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A Hotel Inspector Calls: Exploring Surveillance at the Home-Work Interface

Abstract. This article, which examines inspection experiences in the home-based context of the B&B, makes a distinctive contribution to surveillance theory, and specifically the concept of ‘exposure’. It draws on Levinas’s phenomenological ideas on identity and his concept of ‘sensibility’, in order to better place the ‘exposed’ subject at the centre of analysis. Our empirical research shows how B&B proprietors negotiate their exposure to surveillance within their homes when they take part in the tourist board’s accommodation grading process. Their ‘lifestyle businesses’ involve exposing the context of their own lives to their paying guests, and by extension to the hotel inspectors from the tourist board with its own covert inspectorial procedures. These are described from both the inspector’s and proprietor’s perspectives. We explore not only their subjective experiences of the inspection process, but also the power dynamics between proprietor and inspector, and the various resistance and counter-resistance strategies which each employ.

Keywords: Bed and Breakfast (B&B); covert surveillance; exposure; home-work interface; hotel inspector; Levinas.

A Hotel Inspector Calls: Exploring Surveillance at the Home-Work Interface

This article explores the experience of surveillance in the Bed and Breakfast (B&B) establishment that is ‘accommodation provided in a private house, run by the owner and with no more than six paying guests’ (VisitScotland, 2009: 3). In the B&B, the domestic home is not only a workplace - a backdrop for interactive service encounters - but is also the subject of covert tourist board inspections. Our research is set in Scottish B&Bs, and features their proprietors and inspectors from the VisitScotland Quality Assurance Scheme. This scheme uses ‘undercover’ inspectors who evaluate B&Bs while posing as mystery guests. They reveal their true identity as ‘inspector’ at the end of their stay, delivering the results of their evaluation on-the-spot.

Our analysis foregrounds the interlocking layers of complexity in this process. We first explore the working proprietors’ negotiation of the blurred public-private boundary under surveillance in the home-as-business. We then use the concept of exposure, derived from surveillance theory and the work of Levinas, to focus upon and conceptually frame their experiences of inspections, against the background of dealings with customers. Indeed, the service quality rendered to customers is necessarily the *raison d’être* for their business enterprises, and also for the inspections and interactions between proprietor and inspector. We also explore the surveillance experiences on different levels to which both are exposed and their empowerment/re-empowerment strategies. We look particularly at how proprietors re-negotiate surveillance as they simultaneously attempt to contain and commodify their private

space. In terms of workplace action, we also provide a critique of the wider system and institutional structures that form the broader context for the specific subjectivities of co-surveillance and interactions between proprietor and inspector.

Drawing upon the work of Levinas, the concept of exposure is explored in this research as the main key to unlocking the observed layers of complexity. Exposure can be seen as that part of self-consciousness which is a positive searching for identity involving 'being itself in losing itself and finding itself again so as to possess itself by showing itself, proposing itself as a theme, exposing itself in truth' (Levinas, 1991: 100). However, exposure's various definitions also interpellate the vulnerabilities associated with being under surveillance, the unknowing significations of one's corporeal actions especially when under covert inspection, and the thrill of self-revelation, public declaration, and deliberate subjection to painful scrutiny for uncertain reward (Ball, 2009). In the B&B, the working proprietor, their family, aesthetics, taste and private space are constantly exposed. However, surveillance does not necessarily oppress its subjects (Koskela, 2004); rather it keeps them in a state of ambivalence or incompleteness (Roberts, 2005) in relation to their choice to try to display the 'authenticity' of their own chosen existence. However, for Levinas, any 'claim for authenticity, ultimately, rests on an illusory wish. Ambivalence, rather than the possibility of resoluteness, defines the existential condition of the human being.' (Caruana, 2007: 260).

For the proprietors, although a heightened sense of vulnerability may be created through the type of exposure involved in inspections, critically they voluntarily seek

out the experience, having paid to be scheme members. B&B proprietors have a complex, ambiguous relationship with ‘the inspectorial gaze’ which is sought in the grading process. Carrying dramaturgical overtures of staging, performance and theatrical display (Goffman, 1959; Hochschild, 1983), and further reflecting Levinas’s ‘drama of being’ motif (Caruana, 2007), the home’s intimate spaces are seen to be converted into sites of commercial customer service transactions (Hochschild, 2003), where proprietors perform and play before an ‘all-embracing’ surveillant gaze.

Inspectors, apart from being scrutinised by line managers through VisitScotland’s ‘systems of accountability’ (Roberts, 2003), are also subject to surveillance by proprietors who continually try to ‘blow their cover.’ Successful inspectors must mask their role at all costs. As VisitScotland agents, when inspectors conduct an inspection undercover, they effectively elevate their power position whereupon only they hold the vantage point of knowing that an assessment is being carried out. Proprietors counter this by attempting to regain control via various empowerment/re-empowerment strategies. These ‘on-the-ground’ interactions and power dynamic negotiations between proprietors and inspectors can also effect change from the ‘top-down’ in VisitScotland’s evaluation strategies and procedures. In an intoxicating mix with the thrill and vulnerability involved in exposure, power relations course through the veins of the interaction and constitute many of its surrounding relationships. An exploration of the B&B covert surveillance context, leads to the contesting of assumptions which have been made in the literature about the surveilled individual’s relative powerlessness, passivity or disinterest in surveillance (Lyon, 2003). Indeed we respond to calls in the surveillance literature for greater attention to be paid to

particular contexts where the process of ‘boundary negotiation and control between individual people, inter-subjectivities and systems is framed as a potential site for sociological enquiry into empowerment under surveillance’ (Ball, 2005: 102). Significantly, the paper examines an underexplored site of service work, the home, and the implications of its exposure and re-articulation as a ‘private’ sphere (Seymour, 2007). In particular, we are concerned with social control processes which take place within the face-to-face context of the home-based hospitality business, which, although unique, has been insufficiently explored theoretically and in relation to empirical research not only in the surveillance literature, but also in the organizational and sociological studies literatures.

Furthermore, we show how the opening of spatio-temporal ‘knowledge gaps’ between watcher and watched leverages surveillance (Ball, 2005; 2002) and enables not only resistance but also enjoyment in being surveilled to occur almost as part of a drama among the participants. We go beyond familiar accounts in the literature of more passive and linear resistance, and provide evidence and critique of the complex layers not only of resistance and counter-resistance which occurs in the game of surveillance, but of the Levinasian sense of responsibility for the enjoyment of the other which overshadows it. This is provoked by subjective interactions and profound personal exposure, which is courted, experienced to the full under the surveillant gaze, and often thereby enjoyed.

We next draw upon Levinas’s ideas, as well as other sociological theories and surveillance literature applicable to our focus, in order to frame the conceptual lens of

exposure which we then apply to the empirical context. We then present our methods, which include an overview of VisitScotland's quality assurance scheme. Third, we articulate our findings by drawing on original data excerpts from interviews with proprietors, inspectors and other tourist board officials. Our objective is to unpack and critique proprietors' subjectivities of workplace inspection in detail, and juxtapose these with the VisitScotland inspector's standpoint, purpose and sense of how they go about the inspection process. Fourth, we discuss our findings in relation to conceptual contributions particularly in terms of different types of exposure that follow on from Levinas's ideas, as well as responses to surveillance and the inspection process. Finally we provide conclusions and future research directions.

Surveillance and Exposure at the Home-Work Interface: A Conceptual Lens

In this section we discuss the sometimes difficult articulation of the public-private boundary in terms of surveillance and social control within the B&B's home-as-business setting. We also argue that research hitherto conducted on workplace surveillance has comparatively little to say in this non-traditional work setting. Indeed, the concept of exposure speaks better to the problematic at both local and institutional levels.

Surveillance and Social Control within the Home/B&B

The B&B is simultaneously home and workplace (Di Domenico and Fleming, 2009). The home is a reflection of changing socio-political attitudes (Mallett, 2004), emotionally charged and reflective of the identities of its occupants (Carsten and Hugh-Jones, 1995; Marcus, 1995) and gendered in its embodiment of the notion of

family (Di Domenico, 2008; Di Domenico, 2010; Gurney, 1997). Critically, in its modern, urban form, it is also a private realm (Lyon, 1994, Furedi, 2006). There is a dearth of research into the home space which functions also as a site of economic enterprise and interactive service work. As a result of industrialisation and the more distinct demarcation of places and spaces reserved for work and home, the private residence still carries implicit connotations distinct from economic enterprise and remunerated employment (Rybczynski, 1988). This is despite the different types of home-based work where home-work boundaries must be negotiated and tensions in the management of their intersection are omnipresent. However, relatively few sites combine domicile, customer service, paid work and consumption, where the space is also rendered transparent to the ‘gaze’ of institutionalised structures and external authorities carrying out official ‘inspections’.

Such surveillant practices need not derive from an external authority figure. The idea of social control as implicit within family and home is explored by Donzelot (1997) and Foucault (1975). Norms, routines and etiquette codes are inscribed into family dynamics and hierarchies being enacted within the home. The family set-up is itself an inherently powerful disciplinary institution in which space and power combine to form a normalizing gaze. Family members actively ‘police’ one another in accordance with accepted norms and censor transgressions in a bid to preserve a defined notion of collective discipline and behavioural conditioning (Donzelot, 1997). Foucault (1975) illustrates this through his example of the Mettray adolescent reformatory which adopted the logic of family hierarchies and home in the belief that this would instil a

constant system of surveillance and regulatory practices to circumvent fringe behaviour outside the powerful force of normalizing judgements collectively imposed.

The insertion of the stranger into the domicile is an intriguing problem for the family matrix's normalising judgement. 'The stranger' can take the form not only of the B&B customer as paying guest, but also of the inspector posing as customer.

Disruptions to the internal orderings of the home-work space can be unsettling, ushering in the stranger's watchful gaze, and bringing divergent norms, preferences and tastes. These disruptions form the very articulation of the public-private boundary as it is drawn and negotiated, creating a complex, dynamism between social interactions and surveillance practices, involving a 'mutual gaze' (Maoz, 2006), and based on the various standpoints present, with vulnerabilities and compromises being frequently enacted. Indeed, it is interesting that the *bona fide* customer may be attracted to the B&B's intimate domestic setting and the avoidance of the more formalised, standardised surveillant practices of larger hotels (e.g. computerised check-in, credit-card transactions etc.). However, the inspector often applies quality and standardisation norms and accounting procedures generally associated with larger establishments to their judgements of B&Bs. This causes tension, anxiety and ambiguity especially for proprietors who perceive their security to be dependent upon meeting the expectations of such 'authoritative others' and their future living on the 'successful result' of this 'voluntary' inspection process (Roberts, 2001).

Extrapolations of Workplace Surveillance Insights to Commercial Home Contexts

There has been limited sociological analysis of hotels and guesthouses as sites of surveillance (e.g. Gill et al. 2002), or even as social organizations (Wood, 1994), although recently there has been some consideration of hospitality culture in terms of social and spatial control (see Di Domenico and Lynch, 2007; Lynch, Di Domenico and Sweeny, 2007; Di Domenico and Fleming, 2009). Wood (1994) was particularly concerned with the fact that in empirical studies, hospitality accommodation has not been seen as a fertile ground for theory building, and indeed he illustrates how B&Bs as well as hotels are often like ‘black boxes’ that tend to be treated as sociologically unproblematic’ (1994: 66). Furthermore, research, including that in the tourism and hospitality literature, addressing universal characteristics of workplace surveillance within formal bureaucratic workspaces (Gill et al. 2002) provides limited insight into B&B covert inspection dynamics. Indeed, the latter may be considered more similar to retail ‘mystery shopping’. Shing and Spence (2002) suggest that this practice should not be undertaken because of the deceit, compromise and lack of consent involved. It has also been argued that the results of mystery shopping should always be presented to staff (as occurs in VisitScotland inspections), though future results could thereby be compromised (Wilson, 2001).

Within traditional work spaces, research using occupational psychology perspectives provides insights into the impact of surveillance on B&B proprietors as ‘workers’. For example, research examining personal boundary maintenance when under surveillance establishes that a common boundary is drawn between work-life and private-life (see Stahl et al., 2005). For the research subjects, surveillance became problematic when too much information about workers’ private lives was collected.

The boundary drawn between work and home is difficult to delineate in home-based businesses, rendering the invasion felt from the scrutiny of monitoring within the inspection process ambiguous and difficult to manage in what Zweig and Webster (2002) term the 'latitude' or 'zone' of acceptance of monitoring. Control, privacy and autonomy are therefore germane issues in the workplace monitoring literature (Ball, 2005), relevant to the B&B context insofar as the proprietors and their private homes and tastes become subjects of external processes of 'monitoring' when under the watchful gaze of the inspector. In this literature, it is argued that monitoring processes should be sensitive to the emotional states and individuality of workplace subjects rather than making judgements based upon so-called 'objective' or checklist criteria alone (Aiello and Kolb, 1995; Brewer and Ridgeway, 1998; Chalykoff and Kochan, 1989; Larson and Callahan, 1990; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Stanton and Barnes Farrell, 1996). This is relevant for B&B inspections where opaque inspection criteria are applied to intensely personal matters for the proprietor, such as taste, aesthetics and other aspects of personal judgement.

We now build upon these conceptual and theoretical insights to propose the usefulness of the concept of *exposure* to our analysis of surveillant home-work practices for understanding the subjective experiences of the B&B proprietor.

Exposure

Exposure has been variously defined. For instance, it includes: presentation to view in a public manner; intensity of light falling on a photographic film; the state of being vulnerable or in danger (Wordreference, 2007). Such ideas are highly relevant to

surveillance practices. Notions of vulnerability and danger highlight the application of surveillance techniques to security arrangements as well as the thrill (for some) of its encounter. Acknowledging public visibility as part of surveillance signals a lack of privacy. Photographic notions remind us of the Panopticon's subject, the self-disciplining shadow framed by falling light. As surveillance frames the subject, different aspects become exposed, captured and evaluated. Ball argues that within various surveillant media, a 'political economy of interiority' (2009: 641) has emerged whereby the subject's personal aspects, whether their corporeal, psychoanalytic or emotional states, have become valued objects, indicating a 'truth' or 'authenticity' about that individual. The surfacing of those aspects of the subject to be captured by surveillance indicates that exposure has occurred; in this case at a public-private boundary which we shall demonstrate has been carefully maintained.

Exposure is easy to identify where surveillance is overt and known to the subject, as with deeply emoting reality TV show contestants or electronically monitored call-centre employees 'smiling down the phone'. However, in situations where subjects are unknowingly observed, as with B&B covert inspections, is it possible to theorise their ongoing experience of that observation? As Butler notes, 'we all live with vulnerability...a vulnerability to the other that is part of bodily life, a vulnerability to a sudden address from elsewhere that we cannot pre-empt' (Butler 2004: 29)

To address this problematic, Harrison (2008) uses Levinas' (1978) discussion of fatigue and indolence to argue that exposure is a pre-relational 'default' subject state. The assumption is that the subject is perpetually turned to the exterior and open to the

other, available to be read and signifying nonetheless beyond intentionality, will and purpose (see also Levinas, 1969; Levinas, 1991; Levinas, 2000). Indeed, ‘from the start, the other affects us despite ourselves’ (Levinas, 1991: 129). It is ‘not an exposure of the self but rather an exposure to the other despite oneself’ (Roberts, 2001: 113). The subject signifies by virtue of proximity to, as well as through relationality with, an observer (Libertson, 1982). The other continually distracts us away from a preoccupation with ourselves and with ‘securing the perception of self in the eyes of powerful others’ into an ‘inescapable’ sense of ‘felt responsibility for my neighbour’ (Roberts, 2001: 109). Thus, the sense of responsibility for the other, which involves for Levinas proximity to the other and speaking to the other, is true exposure to the other. It is ‘a sensibility to being hurt, a self uncovered, exposed and suffering in its skin’ (1991; 50). It involves a process of absorption with the proximate other. This is what the B&B host can feel in face-to-face interactions with guests and which often distracts the host from preoccupations that more directly affect the self, such as knowledge of the quality assurance covert surveillance processes of VisitScotland, to which the B&B host has voluntarily agreed to be subject.

Thus while the subject, in this case the B&B proprietor, can knowingly be exposed to surveillance, intentionally interacting with it, following Levinas (1969; 1991; 2000), one can also argue that there are aspects of the subject which ‘live on’ beyond ‘conscious performances’ and ‘deliberate interactions’ which are also exposed. Unintentionally drawing profound parallels with the nature of B&B ownership, Harrison describes exposure as ‘the very definition of hospitality’, as well as ‘a rapport without relation’ (2008: 440). For us, the corporeal subject is always,

necessarily, exposed to an unknown other; the exterior surface is always available to be read. *Surveilled* subjectivities of covert surveillance are excluded by a focus on conscious resistance and cooperation. We argue, and indeed demonstrate, that the proprietors' experience of exposure to the covert aspects of inspections underpins their conscious and performative engagements with its more overt aspects, against a backdrop of embracing their entrepreneurial lifestyles of openness, hospitality and willing exposure to the guest as the proximate other.

Nevertheless, one is necessarily exposed to something, whether that is to the unknown in a proximal or the known in a relational sense. Identifying an associated 'political economy of interiority' (Ball, 2009: 641) of B&B inspections implies an institutional level of analysis where pre-existing surveillant mechanisms, or dispositifs (Lianos, 2003), prescribe aspects of interiority which are 'of value' and thus necessary to expose and capture. Beyond the covert inspection encounter, a conscious response from proprietors is required by the institution as communicated through assessment criteria which produce incentives for proprietors to perform their services in particular ways and to particular standards at the B&B's public-private boundary. Lianos (2003) describes this as a generalised institutional projection. Thus, proprietors personally invest in, or at the very least tolerate, this requirement, allowing elements of their personal, domestic space to be open to inspection; and inspection itself and consumer demand in turn perpetuates it.

Indicative of the Weberian notion of societal rationalisation, standardisation is pursued by institutional bodies such as VisitScotland as a practical manifestation of

selection of subject dimensions which they value and therefore expose. This demonstration of power through monitoring schemes, and the authority invested in those responsible for their application and translation (Munro, 1999), has evolved as an endemic feature of value and taste systems that wider society prioritises and mirrors. Thus, the 'Michelin star' scheme, applied to restaurants deemed of superior quality by food critics, and famed for its covert inspections which carefully preserves the identities of its inspectors, exemplifies the control that these taste arbiters have over judgements and the classification system, and consequently an establishment's reputation and business success (Rao, Monin and Durand, 2005). The B&B proprietor is therefore acutely aware of the inspection process's implications, necessitating their exposure of business, home, self and family, in order to acquire or retain the number of 'stars' displayed to guests. Their fate, and those of their contemporaries subject to this accommodation grading system, is bound up with the words and symbols that designate them (Bourdieu, 1984).

The quality grading system can effectively cause a double-bind for proprietors who choose to be part of it, as it creates for them a context of ambivalence that can be defined as both an incomplete internalisation, or incomplete rejection of the values and behaviours inherent in the system (Roberts, 2005). Thus the proprietors must work within the 'iron cage' of the rational bureaucratic system imposed by the tourist board whilst at the same time enacting their own individualised and idealised notions of their home, also containing private, non-commodified aspects. The home-business is therefore its owner's 'glass palace' and 'glass cage' (Gabriel, 2005: 9). The degree of 'sensibility' towards the pressures from this type of exposure felt by proprietors

reduces their enjoyment of their enterprises and their power and control over the service encounter, and heightens their sense of vulnerability and of being deceived, creating a particular sense of insecurity in everyday working interactions in their own homes (Collinson, 2003).

Next we present our methods, followed by empirical findings exploring the nuances and manifestations of our conceptual lens.

Method

Data Collection and Rationale

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with 33 B&B proprietors at their respective premises in two Scottish towns. In order to be included in the sample, proprietors and their families had to live in the same premises as their customers. Of those interviewed, 23 participants were women and ten men, all aged between 40 and 69 at time of data gathering. All participants were part of married or cohabiting couples. Six had children still residing at home, three no children, and the remaining participants had children resident away from home, mainly due to their age/life-stage.

The majority of proprietors were formal members of VisitScotland's 'quality assurance' grading scheme, with three proprietors rejecting this choice, never having held membership. The scheme has a 'five-star' structure reflecting customer care levels and facilities, within a range of accommodation 'types' graded from 'B&B', 'Farmhouse', 'Hotel', 'Inn', 'Self-catering', 'Hostel' to 'Bods, Bothies and Camping Barns' (VisitScotland, 2008). Study participants fell under the 'B&B' category.

Common standards have been agreed by all major accommodation grading scheme operators throughout the British Isles, although each operator recruits and uses its own inspectors independently. However, benchmarks are shared to provide quality comparisons for consumers and consistent rating applications regardless of scheme membership. There are also more subjective criteria such as those of 'hospitality and friendliness' (VisitScotland, 2009: 4-5, 15). Official attempts to standardise B&B accommodation may contradict the individualistic, quirky, 'home from home' label with which it is generally associated. However, there are definite benefits from scheme membership including advertising, a recognised 'brand' and official approval.

It is rare to find an employment situation which straddles home-work, public-private and kinship-stranger boundaries. The research thus aimed to elicit the experiences of the working proprietor as subject at these boundaries. Consequently, articulations of context, interactions and surveillance are mainly from this particular subject position. However, to add contrast, to facilitate comparison and to aid theorising, VisitScotland staff perspectives were also sought, particularly about covert inspections. Seven individuals with knowledge of various aspects of the QA scheme were interviewed in-depth, including inspectors and managers. There were approximately thirty inspectors (two-thirds of whom were women) working for VisitScotland and carrying out accommodation grading throughout the country.

Analysis and Interpretation

All face-to-face interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. One interview with a manager was conducted by telephone and contemporaneous notes were made. All

interviews were then re-read repeatedly to allow for full data familiarisation and reflection. This process was carried out after each interview whilst still ‘in the field’ and after all interviews had been conducted, allowing for immersion. Interviews were analysed using both within-case and between-case analysis, followed by data reduction and interpretation by coding the text thematically. This process of analysis and interpretation involved two steps. First, data were explored for emergent patterns around the theme of surveillance and specifically proprietor-inspector interactions. This resulted in the identification of a number of themes used to structure our findings:

Exposure to customer constant presence: articulating public-private boundaries

Exposure in interactions between proprietor and inspector

Empowerment/re-empowerment strategies:

Criticism of the inspection process and the tourist board

Alternative support networks and counter-surveillance strategies

Second, interviews were reappraised in light of this coding structure. To support our arguments, excerpts were identified across interview transcripts relating to these key elements. All participants and businesses are anonymised throughout in our findings.

Findings

This in-depth exploration of proprietors’ views presents an empirical account of the nature of exposure. Evidence from inspectors and other tourist board officials provide both the ‘official’ view of quality grading and their views on interactions between proprietor and inspector. We begin by establishing how the public-private boundary – where proprietor exposure to surveillance occurs – is articulated by examining

proprietors' accounts of everyday interactions with customers. We then progress to our findings about their reactions to the inspection process.

Exposure to Customer Constant Presence: Articulating Public-Private Boundaries

The paying guest as customer provides the core logic for all service work encounters taking place in the B&B, and their constant presence is consequently felt. All service rendered by the proprietor and quality benchmarks used by the formal grading system are in pursuit of good 'customer service'. The host, family, home and everyday life are thus constantly exposed due to the customer's omnipresence. The pleasure that is taken in welcoming guests is combined with feelings of vulnerability and anxiety which proprietors also experience. This is reflected in proprietors' accounts which reveal how they maintain public-private boundaries and anticipate the customer's presence.

"You're always aware that there are customers in the house and you have to make an effort ... give a good impression. Everything always has to be clean and tidy just in case someone arrives ... You can't just hang around in your nightgown and slippers ..." (Proprietor #29)

And:

"I know that they [customers] are making their own judgements about me and my house. They'll be making wee comparisons with their own homes and other places they've stayed in ... So you're always on your toes because you

know they're keeping an eye on you and taking a peek into drawers,
cupboards and behind curtains ...” (Proprietor #6)

Despite feeling exposed to customer presence, proprietors still feel in control of the service encounter as they can ultimately decide upon whom to admit into their homes as guests. Having scrutinised the guest beforehand during the booking process, and, if applicable, during previous stays, the customer's presence and surveillance of their host is legitimised in effect by their mutual affirmative gaze. Indeed, proprietors often court the gaze of customers in a bid to receive positive reinforcement from their performative displays. Feelings of vulnerability co-exist with their strong desire to exhibit, perform, invite, please and care for the guest within their own homes. The public-private boundary thus becomes re-articulated with each encounter. Proprietors most like to engage with customers whom they regard as similar to themselves.

“The type of people that I would want to stay here ... the sort who would appreciate that this is a home-run guesthouse you know? People that are like us, that I would like to think I'd choose as friends. I try to make it seem like a home-away-from-home, as much as I can at least.” (Proprietor #15)

Some guests, who are labelled as ‘regulars’, were seen as fitting well into the home due to their familiarity and acceptance by the host. This contrasts with the ‘casuals’, namely first-time customers, ‘strangers’ about whom the proprietor as yet knows little. They are initially regarded with a degree of suspicion for being unknown and possibly not ‘fitting in’ and critically and more dangerously perhaps a tourist board inspector.

Exposure Interactions between Proprietor and Inspector

Just as customers provide the business logic for proprietors, the inspector's duties are performed also 'in the customer's name' to ensure that high standards and good customer service are maintained and even improved on. Indeed, by covertly adopting the genuine guest's persona, they evoke this goal when they perform quality grading.

As the B&B functions as both home and workplace for proprietors, the boundaries between these domains are inherently difficult for both proprietor and inspector to differentiate and negotiate. The proprietors' identities are projected onto their B&B's physical space, framing service interactions. Its exposure to scrutiny creates vulnerability and anxiety which is intensified vis-à-vis the inspector. However, inspectors also feel vulnerable, being isolated and away from home.

“You have to be comfortable with your own company. It can be a lonely job as you're away from home all the time, Monday to Friday, and basically living out of your car. Your base is mobile.” (VisitScotland Manager).

All proprietors used the label 'inspector' without any prompting from the interviewer. It seemed to evoke feelings of anxiety and heightened vulnerability:

“I feel very anxious when I know that inspectors are coming ... I've nothing to hide as I keep this place spick and span but its different when you're actually being inspected and it could affect your star grading.” (Proprietor #18)

Tourist board personnel, although aware of the ‘inspector’ label, use the softer, more participative ‘advisor’ label. The following excerpt highlights how they prefer the voluntary rather than compulsory nature of the quality grading scheme:

“Every so often we’ll have the compulsory registration debate. ... Politically it’s been decided not to do it. Introducing a system requiring compliance with statutory registration would change the nature of the relationship completely. We currently don’t have the power to close an establishment down which we would do if it were compulsory. That power would change it. We would then truly be inspectors and not advisors” (VisitScotland Manager)

The advisory role is stressed in the job’s person specification. Although ability to carry out consistent grading inspections and possessing good knowledge of standards is seen as crucial, interpersonal qualities such as the ability to deal appropriately and tactfully with ‘gender role stereotyped’ B&B owners was emphasised:

“We need people with empathy and understanding. They need a high level of sensitivity and tact. If they can tell a lady in her own home that she’s not good at keeping it clean and still manage to leave as friends ... then that’s the type of person we want.” (VisitScotland Manager).

Despite this awareness by the tourist board of the need for sensitivity in passing judgement, it was the covert nature of inspections that proprietors saw as problematic.

They described feeling ‘duped’ by the inspection’s deceptive nature. It was felt that whilst ‘unannounced’ visits would be a reasonable way of checking-up on standards, covert visits went too far, leaving them feeling misled and vulnerable. Their control of the public-private boundary exerted with regular customers is suddenly stripped away.

“Well, it’s kind of like being hoodwinked. I don’t see why they can’t just turn up and be upfront and say they’re going to do a grading and an overnight visit. Why it needs to be all secretive is beyond me. What do they think they’re going to catch me doing? ... I wouldn’t have the time to suddenly change how I do things ... they try to hide who they really are and what they’re really up to until the end ... It’s all kind of over the top.” (Proprietor #5).

Unlike interactions with guests, which are generally seen in a very favourable and positive light, feelings of confidence and control over the situation diminish to be replaced with mounting insecurity once the inspector reveals his/her identity:

“When you realise they’re an inspector and not just a customer then you’re suddenly on your guard. You feel a bit on edge ... cautious and kind of vulnerable, if I’m being honest” (Proprietor #18)

Vulnerability intensifies at revelation point. In contrast to customer-interactions, where proprietors understand that judgements and surveillance are open, mutual and generally positive, and roles are clearly understood, with inspector-interactions their understanding is based on a false premise. Proprietors feel at a disadvantage being

initially denied full awareness of the ‘guest’s’ true nature, and having revealed often too much, the covert inspection is regarded as a violation of their private boundary.

“I asked her if she wanted any more tea or a packed lunch before she checked out. She then turned around and said that she was an inspector here for a visit. Well, I was speechless! I really had no clue. Honest to goodness! And the previous night I’d even told her about my granddaughter being ill and all sorts of things. I had thought she was a friendly sort, perhaps a bit lonely being a woman on her own, and I ended up confiding in her a lot of personal things. Well, I would never have done that had I known ... I felt ... like I’d been taken in, when all the while she was someone else entirely.” (Proprietor #7)

When inspectors finally revealed themselves as institutional agents, the shock of exposure experienced by proprietors intensified their feelings of disempowerment. This revelation of identity led immediately to a formal discussion of the assessment outcomes, which proprietors often found very distressing. They did not always agree with the assessment, but felt exposed to an inspector with power to exact penalties.

“I didn’t like the way they went about things ... I found them really patronizing ... I did it because I had to ... I didn’t really enjoy the whole experience.” (Proprietor #3)

Indeed, many proprietors described the experience in a negative way that was quite unlike the ‘empathetic advisory relationship’ envisaged by VisitScotland staff.

Empowerment/Re-Empowerment Strategies

In the time and space surrounding inspections and customer service encounters, proprietors adopt empowerment/re-empowerment strategies to redress the perceived power imbalance and neutralise feelings of vulnerability. They firstly criticise the inspectors and tourist board procedures. They secondly try to ‘get their own back’ on the inspectors or ‘second guess’ the identity of any future inspectors.

Criticism of the Inspection Process and the Tourist Board

Most of the proprietors had decided to be graded, aspiring to formal ‘star’ ratings, with only three choosing to reject membership. For members, grading is viewed as a necessary accolade when advertising, as potential guests look for formal institutional approval and a recognised brand. The majority of B&Bs have membership, with one proprietor referring to it as essentially a ‘closed shop’ situation.

Despite the desire for positive grading, proprietors holding membership viewed themselves as reluctant recipients of the required inspection process. They felt they had little influence over it, and apart from the ability to feedback or complain after ‘stars’ were awarded, saw the outcome as a *fait accompli*. Proprietors critically characterised the inspector-interaction as one that was inherently ‘top down’. They were vocal in describing their objections to the standardising impulse of grading, and comparisons that were made between their B&Bs and larger hotels which marginalised their ‘uniqueness’. Indeed they questioned the inspection’s relevance for the B&B context and mode of operation and the criteria to which they were subject, which they regarded as ill-defined, despite its documentation. The details of

the standardised criteria were seen as reinforcing VisitScotland's institutional power rather than relating to their own individualised businesses. They particularly resented the criticisms which were made of their personal effects and aesthetic choice:

“We asked how we would move from three to four star. He said ‘oh well you’d need better wall-paper, better carpets’ and this and that carry on. And towelling robes in every bedroom. But we’re not trying to be a four star *big* hotel or anything. That’s something they don’t seem to appreciate... ” (Proprietor #28)

Many recounted such experiences with grading inspectors, emphasising their “overly critical approach”, despite the “hard work and effort invested”. Thus:

“... they walk into your house with a clipboard ... a woman came to me the first time to grade me ... We’d been working away putting in all the en-suites ... a lot of work ... So ... she said to me ‘oh you really want a strip light above that mirror’. And we’d just decorated! And I thought to myself ... there’s no way... you think ‘no’. There’s limitations and they can come along with their clipboards and they can pick on wee silly nickety-pickety things ... I find at times that they’re not on our side to be honest.” (Proprietor #30)

Despite such criticisms a degree of pleasure, playfulness, performative display and pride in their homes is still evident, even when it comes to performing for the inspector. Unsurprisingly, more positive feelings are displayed and there is far less

criticism if, despite the surprise and stress of the encounter, their enterprise is rewarded by the inspector with an even higher grading. Thus:

“...they were from the tourist board doing an inspection ... I didn’t have a clue ... I mean, and me walking about like John Cleese in the kitchen! But I was delighted with my four stars.” (Proprietor #9)

For three participants, a method of coping with the tourist board’s controlling efforts was to not only criticise them, but also opt out of membership completely.

“I seem to be doing OK without them... I have total control pretty much. I like the freedom to make my own decisions...” (Proprietor #1)

“... they’re very pernickety. Nobody likes criticism ... do you? You like to feel that you’re doing your best ... even now I don’t fancy them nitpicking my house ... I have no standards to live up to all the time so I’m under no pressure that way you know. As long as it’s clean and friendly enough” (Proprietor #22)

These remarks contrast markedly with tourist board perspectives, despite their awareness of the home dimension and the highly personal nature of running such businesses which for many members involved a life-style choice. Tourist board officials readily acknowledge that the quality grading process may place a great deal of pressure on the proprietor, who can feel scrutinised with their own homes being exposed, despite having chosen to open them to the public. This is recognised as

making proprietors defensive in their reaction to inspections, as a former inspector recollects:

“I enjoyed my job but it could get a bit hairy sometimes in terms of the characters you’d have to deal with. Before they’d let you loose on any of the larger establishments you’d have to cut your teeth on the B&Bs and guesthouses. I found some of them really nice... a bit ‘off-the-wall’, but nice. Some could be rather prickly, you know sensitive about my comments and grading if I didn’t tell them what they wanted to hear. They could take it as a personal criticism of them when it’s not meant in that way” (Former inspector/quality advisor).

Indeed, the inspector also feels under the scrutiny and surveillance of the proprietor who is striving to achieve approval for their home-businesses via what they see as an acceptable ‘star’ rating once the inspector had ‘outed’ their presence. Disgruntled proprietors may attempt to exert their own form of power derived from their role as tourist board ‘client’ and voluntary scheme membership by trying to ‘turn the tables’:

“You’d have to be very careful choosing your words ... ‘Cos if they didn’t like the outcome or were expecting an extra star if they’d redecorated the place but you wouldn’t give it to them, then you’d find a complaint when you checked in with head office” (Former inspector/quality advisor).

Thus, although proprietors perceive the process as being essentially one-way with inspectors having the power to award or withdraw important ‘stars’, inspectors also fear complaints from proprietors to the tourist board ‘head office’ and negative assessment on official feedback forms. After the inspection process has taken place, proprietors can attempt to regain their authority by contacting the tourist board with views about the inspection and how they were judged. Proprietors affirmed that they either had in the past or would in the future take such steps if they viewed judgements as very unfair. Indeed, the tourist board officials confirmed that proprietors have the power in the long-term to effect changes to the system ‘on the ground’, as the tourist board is obliged to consider any official complaints made about their inspectors and grading processes. Also, although they may be unable as individuals to alter the grading standards applied *per se*, they can request different inspectors or another attempt at ‘re-grading’ if they are dissatisfied with the service received as tourist board ‘clients’ who voluntarily pay for a service.

Alternative Support Networks and Counter-surveillance Strategies

All the proprietors interviewed were found to be part of informal networks with other B&B owners in their respective local areas. Developed often on a personal basis, networks were used for mutual support and the sharing of information and customers when appropriate. The usefulness of these networks was often contrasted favourably with the benefits derived from the tourist board:

“... We work quite well together because if they can’t take them, then they pass on our address, or sometimes even call us up and say have you got a

room ... They give us more business referrals than the tourist office ... If we're wanting a few days holiday, and one of our regulars phones up, we'll get them a room with one of them as well." (Proprietor #4)

Such links are vital for the proprietors. They enjoy their relationships with fellow B&B owners as friends who provide much more than solely business referrals. Alternative support networks are important in helping proprietors deal with the sometimes disconcerting effects of covert inspections. They also engender a sense of shared *camaraderie* or *esprit de corps* among proprietors, who turn to these 'friends' for advice on issues such as décor, service and customer preferences, as well as on ways to detect the inspector's true identity. Information was exchanged about inspectors in an explicit attempt to outwit and unmask them:

"...the girl that booked in last week I actually got her from Pat (reference to another B&B proprietor) ... she said 'I wonder if it's the tourist board woman' and I said 'it can't be because I'm not due my inspection ... it's not until next year that I'm due my staying over one' so I said 'it can't be'" (Proprietor #6)

To carry out counter surveillance, and to re-empower themselves in the inspection process, proprietors depicted themselves as "canny sleuths", effectively investigating and researching the inspectors in a bid to unmask their true identity. They even collated information to create a 'profile' of the typical inspector based on their own and other proprietors' experiences. Proprietors were 'on guard', deploying techniques to second-guess the inspector's identity in a bid to de-cloak and neutralise them.

“You do keep your eyes peeled. Particularly if you know you’re due an inspection. When you’re new at this business it’s hard to guess that they might be an inspector but after a while you develop a bit of a knack for detection. They tend to be polite but a little stiff if you know what I mean? They also tend to stay just the one night and always order a full breakfast. But you can always be caught off-guard if they don’t fit the bill” (Proprietor #33).

A consensus emerges as to the inspector’s likely identity which illustrates proprietors’ wariness of new guests, before their credentials as *bona fide* customers are verified:

“You tend to be suspicious of single women because you think it’s the tourist board. ‘cos I’ve found them to be always women ... every year they come to stay the night and don’t let on, but usually it’s a woman ... But the first year I got it, it was a man ... and that totally threw me (laughs)” (Proprietor #12)

Counter-surveillance even progressed from profiling to ‘reconnoitring’ the opposition. Some proprietors, dissatisfied with their grading, visited other B&Bs in different towns, by themselves or with others in their networks to compare standards in relation to grading awards. One proprietor revealed how this was carried out:

“... if you go anywhere now they’re looking for the same category as you ... Sometimes, the tourist board gets on all our backs ... I mean they come into your house and they seem to have rules for one person and rules for another.

They want you to have cotton buds and cotton wool in your rooms and shampoo and all this which you do. The four of us were ... speaking about this because we went in the tourist office and I got the tourist brochure and picked some places out of there ... we booked into a three-star in Fort William and it was lovely. But when we went into the room ... I mean the tourist board had graded them three-star, there were no cotton wool buds and no shampoo! ... I have packets of three biscuits for each person in the room. There was only a packet between the two of us! I mean you wonder whether it's the same across the board! I mean they either grade you three star or not ... I don't know how or in what way they do it but it's so annoying..." (Proprietor #6)

There is thus a constant process of comparison with counterparts' standards and a questioning of the distributive justice in grading:

"Well, we've got no option ... you've got to be graded and that's that. They came and had a look at the place and said we were three-star. Well, there's other places up and down that don't have any en-suite accommodation or any off-street parking. They are also three-star ... I know that for a fact. How is that? We have en-suites and off street parking" (Proprietor #13).

One proprietor used her family connections to 'bust' inspection visits, using language evocative of espionage to describe her gaining 'inside knowledge':

“My friend’s niece has a job at the local tourist office. So she knows what’s going on down there and that can be very handy as she gets to know who’s who. I shouldn’t really say this but she’s also given me some good pointers as to the inspectors and when they’re doing their inspections. Yes, very handy. I call her my ‘mole’ (laughs)” (Proprietor #23).

A tourist board official revealed that practical steps were taken in order to try to thwart attempts by proprietors to uncover or second-guess inspectors’ identities through the strategies outlined above. Although it was acknowledged that these methods did not always work, they included the purposeful geographical positioning of inspectors, a system of self de-barring from assessing certain establishments, and substituting other inspectors in order to retain the incognito nature of quality grading, and to throw proprietors ‘off the scent’. Indeed, they tried to avoid recruiting merely from the hospitality industry, preferring a wider range of occupational backgrounds:

“We need people with a bit of wool on their backs. They need life skills to draw on ... A nightmare candidate would be someone who’s been in the industry too long and has very fixed ideas about things. We do have a former hostel manager, but also former lecturers, navy personnel and even former police officers” (VisitScotland Manager).

A number of inspectors were ex-armed forces personnel and even former police officers. This perhaps indicates an affinity with, or preference for, those familiar with working within surveillance-intensive occupational settings which use predefined

rules and benchmarks. This contrasts markedly with the small-scale operations of B&Bs run by autonomous individuals from their own homes, with their own informal social networks. They were aware of proprietors' 'single-person' inspector profiling:

“We have a married couple who work for us who we'll put in on a Saturday night. They would not be expecting that as typically they would expect a single man or woman booked in during the week” (VisitScotland Manager).

Keeping inspections covert was thus a continuous struggle particularly when dealing with B&B proprietor networks, based upon close knit relationships with one another and on the look-out for 'the inspector':

“Sometimes I'd arrive at a place and you could just tell that they knew who you were. The way they were acting it was obvious that they'd had a call from the B&B up-the-road to alert them. If that happens there's nothing you can really do unless they let on. You just have to do the grading as you normally would.” (Former inspector/manager).

The negotiation of exposure to covert surveillance within their homes/workplaces caused tension for both proprietors and inspectors. Proprietors and inspectors constantly negotiated and re-negotiated their play both using strategies at their disposal to achieve greater control of their situations. The former deployed more creative and informal mechanisms through alternative support networks and counter-surveillance. The latter's strategies derived from the authority invested in their role and their ability

to bestow, deny or withdraw the coveted 'stars' through the ratings which they gave to the B&Bs. They both continued to 'play the game' while attempting to take advantage of any lapses or mistakes the other might have made. These observations can now be critiqued further in relation to the earlier discussed literature.

Discussion

The B&B owners' accounts confirmed that the inspection process resulted in feelings of ambivalence on the part of the proprietors. A sense of personal vulnerability and 'shock of exposure' (Levinas, 1991), magnified due to the covert nature of the inspector's surveillance (Collinson, 2003), was combined with the need on a regular basis to act as host and display with pride to customers their home's setting and artefacts through a more 'gentle' type of exposure (Levinas, 1978; 1991). Many of the B&Bs studied presented a 'home from home' for the guests who served to elevate the proprietor's sense of pleasure in welcoming guests to their homes and catering for their needs, combined with a sense of control over the service encounter. The customer was depicted as both 'watcher' and 'watched'. Similarly, proprietors are also perpetrators and recipients of surveillance. As tourist board inspectors also pose as guests, proprietors adopted strategies to help them anticipate an inspector's visit. Although the inspector is subject to surveillance by the proprietor, the former attempts to further mask their identity in order to elevate their power position. Proprietors counter this by attempting to regain some control via various individual and collective re-empowerment strategies. In turn, inspectors and the tourist board also attempt to combat and minimise the potential effects of these games of resistance by leveraging their own strategies of counter-resistance.

Different Faces of Exposure in the B&B Surveillance Drama

All actors continuously scrutinise one another, whether they be customer, host or inspector. This leads to interactions, including power relationships, which are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated (Foucault, 1984), and processes of surveillance, monitoring and social control which operate via normalising practices and judgement mechanisms (Donzelot, 1997; Foucault, 1986). The proprietor is exposed to the customer but in turn scrutinises the latter. Indeed, their roles are continuously played out and reversed and re-reversed in the drama of their face-to-face encounter. This drama is on two intertwined levels involving the hosts; firstly as individuals seeking out their own identity-fulfilment; while on another level implicating themselves with the other (Caruana, 2007), in this case the guest. Although the host is exposed, the latter is a gentle exposure as the host feels a sense of privilege in this interaction and is sensitive to the proximity of the guest. It is in this proximity to the other that their feelings of responsibility, combined with exposure in a self-revelatory sense, are opened up in a positive way to the other (Levinas, 1991; Roberts, 2001). This is the premise on which the host acts first of all with the inspector, while the latter is still unknown and in the guise of guest. However, once the inspector's identity is revealed the 'gentleness' of the previous type of exposure is gone and a local relationship is transformed into one which is set in a new broader light reflecting the shadow of the VisitScotland corporate body. The 'proximate' other of the guest is uncovered in a shock to reveal a 'distant' judgmental, inspectorial other as the representative of an institution which can also reward or punish (Roberts, 2003).

Both the proprietor and inspector are involved in a game in order to leverage authority over the other to reduce their respective feelings of vulnerability as a result of the exposure which takes place with surveillance. For the inspector, this is derived from the authority invested in their role as a representative of the quality assurance system and the rewards or sanctions that they are able to implement. For the proprietor, it is from their voluntary participation and role as 'client' to the tourist board, and their ability to provide feedback or complaints about inspectors and the grading process. However, there is always a sense of incompleteness in both the positive and negative aspects of this game (Roberts, 2005). Ambivalent attitudes and reactions are very much evident. Negative emotions are expressed particularly towards the inspector, especially where criticisms are perceived to be directed towards the proprietor's sense of identity involving personal tastes, values and possessions. This is counteracted by the continual pleasures to be found by the host in exposure through performative display and their more gentle sense of hospitality and care for the other, which is indeed an essential part of their 'being' (Levinas, 1991). Of course, as regards the inspector, this can eventually be combined with the host's delight in a positive outcome, partly compensating for the covertness, the scrutiny level brought to bear, and the shock revelation of exposure once the true identity of the inspector is known.

The study's findings highlight how overall the struggle to contain and commodify their homes as B&Bs resulted in contested articulations of the public-private boundary as proprietors became subject to covert surveillance, resulting in a personal exposure of a kind which they often find threatening and negating of who they think they are. This can be found even injurious in nature especially compared to the more

positive and self-affirming exposure to the other which is part of their daily living and working. The ‘shock’ of the former more injurious type of exposure is particularly useful in highlighting how this particular type of covert surveillance encounter is one which is characterised by greater personal vulnerability, ‘the sudden address from elsewhere that we cannot pre-empt’ (Butler 2004: 26). This out-of-control exposure (Levinas, 1978) explains to some degree the strength of proprietors’ reactions to grading, and was a necessary precursor to the intense power plays around inspection. Moreover initial exposure of this type that they may experience can set the tone for any subsequent counter-activity, which takes place ‘undercover’ and is conducted through informal networks. Surrounding the B&B was ‘a political economy of interiority’ (Ball, 2009) perpetuated by VisitScotland, and voluntarily entered into by the proprietor, which relied on the commodification of the home-space and the convincing elucidation of certain proprietor performativities. At times, however, the inspection process stripped away this performative layer to expose the aesthetic judgements and personal tastes of B&B owners, getting to the heart of their private domestic identities (Di Domenico, 2008; Di Domenico and Fleming, 2009). For the proprietor, successful maintenance, articulation and adaptation of the public-private boundary are critical: while its mobilisation is empowering, its violation is painful.

The ambivalent state of self-exposure described at two levels created a complex and fascinating paradox. Evocative of Gabriel’s (2005) conceptualisation of ‘glass cages’ and ‘glass palaces’, the hosts enjoy opening their homes to the gaze and judgement of others, especially their customers, and even sometimes the inspector, when they are able to confirm a positive view of their home-business. However, they thereby make

themselves vulnerable, and potentially sacrifice their level of comfort and individuality, by accepting an unwelcome or critical covert gaze. The quality controls to which many are subject can appear both as a medium of entrapment and as an invited affirmation of their individual tastes and provision of customer service. This paradox also involves the surrendering of their freedom of expression and individuality by accepting such scrutiny. The standardisation of quality controls and benchmarks becomes a medium of entrapment, thus constricting their sense of identity and exposing their vulnerabilities. The proprietor can choose to engage with this process and court the gaze, attempting to expose such 'desirable' aspects which they wish to emphasise, or alternatively, choose to reject membership completely due perhaps to their own fear of rejection, their discomfort at being judged, and their awareness that the shock of a 'brutish' exposure of any institutionally-defined faults could be a threat to their way of life and earning their living (Roberts, 2001).

Responses to Surveillance and the Inspection Process

It is not surprising that the proprietors also develop network-based support mechanisms and strategies in response to the covert surveillance to which they are subject. When considering the psychological literature on workplace monitoring, many aspects of the inspection process fall foul of its recommendations. Thus, for example, the surveillance takes place in the proprietors' homes, generally an 'off-limits' area (Zweig and Webster, 2002). The B&B proprietors seemed to be in a constant struggle with the boundaries of what they thought was appropriate for scrutiny. Proprietors could also not exercise a choice over the onset of the surveillance, because it was covert in nature (Stanton and Barnes Farrell, 1996). There

are also questions over the appropriateness of covert inspections because a simple star rating does not sufficiently take into account ratees' personal investments (Niehoff and Moorman, 1993). The proprietors were not given the chance to explain the development of their businesses; they were merely subject to judgement. From the standpoint of the host at least, at no point were the inspectors thought by the hosts to be understanding of their socio-emotional states as they were being monitored. The latter can negatively affect the reactions of those being monitored (Brewer and Ridgeway, 1998; Chalykoff and Kochan, 1989). The data show that it was an extremely anxiety-provoking process creating an impetus to deploy reactive strategies as part of a constant process of renegotiating the [perceived] balance of power with the inspector and thus the formal authority of the tourist board. Re-empowerment strategies seemed important to individuals highly protective of their autonomy and individuality as small enterprise owners. Thus, 'criticism of institutional structures' and 'alternative support networks and counter-surveillance' were deployed in a bid to counter the intrusive effects of inspections with some even choosing not to be part of the scheme at all. However, proprietor accounts of spying, intelligence gathering, profiling and de-cloaking inspectors suggest they were also acting within a counter-surveillant mode, taking great delight in attempts to outwit, experiencing thrills when 'posing' as mystery guests and exposing inconsistencies in VisitScotland inspections. The owners' use of their networks partially 'neutralised' the effects of the surveillance process by allowing proprietors to regain a sense of control. It enabled the owners to develop knowledge about inspections and rationalise the seemingly arbitrary judgement criteria to which they were subject.

It is interesting that the game was taken a step further by VisitScotland to make it more complex in that these responses from the proprietors were met with counter-resistance strategies on the part of the tourist board. These included methods such as placing inspectors to carry out visits in regions where they would be unlikely to be known; preventing specific inspectors from assessing certain establishments due to these same individuals having carried out previous inspection visits or because of a personal link; the use of alternative days such as weekends when visits are not normally performed; the substitution of inspectors in order to try to retain the covert nature of grading; and the use of inspectors who may not match proprietors' preconceptions in terms of gender or whether they work individually or as a pair. Knowledge gaps will always feature in surveillance locales, opening gaps for tactical and complex games of resistance and counter-resistance. Therefore, we argue that the inspection process goes from one type of power asymmetry (Munro, 1999) to another. Thus the proprietor feels positive and in control in their dealings with regular customers, but vulnerable in their interactions with inspectors and even with customers who as 'casuals' could be inspectors posing covertly, thereby negatively affecting the host-guest relationship with suspicions of subterfuge. The hosts' subsequent attempts to regain power through resistance strategies are then in turn actively counteracted by the tourist board. These complex layers of resistance and counter-resistance show how it is not only the proprietor who resists and attempts to subvert the inspection process, but also the tourist board officials and inspectors who, aware of these strategies, in turn respond by trying to thwart the success of these attempts through their own counter-resistance techniques. This interactive 'dance' illustrates the complex and dynamic actions and reactions of proprietors actively

resisting and second guessing official attempts to standardise and scrutinise their home-businesses, while they are in turn being played at their own 'game' with another layer of complexity in a 'double bluff' exchange.

Conclusion

The contextual focus of this study, the B&B in the private residence of the owner, has allowed us to uncover insights into surveillance in an interactive service setting where home and work domains dynamically overlap, affecting the everyday lives especially of their proprietors. These individuals were candid in their descriptions of their experiences of surveillance within their homes, and of the power dynamics involved. They expressed their acute sense of vulnerability towards the inspector in comparison to the genuine customer, who is a more real and proximate focus of their enterprises and lifestyles. Indeed, the research has revealed fascinating views and standpoints from the proprietors, the inspectors and tourist board officials in relation to surveillance and exposure in the home-business, which remains a largely hidden and neglected site of interactive service work in the organization studies literature.

In this paper we sought to move beyond the familiar accounts in the surveillance literature of more passive and linear resistance by providing evidence and critique of a context in which there are complex layers of resistance and counter-resistance being enacted. This was seen to have been fuelled by the shock of a profound personal exposure engendered through the type of covert surveillance method employed by the tourist board. As well as subjects of control, power and scrutiny as a result of surveillance, the surveilled subjects are also exposed in a different way in their daily

interactions as vulnerable, desirous, thrill-seeking, inventive, mischievous, playful, performative, corporeal, familial and hospitable to others. Taking a Levinasian perspective, this paper suggests, based on the data, an extension to the 'exposure' concept in terms of the need to place the 'exposed' subject at the centre of analyses adopting a surveillance lens. In relation to the B&B proprietors of this study, we see that they have chosen a lifestyle business involving a Levinasian type of felt responsibility for the 'other', which in their case they have as hosts for their paying guests. This type of responsibility openly exposes the self, and indeed the B&B hosts have voluntarily chosen to expose the context of their lives to their guests. By extension, they do so also to the hotel inspectors from VisitScotland with its own particular covert inspectorial procedures. The case of the B&B is indeed unique and fascinating in this respect as the key actors, the proprietor, inspector and customer, encounter the two types of exposure; one being a more gentle, positive experience due to the courted and proximate presence of the other in face-to-face relations; the other being the shock of exposure when the cared-for other turns out to be a powerful, judgemental other who, once hidden, has unmasked to reveal the social control and disciplinary power of the institution in which the relationship in reality is rooted.

Through the lens of self-defined views, the experience of surveillance can be understood at many different levels: as an issue of personal, ontological security and vulnerability; as a drama that involves not only the self in relation to itself but one that continually implicates the other person; and as the outcome of the ongoing struggle and negotiation of working within the grading and classification system of a particular institutional structure. The B&B owners experienced all of these elements in a high-

stakes surveillance process which in attempting to bind individuals to the corporate source, in itself does not sufficiently acknowledge the proprietors' personal investments and individuality. Ultimately we argue that the experience of surveillance is profound and significant to these individuals and their everyday working lives. It highlights the complexity and ambiguity that can exist in the individual's experience of surveillance in the home, particularly we argue, when commercial transactions are introduced into its logic and function and it is converted into a site of service work linked to the highly individual and personal nature of such businesses.

Future research should explore other settings where there is the possibility to study surveillance in relation to inspections and the different types of exposure involved which have been highlighted here. It would be of interest to find further contexts where there is an overlap between home-work dimensions in order to discern different experiences of surveillance and whether the highly personalised and complex nature of exposure and consequent feelings of vulnerability are similarly observed. Other examples of inspections of these highly complex and confluent spaces include the education inspectors of the home-school or other home-based educational provision, social work inspectors of child-care facilities in the home, and occupational health inspectors of private homes where care workers are employed to look after the sick, disabled or elderly. If subject-centred experiences of the more 'gentle' form of exposure are similarly in evidence in these care-based home contexts, then further research in these types of settings will enrich this level of analysis. In terms of further exploration of the second level of analysis of the concept involving the 'shock of exposure', then it would be of interest to revisit other covert inspection processes

within service settings, such as ‘mystery shopping’. This would reveal whether covert inspection is felt to be injurious in any way, and whether comparable manifestations of subversive behaviour and re-negotiations of the balance of power to counter the tensions incurred by such surveillance practices will also be similarly manifest.

It is also possible to extend the two-tiered notion of exposure that we have drawn out from Levinas and apply it to more conventional organizational contexts and procedures. Our notion of exposure could lead to a more fine grained understanding of the everyday social and spatial setting of the workplace, where taken-for-granted aspects of employees’ private selves are sometimes unwittingly and at other times deliberately brought to bear on work processes and interactions. Of particular interest is how the proximity of bodies in the workplace perhaps leads to an unspoken politics of self/other awareness which intersects with more formal evaluations such as appraisal or more everyday forms of performance management. Further research could explore how our theorisations of exposure can intersect with other analyses of workplace social interactions and micro-politics, particularly those featuring the body and diversity issues, such as those involving gender, sexuality, race, religion, age and disability. As social beings we make connections with others on a day-to-day basis. Although we can never really know the other, through work we reach a certain closeness and ‘sensibility’ of the other, which enables all manner of organization to function.

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