce to form the *Surveillance School*. In developing the Surveillance School as an ideal type, it was

recognised, however, that surveillance 'trends are often nuanced and idiosyncratic', and such a generalised and distilled account papers over the contextually and culturally specific proclivities (Taylor, 2013: 8-9). By way of furnishing this testimony of heterogeneity, the capture and harvest of data through personal and learning analytics, often masking latent surveillant attributes through gamification and pedagogical objectives, have been welcomed in some countries as a means of enhancing learning and fitness, whereas others have attempted to legislate against the commercialisation of student data. For example, in the US, *The Student Digital Privacy Act* was introduced in 2015 to prevent companies from selling/using data collected in the school context for profitable gain.

The use of radio frequency identification (RFID) systems has proven popular in Brazil, Japan and the USA (although there has been some high profile resistance such as Hernandez v. Northside Independent School District[1]), but has only been implemented in a few schools in England (Taylor, 2017a). On the other hand, English schools reflect the nation's love affair with CCTV saturating their schools with cameras reaching ratios of one camera for every five students (Big Brother Watch, 2012). Australia, the focus of this paper, continues to register notable resistance to visual surveillance in schools, but, in turn, appears to be less confronted, for example, by the introduction of randomised, suspicion-less drug testing in educational settings, as will be further explored.

[1] In 2012, John Jay High School in San Antonio, Texas introduced RFID tags for all students as part of their Student Locator Project. Fifteen-year-old student Andrea Hernandez refused to wear the RFID tag on grounds that it contravened her religious beliefs. As a result of her noncompliance with the program she was promptly suspended. As a supposed compromise, school representatives proposed that if Andrea and her family would agree to cease criticising the initiative they would provide her with a chip-less badge. However, her father argued that this would amount to tacit consent for the overall program, which continued to contravene the family's religious convictions. The case went to court where the judge ruled that Hernandez's refusal to wear the badge without the RFID chip undermined her claim that the school district was violating her religious freedom stating: 'Plaintiff 's objection to wearing the Smart ID badge without a chip is clearly a secular choice, rather than a religious concern.'

These are just a few instances of material divergence and deviation notable in international incarnations of the Surveillance School. In light of this, this paper seeks to expose the culturally specific influences that underpin the specific anatomy of the Surveillance School in one country, Australia, exploring how and why the manifestation of surveillance in this country differs from others. The paper examines how national cultural mythscapes, the socially constructed and imagined shared values and belief systems, can shape and reflect the appetite and tolerance for different mechanisms of surveillance.

In approaching the 'the newspaper as cultural product', Anderson (1991: 33) has highlighted its centrality to the development of a shared identity and common values (particularly in emerging colonies such as Australia), articulating how the reporting of news and affairs significant to the diaspora 'quite naturally, even apolitically, created an imagined community among a specific assemblage of fellow-readers' (Ibid.: 62). As such, the media was central to (re)creating an 'imagined community' in modern Australia (Anderson, 1991), thus rendering the shared values that it represents as an important site of analysis.

"The Australian Way of Life"; Cultural Mythscapes and National Values

"This is not America" affirms a newspaper article discussing whether schools should introduce CCTV, and the apropos title of this paper (The Warrnambool Standard, 2014). In this vein, some have argued that it is often easier to define Australian culture by that which is considered to be 'un-Australian', as the former chief of the Australian Defense Force, Peter Cosgrove asserted:

> Even though pundits and would-be pundits like me occasionally attempt to list our values and our national characteristics, Australian society is really best at defining them in the negative; by that I mean we all intuitively understand when some action has deeply offended our values or when some person has displayed an 'un-Australian' characteristic (cited in Greig, 2013: 249).

The drawing of parameters regarding what Australia is not, rather than what it is, perhaps reflects the liminality and plurality of modern Australian culture and the discomfort with ideologically-laden convictions of 'Australianness'.

National identity, particularly in countries that are still reeling from the despoliation of colonial settlement and the relegation and repression of endogenous knowledge (see Hountondji, 1997), such as Australia, remains a contested concept. Thirty years ago Rowse and Moran (1984: 229), rebutting the inclusiveness of Australian national identity, declared that the 'coherence that was once apparent in the "Australian Culture" has disintegrated', in part due to Indigenous peoples, women and new migrants rejecting complicity with definitions of an Australian culture that excluded them.

In some respects such 'defining in the negative' may have become the inverse of what Arthur Phillips, a literary critic, famously termed the 'cultural cringe'. Phillips used this to describe a peculiarly Australian inferiority complex stemming from geographical isolation, marginalisation and perceived inability to compete on the global cultural stage, but perhaps the veneration for other countries is giving way to the denunciation of developments that are distinctly 'un-Australian'. In the context of this paper, the hyper-securitization of school campuses provides just one example. It is thus argued that the cultural cringe has given way

to 'cultural conservation' and civic pride in the mythologised cultural praxis of Australia. Bell (2003: 75) has conceptualised a 'national mythscape', defined as 'the discursive realm, constructed by and through temporal and spatial dimensions, in which the myths of the nation are forged, transmitted, reconstructed and negotiated constantly'. Similarly, Price (2010: 453) has argued that 'foundations of national ideas and values are established through myth and highlight that which is considered natural and accepted or alien and excluded within a culture'. And so, although White declares that there is 'no real Australia waiting to be uncovered' and Bell (2003) cautions against perceptions of a 'singular, irreducible, national narrative', there are some mythologised core values that many Australians claim to subscribe to, and that are perceived as distinctly 'Australian'.

Greig (2013: 249) asserts that the following concepts often furnish descriptions of The Australian Way of Life (TAWOL); egalitarianism and the right to a 'fair go', mateship, sympathy for the underdog, straight talking, being laid back and informal. A love of sports and the outdoors could further be added to this. Furthermore, such mythologised values are often found in concepts such as the 'tall poppy' syndrome and reflected in cultural heroes that come to symbolise them. For example, egalitarianism often translates into an anti-authoritarian spirit, symbolised by national heroes such as Ned Kelly (Seal, 2002). Furthermore, the ANZAC Legend, a powerful mythology surrounding Australian military history and national identity, has come to symbolise and represent a unique national character based on the qualities of 'mateship, larrikinism, courage, endurance and sacrifice' (Hawkins, 2013: 2). Donoghue and Tranter (2014: n.p.) argue that the 'Anzacs' (an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) have become 'by far the most influential historical figures in relation to Australian identity' and a symbolic 'foundation element of the national narrative'. It is these national mythscapes and praxes that are drawn upon to examine how

they are mediated through cultural products such as print media and shape the adoption and rejection of surveillance practices in Australian schools.

Methodology

Content analysis has a rich history in the social sciences and has been used widely as a research technique. Titsscher et al. (2000: 55) have identified it as 'the longest established method of text analysis among the set of empirical methods of social investigation'. In its broadest sense, it has been defined as 'the study of recorded human communications' (Babbie, 2001: 304) and has gained prominence with the expansion of mass communication. Content analysis is 'essentially a coding operation' (2001: 309) that enables the researcher to categorise raw data and analyse in a broader context. The method adopted for the present study was a classical content analysis, adopting a largely quantitative approach to ascertain the occurrence, frequency and meaning of key words and themes. Newspaper articles relating to surveillance technologies in Australian schools published during the past five years (between 1st August 2010 to 31st July 2015 inclusive) were accessed using the online database Factiva, a news database of international, national and regional newspapers from over 200 countries. The key search strings in Table. 1 were input to identify and extract the news stories.

[TABLE 1. About here]

After narrowing down to the relevant articles by excluding those less than 100 words in length, those printed in non-mainstream outlets (such as industry websites), those not relating to surveillance in schools, and removing duplicates (most newspapers are syndicated across

several states and so duplicates were plentiful), 265 relevant articles remained, the majority of which, 176 (66%) focused on CCTV in schools (Table. 2).

[TABLE 2. About here]

A coding instrument was developed in Microsoft Excel to capture key features of each story. This included: the specific surveillance technology being discussed (e.g. CCTV, GPS, RFID etc.), the nature of the story (e.g. reporting on a crime, health issue), key concepts (e.g. privacy, civil liberties), the explicit objective of the technology (e.g. improving attendance, crime control, health etc.), which stakeholders were consulted as part of the story and how the story was framed. The author and three research assistants[2] coded each of the news articles, discussing any anomalies as they arose, and refining the coding instrument as required. Obtaining agreement, or establishing inter-rater reliability, is essential in order to establish the validity of a coding scheme (see Cohen, 1960, for a discussion of establishing agreement). The analysis provided insight into the salient features of news reporting on surveillance in schools, and thereby enabled inferences to be drawn regarding the readership's decoding of stories. Hier et al. (2007: 733) have highlighted how the media shapes public opinion about CCTV by constructing and presenting the 'symbols, myths and images that embody and represent social problems' in tandem with moralizing discourses that serve to legitimate surveillance (Hier et al, 2007: 733). The findings presented in this paper focus on the media representation of CCTV, drug testing, GPS and RFID in Australian schools.

Findings: The Anatomy of the Surveillance School in Australia

[2] The author would like to thank Benjamin Caluzzi, Judy Kuo and Emma Shinozaki-Langridge for their help and assistance in collating the data.

The strings of search terms outlined in the methodology (Table 1) elicited 265 relevant articles that were categorised into seven different types of surveillance technology as outlined in Table 2. Crossing these technological developments were themes associated with the desirability, reverence or resistance to their use in schools. The two major narratives framing the use of surveillance in schools extracted from the analysis were; safety and security and health and well-being, although there was some overlap between these categorisations. The following analysis is thus organised into these themes to explicate how Australian culture shapes how, and why, some surveillance technologies are uncritically accepted and others are problematized.

Safety and Security

Two-thirds (n=176) of the news stories related to CCTV. Of these, 53 (30%) were reporting on an incident relating to a school in which footage had been captured. The stories either stated that police were investigating CCTV footage, footage had been released (e.g. 'Can you Identify this Man?', *The Queensland Times*, 02/08/2012) or the story was reporting that an individual or group had been identified by using CCTV footage (e.g. 'Two Teens Caught After Alleged School Arson', Leonard, 15/08/2012). The behaviours and events that these stories related to are presented in Table 3. Vandalism (n=15), violence, both actual and threatened (n=10), unlawful entry (n=8) and arson (n=8) were the main incidents that CCTV was used to investigate. Animal abuse (n=7), usually in the form of violent attacks on school pets including alpacas and chickens were also covered, although some of these stories related to the same event. Although these stories did not present any particular angle regarding the use of CCTV, its use as a technology to aide crime control is clearly inferred, and as such this

could provide a latent function of cementing the perception that CCTV is an effective crime control solution. For example, headlines such as 'School now safe and secure' (*Canterbury Bankstown Express*, 09/04/2013) following the introduction of CCTV (and fencing) evokes this perception. There were no stories, for example, stating that CCTV did not capture footage of interest, or reporting that the CCTV was unable to gain a clear image of assailants. This finding does support suggestions that the role of CCTV has shifted from being perceived as a crime deterrent to an 'after the event forensic tool to aide investigations' (Taylor and Gill, 2014: 713).

[TABLE 3. About here]

There were 63 newspaper articles in which CCTV was announced as having been installed or planned for the near future (a further 18 outlined calls for CCTV but there was no current intention apparent that these requests were going to be met). Of these, 20 related to funding from the *Secure Schools Program* (now the *Schools Security Programme*), launched in 2007 to provide 'non-recurrent funding for security infrastructure, such as closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems, lighting and fences, and for the cost of employing security guards'. Since 2007 the Programme has provided $35 million for security measures in 126 projects at 76 government and non-government schools and preschools. The allocation of funding prioritised government and non–government schools 'assessed as being at risk of attack, harassment or violence stemming from racial or religious intolerance' (Attorney-General's Department, 2015). The 2014-2015 scheme, providing $18 million of funding to eligible school, generated numerous news stories. There was a clear presumption in all 20 publications that CCTV was the *de facto* security mechanism but it was not apparent exactly how CCTV would safeguard against racially-motivated violent attacks. Similar to the state-

sponsored roll-out of public CCTV cameras in the UK (Coleman, 2004), the Australian *Secure Schools Program* has pushed a federal agenda to install CCTV in schools. Reflecting the 'surveillance creep' that often accompanies technologies such as CCTV, following the *Schools Security Programme*, there was a perceptible shift in the use of CCTV, as one article outlined:

> They had criminals, vandals and terrorists in their sights - but surveillance cameras at schools have actually stopped playground bullies in their tracks. (McDougall and Danks, 2012).

The story went on to outline that although the cameras were 'meant to protect school property after hours' the schools were now 'using video footage to root out troublemakers, thieves and thugs among their students' (Ibid). This function creep was not problematized in the article but rather CCTV was presented as delivering numerous supplementary benefits; a technology that could remedy a spectrum of societal problems, ranging from terrorism to bullying.

Largely, stories relating to CCTV as a crime and security aide depicted it as ordinary and benign. There was little discernable critical engagement with whether CCTV was effective or whether it ushered in unintended consequences when used in the school environment. There were, however, 24 stories that that offered opinions on the use of CCTV relating, in particular, to views on its effectiveness in meeting the objectives it had been installed to address. Just four of these were coded as being overtly positive; two of these were reader's letters, one was an editorial and another focused on the claims of a principal 'with 59 eyes' (CCTV cameras) who stated that since the introduction of CCTV, bullying had fallen by 70

per cent and that the cameras had 'had quite a profound impact […] There is no vandalism in this school any more, there is no graffiti in this school any more' (cited in McClellan, 2012).

The readers' letters, although overall calling for CCTV, were perceptibly moderated in their assertion that CCTV should be installed in schools. One was impelled by ongoing vandalism and only deemed 'recording devices in all schools throughout Australia' appropriate if 'activated after hours by motion and other disturbances' (cited in *The Cairns Post*, 29/01/2013). Another reader was also cautious in the uncritical appropriation of CCTV, despite aggrandizing its capabilities, stating, 'I abhor the idea of Big Brother, but […] there is little doubt that the use of CCTV is an important step in a direction which will ultimately save lives' (cited in McDougall, *The Daily Telegraph*, 29/03/2012). The editorial entitled 'Film bullies to halt scourge' (The Advertiser, 09/11/2010) asserts that 'there would be much to be gained from the strictly controlled and highly regulated use of CCTV in schools', but is similarly reticent, adding, only 'when the parents of a school have determined collectively the minor invasion of privacy would [be preferable to] the physical and psychological trauma' of bullying. These four pieces (three on bullying and one on vandalism), being the only explicit positive viewpoints on school CCTV reveal some of the cultural aspects of Australian society. CCTV in these instances can be seen to uphold the ethos of anti-authoritarian and the right to a 'fair go'; to be able to go about one's business without undue interference or 'stickybeaking' into one's affairs. However, the rejection of CCTV is flipped to acceptance if its purpose is to protect the underdog; in the above case targets of bullying.

There were ten stories that were coded as being overtly negative in terms of the use of CCTV in schools. Two were opinion pieces; one by the former editor of *The Age* and one by the present author published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Author, 2012). Questioning the

deterrent capacity of CCTV, the editor, writing in response to Victorian school principals calling for CCTV in all school foyers to protect teachers from aggressive parents, states:

> Video will not help head off conflict, it will only assist in the aftermath. And, in the long run, any skills school heads have in defusing difficult situations may diminish if they increasingly turn to technology to deal with difficult situations […] technology was supposed to free us, wasn't it? Instead it's enslaving us, making us more insular and less capable of normal human interaction […] modern technology is increasingly the problem, not the solution. (Guthrie, 15/09/2013)

There were four stories that alluded to the hyper-securitisation of schools, using terminology such as 'Fort Knox, 'enclosed fortresses' and environments where students are 'made to feel like prisoners' ('Cut off from community', *Darwin Palmerston Sun*, 04/12/2013). Of interest is that such fortification is considered to be symptomatic of US-style security as illustrated in the three excerpts below:

> While Australian schools have introduced "lockdown" drills over the past decade […] security remains relatively light compared with the US and Britain. Schools in those countries are often entirely fenced in, with the buildings locked during the day, while security equipment includes CCTV and even metal detectors ('Teachers, parents dismiss safety clampdown', *The Australian*, Box, 2012).

> We should be looking at other measures to curb threatening behaviour towards teachers, such as better resourced schools and improved training in conflict resolution for principals, teachers and other staff. This is not America. ('As if the teaching profession wasn't beset enough', *The Warrnambool Standard*, 2014).

> [The] Education Minister […] says "I'd have some concerns about the Americanisation of our schooling system"' ('Schools don't need CCTV, metal detectors', *ABC News*[3], 2011).

CCTV and the securitization of spaces, including schools, are represented in these media stories as symptomatic of American culture, and British culture to a lesser extent. The rejection of the cultural artifact of the surveillance camera, and all that it represents can be perceived as a dismissal of policy transfer from the US to Australia. The use of CCTV in schools is deemed as unsettling a number of mythologized national cultural values, not least the ability to discuss problems and tackle them head on rather than defer to techno-solutions. Rather than the cultural cringe identified by Arthur Phillips, these stories represent cultural conservation – a rejection of influences that are perceived as being distinctly un-Australian.

Health and Well-Being

Australia is a sporting nation, and Australians often suggest that 'sporting heroes' reflect their national identity (Cashman, 1995; Tranter and Donoghue, 2015) and as such physical health is held in particularly high regard. It is argued that this culturally defining characteristic underpins the acceptance of what could be considered, were there to be a scale, some of the most invasive school surveillance technologies; RFID and GPS tracking devices and the randomised mandatory drug testing of schoolchildren by schools.

[3] Text-based *ABC News* stories that were published online were included in the sample, reflecting the flows that exist between online, print and television news reporting and how each can serve to further cement the other.

There were 18 stories that related to RFID or GPS tracking of schoolchildren. Some of the stories related to parents using GPS to 'keep tabs' on their children (e.g. 'Parents play Big Brother', *Sunday Times*, Thom, 2011).[4] Interestingly the sentiment in these stories was largely negative, as the title conveys, largely because it 'could cross the boundaries of trust between parent and child' ('GPS technology lets parents track children', *The West Australian*, Burke, 2012). In contrast, those articles that reported on GPS and RFID being used by schools to promote sports, physical activity and health were far more positively framed. One story outlined that 'at least 30' schools were taking part in a study endorsed by the state of Victoria's Health and Transport departments to measure physical activity amongst teenagers. The schoolchildren would be 'fitted with GPS tracking devices' and have their height, weight and waist measurements recorded as part of the study. The story was framed around health and fitness, stating that 'one in three adolescents is now regarded as overweight or obese' ('Sky eye tracks kids on the go', *Herald Sun*, Hosking, 2014). Similarly, another story entitled 'Study to help kids fight obesity' reported on 'pioneering research' in which 'young children at child care are being fitted with accelerometers and GPS devices'. The title of the article clearly articulates the uncritical stance adopted and the acceptance of surveillance practices if they are premised on health.

GPS is also being used to track schoolchildren in a bid to tackle truancy, and by extension prevent young people from becoming involved in deviant behaviour. One story provided an overview of a mobile phone app 'MGM Pinpoint'. The company MGM Wireless, it is outlined, was already providing approximately 1000 schools across Australia with an SMS system that sent automated messages to parents about their child's absences. MGM Pinpoint

[4] Although these stories didn't relate directly to school-led initiatives they were kept in the sample as they related to the tracking of schoolchildren, their journeys to and from school, and presented an interesting juxtaposition highlighting the context-specific acceptance or rejection of surveillance technologies.

extended this to include GPS tracking whereby 'parents receive an SMS alert about the absence and a link to a Google map showing the location of the student at that time […] For an extra cost principals can receive a map showing the location of every student with an unexplained absence that day' ('Nowhere to hide if you're not at school', *Daily Telegraph*, Danks, 2013). While the story does mention the views of a spokesperson from the Federation of Parents and Citizens of NSW who raises 'privacy issues', the story is a largely descriptive account of a technological fix to the issue of truancy. These stories represent what Lupton (2014) describes as a 'techno-utopic' discourse whereby new technologies are presented as technological fixes to societal issues, in this case obesity and related health issues.

The use of drug testing in schools, was a contested issue, and similar to CCTV, polarised opinion. It was the focus of 34 newspaper articles over the 5-year period, mainly stemming from the announcement that a Queensland private school with 880 students intended to begin randomly testing students in 2012, a move supported by the Queensland Education Minister (although it was asserted that there was no intention to roll it out to public schools). At the beginning of each term students would be selected at random and required to provide a urine and saliva sample for testing. Relating to policy transfer above, it was reported that the principal instigating the program had 'recently returned from a fact-finding tour of the United States' ('Concern over school's decision to drug test students', *ABC News*, Lewis, 2012). One story claimed that students were supportive of the initiative with 'members of the school's rugby and basketball team volunteering to be the first to be tested' ('Drugs tests backed', *The Gold Coast Bulletin*, Stojceska, 09/08/2012).

The concerns represented in the news coverage focused on what would happen to the information should a student test positive, the reliability of the testing equipment and possible false positives, the potential for the fear of drug testing to result in drug-using students to disengage from school, and unease that school drug testing is being pushed by commercial outfits eager to tap into a lucrative market. There was concern about students becoming criminalized should they test positive for drugs (and further concern that the test would be inaccurate). The private school which sparked the media debate about drug testing in Australian schools was located in the state of Queensland which has a *School-Based Policing Program; '*a joint initiative between the Queensland Police Service and Education Queensland ... to establish positive relationships between police and the secondary school community' (Queensland Police, 2015). The introduction of police personnel in schools forges a direct link between schools and the criminal justice system. Furthermore, 'behaviours that would once have been dealt with internally are passed on to the police and are more likely to result in arrest, and minor transgressions are increasingly criminalised' (Taylor, 2013: 27). This sentiment was reflected in the newspaper coverage with some lamenting that 'what they thought was an institution that was there to help them, is in fact becoming part of a prosecuting authority' (cited in *ABC News*, 'fears school drug tests may spark legal minefield', 2012). Lyon (2003) suggests that the underlying reasons for surveillance can be situated along a 'continuum from care to control', arguing that 'some element of care and some element of control are nearly always present'. Similarly, Nelson and Garey (2009: 8) view the motivations of care and control 'in a dialectical relationship with each other, and not a simple dichotomous one'. There is certainly ambiguity regarding the motivation behind drug testing in schools, and the media representation represents this uncertainty. Where drug testing is seen as invasive and part of criminalizing process it undermines the value of a 'fair go', but where it is seen as responsibilising young people to

take care of their health and bodies it is more accepted. In the rhetoric of the latter, 'public safety and the safety of students who are potentially taking drugs overrides a student's right to privacy' ('Should students be drug tested?', *The Satellite*, 2015).

There was also a concern that school drug testing was emerging from a push by commercial enterprises to break into the lucrative school market. For example, a spokesperson from Drug and Alcohol Research training Australia stated: 'We have drug testing companies around this country that are making millions, millions of dollars … and they certainly want to get into schools. Its an untapped market for them' (cited in Lewis, 'Conern over school's decision to drug test students', 08/08/2012). The school surveillance economy is substantial and many companies offer their services under the guise of safeguarding young people. Once some schools adopt strategies to counter the perceived risks, other schools often follow, through fear that they will be regarded as negligent if they do not (Author, 2013).

School Surveillance, Contestation and Cultural Conservationism

The media representations of school-based surveillance, and the surveillance of young people more broadly, are found to both legitimize and problematize the increasing prevalence of monitoring and tracking. Whilst newspapers provide **'**a very poor resource' (Greenberg and Hier, 2009: 461) for understanding the use and politicization of school surveillance, they do provide insight into how and why some surveillance practices are accepted and others rejected. Often ushered in with promises of safeguarding children, surveillance technology can enhance a sense of security, but it can also conjure feelings of anxiety, loss of privacy, and mistrust in some individuals (Author, 2013). The newspaper articles relating to the introduction and use of CCTV, GPS, RFID and randomized drug testing in schools spanned

discourses from care to control. If the surveillance device was understood to fulfill the former objective it was generally accepted, even when weighed against negative consequences such as a loss of privacy, but if it was depicted as being introduced as a device for unnecessary control or discipline it was largely viewed as un-Australian.

Highlighting the importance of cultural context in the adoption or rejection of surveillance, there was a clear resistance to technologies that were seemed to emulate other countries, particularly the United States. There were a number of newspaper stories in Australia following the tragic shootings at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut in December 2012. For example, in one story, 'Teachers, parents dismiss safety clampdown calls' (Box, 2012), the President of the Australian Secondary Principals Association, strongly rejected any plans to increase security in Australian schools:

> It makes a school a fortress, not somewhere children and other people can be together. A school is a very important part of the local community and if we fence it off, we risk losing all that. We'd lose a lot of the cultural cohesion; the social values we think are important.

Rooney (2015: 893) has similarly argued that securitizing schools can create boundaries, both physical and symbolic, between schoolchildren and the local community, creating disconnect and potential alienation:

> In thinking about the design of school boundaries, any loss of movement in and around communities therefore needs to be acknowledged as a potential loss for nurturing a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, drawing upon the example of school fences, she claims that security can paradoxically conjure a climate of insecurity; instilling a sense of fear amongst schoolchildren by signifying that there is something 'out there' that they need to be protected from. Whereas in the US high profile incidents such as school shootings have 'become a key reference point in justifying increased surveillance and security systems in schools throughout the United States' (Monahan, 2006: 109), in Australia the reverence for informality and a relaxed atmosphere overshadows calls for the securitization of education spaces. But furthermore, the mythologised cultural values of Australia are celebrated, not cringed at, in an explicit rejection of policy transfer.

A research agenda

School surveillance continues to receive relatively little academic attention. In order to better understand the distinctive cultural dynamics that underpin the acceptability, reverence and rejection of different surveillance practices there are many avenues requiring future research. One such avenue would be to explore how surveillance apparatus manifests and operates differently in state schools compared to independent schools, for example, and at different levels through primary, secondary and senior schools. Further, disaggregating the applications and experiences of surveillance in schools in relation to gender, race and class would, importantly, illuminate differential cultural meanings and implications. This is key to understanding processes of social sorting; 'the classifying drive of contemporary surveillance' (2003: 13), which is exemplified in the education system.

Conclusion

Globally, schoolchildren are fast emerging as one of the most heavily surveilled non-criminal populations, but yet there has been remarkably little empirical research into this phenomenon. Furthermore, there has been a tendency to claim homogeneity in the materiality of surveillance practices in schools, and beyond, rather than seek out and excavate how and why they surface and take root unevenly internationally. This paper, in contrast, has aimed to account for divergence and deviation, articulating the multiple ways in which cultural context shapes the ways and means in which surveillance manifests and is articulated. This begins to address a significant gap within surveillance studies, which has largely ignored the ways in which surveillance technologies are invested with specific cultural values, in favour of universalising discourses that deny the importance of context specificity. In relation to Australia, it has been shown how the 'cultural cringe' has given way to 'cultural conservation' and civic pride in the mythologised cultural praxis of the nation. In doing so, it has demonstrated how the media filters the discourse around school surveillance through Australian cultural myths and values, thus encouraging acceptance or resistance to different surveillance apparatus. The condemnation of developments that are, in turn, determined to be distinctly 'un-Australian', such as hyper-securitization of school campuses, illuminates the way in which cultural context influences the surveillance landscape. More broadly, the paper reveals a tension between globalised depictions of surveillance that are universalising and despatialised on the one hand, and the very specific culturally rooted ways in which surveillance regimes materialise, on the other.

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TABLES

Table 1. Search strings used				
School	*and*	CCTV		
School	*and*	Fingerprinting		
School	*and*	AFIS		
School	*and*	RFID		
School	*and*	Drug Testing		
School	*and*	GPS		
School	*and*	Technology	*and*	Surveillance
School	*and*	Technology	*and*	Monitoring
School	*and*	Technology	*and*	Tracking
School	*and*	Technology	*and*	Watching

Table 2. Surveillance technology focus of story	
CCTV	176
Drug Testing	34
Online	20
GPS / RFID / Wearable techs	18
Fingerprinting	9
Personal and Learning Analytics	5
Surveillance Overview	3
	265

Table 3. CCTV footage of incident	
Vandalism and criminal damage	15
Violence – actual and threatened (including racial abuse)	10
Unlawful entry	8
Arson	8
Animal abuse	7
Drug dealing	1