

**“Self-Appraisal System”, a Key for Autonomy or  
a Technology of Governmentality?: A Case Study  
on Accountability Policy and Power in Education  
in South Korea**

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# **DECLARATION**

I, Taeyoung Yun confirm that the work presented in my thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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# ABSTRACT

This research raises a critical question about a policy shift within the accountability context in South Korean schools, specifically in the local educational government of Gyeonggi-do: whether the Schools' Self-Appraisal System (hereafter SSAS), which started in 2009, was a true means of teacher empowerment with enhanced autonomy or an evolved method of control through different and complex approaches to power exertion under neo-liberal governmentality.

To answer this question, the study addresses teachers' perceptions, practices, and self-translation regarding autonomy, control, subjectivity, and professionalism under the current accountability policy, represented by the SSAS. The thesis argues that the SSAS is a technology of neo-liberal governmentality, alongside other current performative accountability measures, and supports this argument with evidence of practical changes in policy enactment, focusing on how autonomy, surveillance, and accountability contribute to the strengthening of power and government. This core thesis is supported by empirical data collected from a case study that interviewed 16 teachers from 4 different primary and secondary schools and 2 current and past policymakers and theoretical discussions on how the SSAS operates with diverse political technologies, tactics, strategies, and techniques regarding teacher autonomy, surveillance, and accountability. It also examines the consequences or changes in terms of teacher professionalism and subjectivity, using concepts and explanations on power from Michel Foucault, such as bio-power, pastoral power and governmentality.

After thorough examination, I conclude that the SSAS is an extension of political control, specifically the technology of neo-liberal governmentality, which is more intricate and effective in addressing the modern and post-modern neo-liberal teacher population in Korean

educational settings, making overall accountability more complex and discursive.

# IMPACT STATEMENT

This thesis provides significant insights into the dynamics of power, control, and autonomy in the context of accountability policies within South Korean education. Specifically, the research examines the Schools' Self-Appraisal System (SSAS) and its dual nature as both a means of teacher empowerment and a mechanism of neoliberal governmentality. The findings have the potential to generate meaningful benefits both within and beyond academia.

The study contributes to theoretical and methodological advancements in education policy research by integrating Foucauldian concepts of power—such as governmentality, biopower, and pastoral power—with empirical case studies. By doing so, it enriches the discourse on post-performative accountability, professionalism, and teacher subjectivity, while advancing scholarship on the intersection of power and education. These insights can inform curriculum development in education studies, public policy, and sociology, as well as foster critical thinking in academic discussions on governance in education.

Furthermore, the study's findings on the lived experiences of teachers under the SSAS offer methodological guidance for future research, particularly in qualitative inquiry and case study design. It highlights the value of combining theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence, setting a precedent for interdisciplinary approaches in education policy analysis. This could inspire new research into accountability systems in different cultural and political contexts, providing a global perspective on governance in education.

The practical implications of this research extend to public policy design, educational governance, and professional practice.

Policymakers and education administrators can use the findings to critically evaluate the unintended consequences of accountability

systems like the SSAS, ensuring a balance between teacher autonomy and systemic oversight. The research identifies the presence of control embedded in neoliberal accountability measures and calls for the design of policies that genuinely empower educators while maintaining accountability.

The insights into the SSAS's dual nature could influence public discourse on education, helping stakeholders—including teachers, parents, and students—better understand how such systems shape professional identities and classroom dynamics. This understanding could lead to more collaborative and inclusive approaches to policy development and enactment.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations	Full Words
BMA	British Medical Association
CEDC	Chosun Education Deliberation Commission
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EMB	education and management bureau
GERM	Global Educational Reform Movement
GOE	Gyeonggi-do Office of Education
KECE	Korea Education Committee on Education
KEDI	Korean Education Development Institute
KERIS	Korea Education and Research Information Service
NAEA	National Assessment of Educational Achievement
NC	National Curriculum
NEIS	National Educational Information System
NHS	National Health Service
NPM	New Public Management
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PBIS	Performance-Based Incentive Schemes
PCER	Presidential Committee on Education Reform
PDF	Purpose-Driven Funds
PLC	professional learning communities
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SAT	Standardised Assessment Test
SDCI	School-Driven Comprehensive Inspection
SIP	School Information Publication
SIPS	School Information Publication System
SLT	Senior Leadership Teams
SMOE	Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education
SSAS	Schools' Self-Appraisal System
SU	Soviet Union
SCNR	Supreme Council for National Reconstruction
TAPD	Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development
THRSP	Teacher Human Resources System for Promotion
USAMGIK	U.S. army military government in Korea

# Chapter One. INTRODUCTION

Nobody would deny that education is something to do with politics in modern administrative states. Education is closely bound to political thinking by means of diverse policies. In particular, over the last forty years, policies of assuring accountability based on ‘performativity’, which is about measuring performance of an individual or a group by standard within a particular discourse (Ball, 2003; Perryman, 2006), in education has been internationally adopted by many countries, including America, Portugal and England (Moos et al., 2008; Suspitsyna, 2010; Magalhães et al., 2013; Atkinson, 2014) and this has also been the case for South Korea (Kim et al., 2014) whilst managerialism has been emphasised in tandem with the adoption of neoliberalism in education. Research has reported that the work, identity, subjectivity and professionalism of teachers has been strategically regulated and even manipulated as performative accountability restricts autonomy and enhances control of teachers and their work (Ball, 2003; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2010; Bodman et al., 2012; Buchanan, 2015; Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2017).

This thesis seeks to critically analyse and examine the current accountability culture in South Korea in relation to the governing of teachers, with the prime focus on Foucault’s conception of governmentality. Through the research, it explores how teachers’ practice, subjectivity and professionalism are presently governed and transformed, with a focus on the different governmental strategies under the current accountability policy, represented by the Schools’ Self-Appraisal System (hereafter SSAS) in South Korean schools. This study will use the theoretical concepts of Foucault’s power and governmentality which provide theories and insights on how different accountability policies were constructed and practiced, and how the new mode of accountability policy and measures produce new kinds

of policy subjects (Ball, 2016) during the transitional era of government. The data for the research were gathered by qualitative research methodologies and techniques from frontline teachers and policy-makers and managed and analysed using thematic analysis.

## **1.1. The Current Picture**

As a starting point, I will introduce the current picture of education policies relating to teacher accountability in South Korea, many of which stem from the influence of neoliberalism. These neoliberal education policies, I will argue, have significantly impacted the autonomy and working conditions of teachers in South Korea, leading to their increased control and subjugation. These policies, emphasizing accountability, standardization, and market-driven principles, have reshaped the educational landscape in several ways.

One of the primary mechanisms through which neoliberal policies control teachers is the heavy emphasis on standardized testing. Teachers are under constant pressure to produce high test scores, across all age groups, which are often used as the primary measure of educational success and achievement. This focus on testing narrows the curriculum, forcing teachers to 'teach to the test' rather than fostering a more holistic educational experience. The pressure to achieve high grades can lead to significant stress and burnout among teachers (Seth, 2002). This means that teachers' job security, promotions, and salaries are directly influenced by their students' performance, which is translated as their performance. Such evaluations can undermine professional autonomy and reduce teachers' professionalism in their teaching methods (Kim, J., 2019). Another consequence of neoliberal educational reforms is the increased administrative workload. Teachers are required to spend more time on bureaucratic tasks, data collection, and reporting to meet accountability requirements. This administrative burden detracts

from the time and energy teachers can devote to actual teaching and student engagement (Kwon, 2019). The neoliberal agenda also promotes privatization and marketization within the education sector. In South Korea, this has manifested in the proliferation of private tutoring centres, called 'hagwon', which compete with state schools. The competition with hagwons pressures state school teachers to deliver similar results without comparable resources or compensation, further subjugating them to market forces (Lee, J., 2006). These policies have collectively diminished teachers' professional autonomy and increased their subjugation within the educational system.

In terms of performative accountability and appraisal policies, the Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development (hereafter TAPD) system, introduced in 2001, is a prime example of neoliberal accountability in South Korean education. TAPD requires teachers to undergo regular evaluations based on student performance, classroom management, and peer reviews. This system places significant pressure on teachers to focus on measurable outcomes, often linked to student test scores, rather than broader educational goals (Kim, J., 2019). The reliance on student performance as a key metric can undermine teachers' ability to address diverse learning needs and foster creative, critical thinking skills. Performance-Based Incentive Schemes (hereafter PBIS) are another manifestation of neoliberal policies. In South Korea, teachers' salaries and incentives are increasingly tied to their quantifiable performance evaluations, such as on teaching hours, number of subjects and students' standardized test results (Lee, Y., 2017). This approach not only heightens competition among teachers but also incentivizes teaching practices aimed solely at improving test scores and administrative workload. Such policies discourage collaboration and sharing of best practices among teachers, fostering a more individualistic and competitive environment. In addition, increased administrative oversight and reporting requirements are additional tools of neoliberal accountability. South Korean teachers are often required to maintain

detailed records of their teaching activities, student progress, and professional development efforts in the digital system, called the ‘National Educational Information System (hereafter NEIS)’ which all state-run and independent schools across the country must use. This bureaucratic burden is intended to ensure accountability but can significantly detract from the time teachers have to engage with students and develop innovative teaching methods (Park, S. 2020). The emphasis on digital documentation and evidence and compliance over pedagogical creativity and student-centered approaches exemplifies the controlling nature of these policies. School evaluations and rankings also play a critical role in controlling teachers. Schools in South Korea are ranked based on student performance on national standardized tests, and these rankings can affect administrative decisions and public perception. Teachers in lower-ranked schools, for example for the achievement of the ‘College Scholastic Ability Test’, may face increased scrutiny and pressure to improve test scores, often without additional resources or support (Jang, H., 2018). This system perpetuates a vicious cycle of stress and performance anxiety, particularly in schools serving disadvantaged communities. The Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education has enacted policies that closely monitor and evaluate teacher performance. One notable policy is the ‘Classroom Observation and Feedback’ initiative, where external evaluators observe and assess teachers' classroom practices. While arguably intended to provide constructive feedback, this policy can feel intrusive and punitive to teachers, particularly when linked to high-stakes outcomes like job security and promotions (Chung, 2016).

Neoliberal accountability and appraisal policies thrive in South Korea and they have created a fertile climate of control and subjugation for teachers. The emphasis on performance metrics, standardized testing, and bureaucratic oversight undermines professional autonomy and increases stress. These policies prioritize measurable outcomes over holistic educational development, often at the expense of teacher



morale and student learning experiences.

## **1.2. Orientation**

Unfortunately, a substantial number of newly-employed teachers in South Korea start their teaching career without awareness of such accountability and appraisal policy context and the close relationship between education, politics and economy (or political economy). That is, in the modern liberal and democratic societies, a considerable number of teachers believe that they are free from external power in the classroom teaching and management. This was true for me during the first few years of my teaching career in South Korea.

I have served as a teacher of English in Secondary state-funded independent schools for around ten years. I have been a good and docile policy subject according to the standard and norm set by the performative accountability and appraisal policies of the time. I always pushed pupils to produce better outcomes and performances to be accountable for results and achievement and I thought these were also good for me to be considered as a competent/competitive teacher. I didn't realize that I had been normalized and programmed by such policy discourses, and how my subjectivity has changed with respect to the standards/aims/aspirations of policy-makers and authorities. When I reviewed my professional life while reading works of different scholars, such as Stephen Ball (2003; 2013) and Jane Perryman (2006; 2007; 2009), about performative accountability, I found that I had become exactly the 'good teacher' imagined in the 'dreams and schemes' of a neoliberal rationality rather than a good teacher for myself, colleagues and pupils, and that I have been the subject of strategies and technologies in the power game that effectively underpin the aims of control. This is also true for many other teachers. Many aspects of education, such as pedagogy, curriculum and classroom managements have been manipulated by

the aspirations and power relations between philosophical, political and economic rationalities.

Motivated by such critical awareness and orientation, I strongly believe that studying and uncovering how teachers – their work, subjectivity and professionalism - can be controlled and regulated by means of diverse governmental tactics/strategies/technologies is highly exigent and vital. It is because I believe that most teachers would like to be free/neutral from heterogeneous political and economic power when they teach pupils, though the reality is they are not. Thus, it is urgent and crucial to explore how they are governed by power, as they may not recognize how political power has effectively controlled teachers and education throughout times of the modern Korean governments after the end of the World War II and they have been the subject and object of such control.

So, as briefly described above, I have paid in-depth attention to the current complicated context of teacher accountability and appraisal systems and their political complexity in South Korea. The current conservative administration in South Korea aims to be a strong but small government as the Conservatives do in England. However, before they came to power in 2022, the democrat government and the local educational authorities that were in line with the previous government gradually replaced some of the education policies based upon neoliberal and neoconservative ideas and ethos, such as school diversification and privatisation and direct inspection. One typical case is the appraisal policy for teachers and schools. Then, the government launched a new appraisal scheme which is ostensibly underpinned by responsibility and autonomy of teachers, the SSAS. In the new appraisal system, teachers are supposed to be actively involved in the whole process of appraisal from setting standards to reviewing their own pedagogy and teaching. However, though this action of shift does arguably and potentially point towards some positive developments in terms of teachers' autonomy and professionalism, it has not been scrutinized whether or not this is

another technology of control using personal responsibility and self-entrepreneurship, which steer individuals indirectly to fit into aspirations of those of government. Over the course of this thesis, I illuminate that the current change is a mere transformation and evolution of technology of government, rather than a fundamental change of policy nature/direction to promote or guarantee genuine independence or freedom of education.

### **1.3. Finding Foucault**

Dating back to when I initially thought of the research project, as a former teacher in South Korea and a current teacher in the UK, I was more inclined to focus on the topic of teacher professionalism and how to enhance it in practice, rather than on how policies and political power affect the practice, professionalism, and subjectivity of teachers. However, exploring topics related to teacher professionalism and identity, and extensively reading about the detrimental effects and consequences of performative accountability policies in education in the first year of my PhD programme, I realized that illuminating how power controls frontline teachers in education via policy in the post-modern states that adhere to neo-liberalism in both politics and economy is one of the pressing and fundamental issues to address in order to challenge current ways of thinking and doing, and to make a small but still important contribution to debates which are concerned with securing and enhancing teacher professionalism and empowering teachers.

During subsequent comprehensive research, I was surprised to find that teachers in South Korea experience very similar constraints, regulations, and disciplinary and governmental control through accountability policies in their practice to those in England and other countries, and strongly suffer from them. This indicates that similar rationalities and power exertions have imposed control on teachers in

both contexts, suggesting the existence of tactics, strategies, and technologies that are effective in controlling the contemporary population of teachers in both countries. Though such power and rationalities are not physically visible or identifiable, I became interested in uncovering and explaining such governmental power and mechanisms in terms of how they control teachers and affect their professionalism and subjectivity.

Though there are multiple governmental rationalities operating in the power game of politics, I realized that in contemporary liberal democracies like South Korea, as well as most Western societies, they are characterized by the significant influence of neo-liberalism on societies and individual 'liberal mentalities' (Dean, 2011, p. 175). This ideology emphasizes free-market-driven and right-of-centre political viewpoints that prioritize individual freedom and rational choice, particularly in the individual economy. It advocates for minimal state intervention, although the paradox of neo-liberalism is that it affords the state new means of governing, believing that individual freedom ultimately benefits society and the political system of democracy, which decentralizes and distributes power. The neoliberal political rationality of power in such liberal democracies therefore allows citizens to have and exercise freedom, albeit a shaped or programmed one with political aims, and places responsibility for rational choices of individuals using such freedom, whether or not they are beneficial, on themselves. Foucault stated that 'freedom is something to be contrived by a vital policy that promotes the conditions of free, entrepreneurial conduct of economically rational individuals' (2008, p. 148), rather than a natural attribute of human beings. For Hayek, freedom is 'a product of cultural evolution conceived as the development of civilization and its discipline' (1979, p. 155). Whether it is a product shaped by policy or a product of cultural evolution, one thing in common in these explanations for the contemporary concept of freedom is that it is an artifact (Dean, 2011, p. 183).

This understanding of the characteristics of neoliberal governmental rationality and the concept of freedom which is socially constructed led me to seek mechanisms regarding power exertion on individuals in various professional fields, including education. I then discovered Foucault (1977; 2009; 2010). I immediately delved into his conceptions and explanations of power, its nature, modalities, technologies, and evolution. In particular, I became attracted to his concepts of biopower, pastoral power, and governmentality as useful conceptual theories to adopt for explaining power exertion on Korean teachers who operate within the complicated accountability context. Specifically, Foucault's conceptions of power and governmentality provided me with a nuanced framework for understanding how neoliberal governmental rationalities control contemporary populations and shape their behaviors, practices, and identities.

As will be discussed much more in depth in the literature review and data analysis chapters, biopower refers to the regulation of populations through an array of institutions, practices, and policies aimed at managing life and health. Mitchell Dean explains that biopower is exercised through various governmental techniques that aim to optimize the life of the population, enhancing its productivity and well-being while simultaneously controlling it (Dean, 2010) through, for example, genocide, forced sterilization, which is the flipside of bio-power in the name of population. For example, vaccination campaigns and health monitoring systems illustrate biopower by promoting public health while also serving as tools for surveillance and control as well as how is this relevant for neo-lib accountability policies. Pastoral power, a concept derived from Foucault's study of Christian institutions, describes a form of power that is concerned with guiding and caring for individuals, akin to the role of a shepherd with their flock. This power is exercised through continuous, individualized attention and aims to ensure the salvation and well-being of individuals within the community. Rose and Miller (1992) elaborate that in contemporary society, pastoral power is

manifested in the welfare state, educational systems, and therapeutic practices, where the state and various professionals, such as teachers, social workers, and therapists, act as 'pastors' guiding individuals toward desired behaviours and norms. Governmentality combines the concepts of governance and mentality to describe the art of government that involves the management of populations through a range of institutions, practices, and knowledge systems. It represents a shift from sovereign power, which rules through direct imposition, to a more subtle form of power that operates through the regulation of self-governance among individuals. Rose and Miller (1992) highlight that governmentality involves the use of various techniques and forms of knowledge, such as statistics, sociology, and economics, to create norms and standards by which populations are governed. This includes the development of policies and programmes that encourage individuals to regulate their own behaviours in accordance with societal goals, such as health promotion, crime prevention, and economic productivity. Dean (2010) further notes that governmentality encompasses a wide array of practices and discourses that seek to shape the conduct of individuals and populations, aligning personal aspirations and practices with state objectives. I should note here that the brief description of biopower, pastoral power and governmentality sound similar here, due to the fact that they are very much interrelated and reflect Foucault's development of ideas and shifts of position. However, some of the conceptual and interpretational differences will be further discussed and examined in the following literature review and the data chapters.

Grasping such conceptions of power and their mechanisms, I firmly reached a conviction that a Foucauldian perspective on the modalities of power will mirror and expose the contemporary control from the neoliberal governmentality on the Korean teachers via accountability systems. In particular, I was able to question whether or not the SSAS is a means of control or a true outlet for teacher freedom and professionalism, as stated in the policy texts of the SSAS.

## **1.4. Outline of the Chapters**

To properly address the question on the SSAS and its relationship with Foucault's conceptions, this thesis is structured with eight interconnected chapters.

Chapter one is the introduction, which is this chapter that outlines the context, orientation and the structure of the research.

Chapter two explores key theoretical concepts underpinning the thesis in reference to existing research and arguments. In the first section after its introduction, I examine the professionalism of teachers in relation to neoliberal influences, including re- or de-professionalization. Following this, I address the formation and change of teacher identity and the subjectification of teachers due to socio-political influences. The subsequent section deals with the notion and discussion of performative accountability in education and its policy realizations. The discussions on performative accountability policies include their drawbacks. In the final section of the chapter, I discuss Foucault's conceptions of power, providing explanations of sovereign and disciplinary power that link to former accountability schemes before the SSAS in South Korea, and governmentality that encompasses biopower and pastoral power, which are referred to in discussing the SSAS. Additionally, neoliberal governmentality is further examined in depth as a predominant political rationality and linked to the current accountability context in South Korea.

Chapter three engages with the the history and genealogy of accountability since the birth of the modern government in South Korea, with particular attention to performative accountability and its policies since the 5.31 education reform in 1995 and onwards. It discusses the emergence, dominance, and reactions to discourses that gave rise to particular sets of policies reflecting the political aims and aspirations of political rationalities. Although it spans the entire

timeline since the first government of the country, it is more than a linear description of the history of accountability. The chapter focuses on several key discourses and their dynamics at critical moments of shift and transition in Korean education accountability. It addresses issues around power relations inherent in accountability policies to create the current policy environment.

Chapter four specifies the key research questions and demonstrates the suitable research methodology to tackle them. It illustrates the four main research questions. It also justifies why the research methods, case study, primarily using interviews, are well-suited to answer the questions. The information on research participants and the school participants for the interviews is presented in the chapter. The criteria considered in the selection process of research participants are also detailed. The methods of data collection and analysis are explained and some ethical considerations are followed at the end of the chapter.

The following four chapters, from chapter five to chapter eight, analyse data collected from interviews with 16 participant teachers and 2 former and current policymakers, along with data from policy texts and other various written sources about the SSAS. All the chapters begin with a short introduction that outlines findings related to the specific topics of each chapter. Chapter five discusses teachers' initial perceptions of the SSAS compared to the former accountability system, the School Inspection, including the lingering effects from past experiences with the previous policy. Chapter six and seven addresses the SSAS as a political technology for controlling teachers. They examines how autonomy, surveillance and accountability are experienced and whether these qualities are strengthened under the SSAS. Additionally, they explores the technologies and discourses of government, such as the technology of the self and the collective via professional learning groups. All practical data related to power exertion and political control of authorities through the policy are analysed based on Foucauldian conceptions of power. Chapter eight



further examines the impact of the SSAS on the professionalism and subjectification of teachers. Based on the data and relevant theories on power, the changes in professional identity under the accountability system are analyzed, concluding that the SSAS is an evolved means of neoliberal governmental control over contemporary teachers. A short but comprehensive conclusion of the data chapters follows.

As a chapter for further and in-depth discussion, chapter nine refers back to Foucaudian notions of power and control to conceptually support the argument that the SSAS as a highly evolved political mean of control, being tailored to the contemporary teacher population in South Korea.

In the conclusion of the thesis, which is chapter ten, the thesis concludes that the current accountability context in South Korea has not allowed teachers to experience extended professional freedom and autonomy. Instead, it has enhanced control via strengthened surveillance and evolved political technologies devised by dominant political rationalities. In this context, teachers have been benign political actors, with no significant difference under the shift in accountability approach shown in the SSAS.

## **Chapter Two. LITERATURE REVIEW: THE KEY CONCEPTS**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This literature review investigates several key themes of the thesis and concepts that are drawn upon: teacher professionalism, identity, subjectification, performative accountability, and Foucauldian conceptions of power and governmentality. By exploring these interconnected concepts, the review aims to provide a basis of conceptual understanding of the key arguments of the thesis as well as the contemporary landscape of teacher accountability and the power dynamics in South Korea.

### **2.2. Teacher Professionalism**

Definitions of professionalism vary across time and place (Whitty & Wisby, 2006) and the nature of professionalism is constantly changing. As Halon (1998) asserts, the values and attributes of professionals are fluid and subject to change and struggle between different occupational groups at any particular time. Back in the early 1900's in England, for example, the value of individualistic professionalism, which entailed the idea of service to those who could pay, was the dominant paradigm, before the emergence of new value of professional services that meet the mass of people in need rather than a particular group. As an example, the doctors in the British Medical Association (hereafter BMA) struggled and tried to boycott acceptance of the control of the National Health Service (hereafter NHS) for the public in 1948, until their demands on payments were partly met (Rivett, 1998; Webster, 2002). The BMA was concerned about losing their autonomy and professional control under a state-run

health system. They feared that the government would interfere in clinical decisions and that doctors would become mere employees rather than independent professionals. The BMA was also worried about how doctors would be paid and their working conditions. The shift from private practice to a publicly funded system for the public raised concerns about potential reductions in income and changes in the structure of their remuneration (Rivett, 1998; Webster, 2002). This was a struggle towards the value of a broader scope of professional service as well as for the survival of the profession.

After that, a new version of professionalism, called ‘commercialised professionals’, arose during the post-1948 era (Dunne, 2021), where state intervention and market forces began to play a larger role in shaping the professional landscape. This phenomenon was noted particularly in health services after the formation of the NHS in 1948, with the advancement and boost of the managerial and entrepreneurial economic culture (Givati et al, 2018). This professionalism normally stresses these three factors, as Hanlon (1998) describes:

- technical ability: this will allow one to practice on the profession but it will not guarantee advancement nor success.
- managerial skill: this is the ability to manage other employees, the ability to balance budget and capacity to manage and satisfy clients.
- the ability to bring in business and/or act in an entrepreneurial way.

The idea of commercialised professionalism was generated and reinforced by the culture of pursuing profit rather than meeting needs, and granting priority to the clients with economic power. Therefore, it has mostly significantly emerged in areas of the private sector such as accountancy, law and engineering (Halon, 1998).

Along with that, notional changes of professionalism, whether rapid

or gradual, seem to be facilitated by the emergence of social consensus. The state professional sector expanded rapidly to serve the general public following the development of the consensus that demanded the expansion of welfare, such as healthcare, education, and safety at work. The expansion resulted in the creation and eventual domination of social service professionalism. In this respect, a typical list of characteristics of professionalism was suggested which included such items as (Whitty 2006):

- the use of skills based on theoretical knowledge
- education and training in those skills certified by examination
- a code of professional conduct oriented towards the ‘public good’
- a powerful professional organization

The flow of definitions and redefinitions of professionalism, which reflect the changing nature of the professionalism according to time and era, has influenced the shape of the modern professionalism of teachers.

Autonomy is generally regarded as a key component in the modern world of professional occupations such as medicine and law, despite accountability being everywhere in reality. In the teaching profession, however, it is not easy to find societies that empower teachers by granting them sole autonomy in not only how to teach and also what to teach. The post-war era in South Korea, between the 1950s to mid-1990s, was the time that the teachers’ responsibility for curriculum development was relatively well respected, though the first National Curriculum (hereafter NC) of the country was introduced in 1954 and several revisions of the curriculum have been undergone. It means that both the NC and the teachers’ professionalism had played their roles in good harmony, while the framework of the national education

has been shaped across the revisions. Parents were expected to trust teachers to prescribe according to the educational diagnosis and needs of their children. Therefore, it can be said that the teachers' autonomy in determining their own tasks in the classroom, based on their knowledge, was a core value of teacher professionalism. From the mid-1990's, however, such autonomy was taken away from teachers with emergence of various discourses that shook teachers' professionalism, such as 'deficit' of teachers or 'classroom collapse' (refer to section 3.3. in chapter for more details), coupled with a strong demand of accountability from the government, alongside with the intellectual critique of public sector management on the part of neoliberals and public choice theorists (Whitty, 2006). Whitty (2006), referring to teacher professionalism in England which has been a key laboratory and exporter of neoliberal policies, suggested two major reasons that facilitated the rapid loss of autonomy in teachers' professionalism and they were true to education in South Korea. Firstly, globalization and neo-liberalism led to the notional change of teacher professionalism by putting a value on competition between educational institutions focused on visible educational results, such as standards in teaching and students' level of achievement. Also, the demand of accountability for public sector schools from parents who wanted a wider range of choices made changes inevitable. In Korea, for example, most parents, apart from those who could afford overseas education and fee-paying independent schools, wanted access to the equivalent level of state schools that their children could attend close to where they were living, so state schools had to be accountable and measurable by the standards set by the Korean governments since 1990s. Consequently, the traditional nature of teacher professionalism based on autonomy turned, rather dramatically, to the new one which is a mixture of two paradoxical forces, free-market competitiveness and accountability of a strong state. Whitty (2006) describes the reality of the change as follows.

This is operationalised through the range of targets and performance indicators, and associated league tables that have grown up around ‘marketised’ systems. Although justified in terms of providing information for the ‘consumer’ and greater public accountability, these indicators also enable government to scrutinise and direct providers. Standardised criteria now feed into the framework of targets and indicators that schools and individual teachers must work to, and the new assessment regimes provide a wealth of performance data for their managers at all levels of system.

(Whitty, 2006, p. 4)

The transformed conceptualization of teacher professionalism was reinforced by the Education Reform started from 31<sup>st</sup> May 1995 and onward, called *5.31. education reform*, which is the landmark shift in approaches in education which embraced the epitome of a policy combining market forces and state control, set by the Conservative government in Korea. The trend to pursue the balance between the market and state has been followed by the successive political rationalities – combining devolution, diversity, choice, and even privatization, on the one hand, and centralized regulation, monitoring and even pedagogical prescription, on the other (Whitty 2006). The government’s new view of the teaching profession of that age is very similar to the viewpoints summarized in the 1998 Green Paper in England, ‘Teachers: meeting the challenge of change’ (DfEE, 1998) as follows:

- to have high expectations of themselves and of all pupils
- to accept accountability
- to take personal and collective responsibility for improving their skills and subject knowledge
- to seek to base decisions on evidence of what works in schools in the UK and internationally
- to work in the partnership with other staff in schools

- to welcome the contribution that parents, business and others outside a school can make to its success
- to anticipate change and promote innovation

Being a professional teacher, from this point of view, is to accept a more externally managed vision of their own professional expertise (Furlong, 2013).

Critics of, and concerns towards these new concepts of teaching professionalism have emerged. The strange companions of marketisation and centralisation, and the establishment of standards for good teaching and teachers, are regarded as an unacceptable attack on teacher autonomy and creativity, ultimately demoting teachers from professionals to technicians (Ball, 1999). Darling-Hammond (1998) argues that teaching standards are not a magic bullet. By themselves, they cannot solve the problems of dysfunctional school organizations, outmoded curricula, inequitable allocation of resources, or lack of social supports for children and youth. Standards, like all reforms, hold their own dangers. Standard setting in all professions must be vigilant against the possibilities that practice could become constrained by the codification of knowledge that does not significantly acknowledge legitimate diversity of approaches or advances in the field. Also, Sachs (2003) said that the modern professional teacher, in the eyes of government, is increasingly one who works efficiently and effectively in meeting the standardized criteria set for the accomplishment of students and teachers as well as contributing to the school's formal accountability processes. He criticised the effort of establishing uniform standards for the teaching profession by examining the assumption that the application of a standard framework would make a difference to the quality of teaching. Furlong (2005) similarly argues that such professionalism accepts that decisions about what to teach, how to teach and how to assess children are made at school and national level rather than by individual teachers.

Meanwhile, from some sociologists' perspective, the change from the interventions of market forces and state control is seen as a process of re-professionalisation (Ball, 2008; Bailey, 2015), or de-professionalisation (Zeichner, 2014). Re- or de-professionalisation of the teaching profession has been in line with the spread of neoliberal education reform in the West, particularly by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government 1979-1991 in the UK and the Ronald Reagan Republican government since 1981 in the US. Then it became a 'Global Education Reform Movement' (Sahlberg, 2016). That is, this movement has become a significant global trend in education policy over the past 40 years across the globe, along with several key ideas such as devolution, choice, competition, efficiency and increasing performativity demands (Day, 2002), though specific policy development has been varied from country to country and government to government within a particular country (Whitty, 2006). As will be indicated in the policy context chapter, South Korean governments, since the mid-1990s and onward, have also imported and more or less surrendered to such neoliberal ideas as a central political ideology (Shin, 2010). Such systematic and government-driven upheaval demands the application of neoliberal ideas in education, placing priority on performativity. The emphasis on performativity has been coupled with neoconservative ideology that puts more emphasis on strong central command, control and order on the teaching profession. Neoconservatism as mainly advocated by the conservative governments and the new-right thinkers since mid-1990s pursued a so called 'modernization project' for teacher professionalism that sees teachers as complacent, elitist and favouring egalitarianism over pupil attainment, thus they are constructed as subjects 'ripe for reform (Ball, 2008. p . 144)'. In the beginning of 2000s, based upon discourses about the lowering quality of education (Adams, 2014, p.118) and increasing demand for a greater accountability of teachers, coupled with the economic downturn across the industrial West and East, policies that aim at stronger



central control and regulation, such as tougher inspection and performance-based incentive system, were introduced in state education in South Korea. Such measures for constant monitoring of performance, usually by data and outcomes, or ‘steering at a distance’ approach (Whitty, 2006, p.4) has contributed to making teachers ‘technicians’ and teaching as a ‘semi-profession’. As a result, a wide range of performative accountability mechanisms have weaved, like a web, via various measures like school inspections, performance related pay, (unofficial) school league tables combined with the publication of school performance, and even teacher training courses in which teachers are educated via a list of prescribed competencies in relation to subject knowledge and pedagogies, all of which aimed at best performance in teaching and managing pupils. Under such governmental power and political pressure, using performative accountability policies, teachers are encouraged to comply with, governmental directives, external criteria, targets, indicators and evaluations (Day, 2002; Ball, 2003) that defines ‘good education’, and a ‘good teacher’. Teachers were placed in the ‘conditions under which they are encouraged to achieve government targets and punishes those who do not’ (Day, 2002, p. 678). In this mechanism, teachers have suffered from routine surveillance under disciplinary power and became benign subject to policy and its demands (Perryman, 2006).

Under such processes of re- or de-professionalisation, many teachers have complied with a performativity-based agenda without criticism and resistance, though some have had a certain degree of reluctance to such agenda thus becoming neither ‘compliant’ nor ‘resistant’ (Wilkins, 2011), experiencing reduction in their ‘traditional’, ‘professional’ and ‘occupational’ classroom autonomy (Day, 2002). That is, for some, they have never experienced any degree of professional autonomy and independence to regulate their own affairs, plan lessons, assess student progress and make pedagogical choices without external pressure or strict oversight, all of which are guaranteed within the culture of occupational autonomy, as in the way

that other professions such as law and medicine have. Thus they subscribe to ‘controlled’ or ‘productive’ autonomy where practices such as the formal auditing of pupil’s learning and monitoring by senior teachers or the school leadership team and performance-based career progression are taken for granted (Perryman, 2006).

As a result, neoliberal teacher subjects have been created. Such teachers, regardless of their personal beliefs and experiences, and whether or not they are happy with current key aspects of central policy, teach to generate measurable outputs and to meet performance targets over personal enrichment (Moore and Clark, 2015), while enacting central policies that are essentially neoliberal in nature. This in turn informs a new form of professionalism, what Moore and Clark (2015) call ‘organizational’ professionalism. Adopting such organizational or entrepreneurial professionalism, teachers find themselves caught between, on the one hand, the old egalitarian hopes, emphasizing values such as honesty, inclusion, integrity, and critical thinking, of making a difference to the lives of each and every child they teach, and, on the other hand, the new necessity of preparing those same children for success in assessment that may lead them to relative socio-economic success in the precarious world of contemporary capitalism (Moore and Clark, 2015, pp. 671-675). This new conception of teacher professionalism has been further theorized by Chris Wilkins (2011), using his conception of the ‘post-performative teacher’. Post-performative teachers are still committed to the ideals of professionalism, such as autonomy and self-regulation, but they are also aware of and subscribe to the need to be accountable for their work, which potentially prevents them from the use professionalism in freer ways. This is important because, if teachers subscribe to organisational and post-performative professionalism, it arguably means that their autonomy is eroded at the expense of sticking to performative measures of accountability, which may change not only what they do but also who they are (Ball, 2003; Ball and Youdell, 2006), subjectivizing them as neoliberal

teacher subjects.

The consequences of the re- or de-professionalisation of the teaching profession and the birth of the post-performative teacher in South Korea imply that we witness a new cohort of particular teachers who find themselves within organisational and post-performative professionalism.

On the other hand, Barber (2005) described this as ‘informed professionalism’, a new phase when teachers will have appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes so that the government can grant them a greater degree of licensed autonomy to manage their own affairs. He reviews the time that almost all teachers had public goodwill, and many sought to develop themselves professionally but, through no fault of its own, the profession as a whole was uninformed until the mid of 1980’s in England. However, behind these significant changes in accountability he sees a major foundational assumption in government. That is, the system has reached a new level of maturity to the informed ear; that performance improvement no longer needs to be driven with such vigour from the top down because leaders and teachers within the system have the will and the means to drive improvement themselves, while government provides strategic direction and resources and creates the circumstances within which this bottom-up drive for improvement can take place (Barber, 2004).

As an alternative to both the traditional professionalism and managerial professionalism of teachers, several new conceptions to describe modern and post-modern teacher professionalism has been discussed by scholars. Firstly, ‘autonomous teacher professionalism’ (Hargreaves, 2000) is a conception that emphasizes the independence and self-direction of teachers in their professional practice. This model of professionalism suggests that teachers should have significant control over their work, including curriculum design, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. This conception argues that teachers, as educated professionals, are best positioned to make

decisions about their practice and should be trusted to act in the best interests of their students. Hargreaves (2000) discusses autonomous teacher professionalism in the context of teacher development and the pressures of accountability. He notes that autonomy is critical for fostering innovative and responsive teaching practices that can adapt to the needs of diverse student populations. He further argues that when teachers are given the freedom to exercise their professional judgment, they are more likely to engage in reflective practice and continuous professional learning, which ultimately benefits student outcomes.

Along with this, 'post-modern teacher professionalism' also reflects a shift from traditional, standardized notions of teaching to more fluid and adaptable approaches (Hargreaves, 2000). This model recognizes the complexities and uncertainties inherent in contemporary education, advocating for a more flexible and collaborative form of professionalism that embraces diversity, adaptability and multiple perspectives. In this model, teachers work together in professional learning communities, share best practices, and support one another in navigating the changing educational landscape. This approach values the unique contributions of each teacher and acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to educational challenges. Instead, it promotes a pluralistic view of professionalism that is responsive to the varying needs of students and communities.

On the other hand, democratic teacher professionalism is a concept that emphasizes the role of teachers as active participants in democratic processes within schools and the broader educational system (Witty and Wisby, 2013). This model advocates for the inclusion of teachers' voices in decision-making processes and policy development, fostering a sense of agency and collective responsibility among educators. Whitty and Wisby (2013) explore democratic teacher professionalism as a means of empowering teachers to take on leadership roles and advocate for educational equity and social justice. They argue that teachers should not only be involved in

classroom practice but also engage in shaping the policies and practices that affect their work and their students' learning experiences. This conception encourages teachers to collaborate with colleagues, parents, and the community to create inclusive and participatory educational environments. It highlights the importance of building relationships with local communities, external agencies, and alliances between teachers, other members of the school, like teaching assistants, and stakeholders, such as students, parents and communities, to forge alliances in decision-making ranging in from the classrooms to wider educational policy making. To build solid relationships and facilitate the process of opening policy decisions, teachers are required to work not as a largely separate professional group, but in active collaboration with other professionals, and para-professionals and non-professionals from a range of possible disciplines (Whitty & Wisby, 2006). These alliances are not static, but form and are reformed around different issues and concerns (Sachs, 2003). Activist professionals, a term coined by Sachs (2001), take responsibility for their own on-going professional learning, and work within multiple communities of practice by working collectively towards strategic ends, and operate on the basis of developing networks and alliances between bureaucracies, unions, professional associations and community organizations. There are negative views that regard the collaborative and democratic professionalism of teachers as kind of de-professionalizing. They argue that collaborative and democratic professionalism promotes the inclusion of various non-professional stakeholders in educational decision-making processes and this reduces the exclusive authority that teachers traditionally hold. Critics further argue that this approach dilutes the professional expertise of teachers by placing them on an equal footing with non-professionals, leading to a perceived erosion of their professional status (Whitty & Wisby, 2013). In this context, teachers may also feel that their specialized knowledge is undermined when their authority is shared with individuals who may not have formal

training in education. According to Sachs (2001), this collaborative model requires teachers to continuously renegotiate their roles, potentially leading to feelings of reduced control over their profession. That is, by requiring teachers to collaborate with a broader network of individuals, it can blur the lines between professional and non-professional roles, thereby diminishing the distinction that defines teachers as a professional group.

However, as noted by Whitty and Wisby (2006), others argue that collaborative and democratic professionalism does not de-professionalise teachers, but rather redefines professionalism in a way that is more aligned with contemporary educational needs. In this view, the inclusion of diverse perspectives, especially those of parents and communities, enhances the relevance and effectiveness of education by making it more participatory and responsive to social justice concerns. Thus, the perspective views it as a necessary evolution that empowers educators and students by promoting greater inclusivity and shared responsibility in educational processes, which perhaps more appropriate to contemporary needs and presenting a greater hope of empowering teachers and pupils for a democratic future (Whitty & Wisby, 2006).

## **2.3. Teacher Identity and Subjectification**

### **2.3.1. Teacher Identity Formation**

Teacher identity is continuously shaped by complex interactions of diverse elements and factors: Polak (2005) puts forward a framework of five elements in defining identity and self-image - the biological, the cognitive-experimentalist, the experiential, the psychodynamic and the social constructionist perspective; Mockler (2011) argues that teacher identity is located at the intersection of three domains - personal experience, professional context and the external political environment. She defines the external political environment as the

discourse, attitudes and understandings surrounding education that influence teachers through the media and government policy decisions pertaining to their work; Rodgers and Scott (2008) outline four assumptions that most approaches to investigating teacher identity share: The first is that identity is influenced by and formed within multiple social, cultural, political, and historical contexts. The second is that identity is formed through relationships and involves emotions. The third is that identity is constantly shifting, and therefore unstable; and the fourth is that identity involves the reconstruction of stories told over time; Sonia Nieto's seminal work, 'Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education,' emphasizes the importance of recognizing teachers' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences in shaping their identities (Nieto, 2012). Nieto argues that effective teaching requires an understanding of one's own identity and its intersection with students' identities, highlighting the role of self-awareness in teacher identity formation; Ivor Goodson's research on narrative identity highlights the significance of storytelling in teachers' professional development (Goodson, 2011). Through reflective practice and narrative inquiry, teachers construct their identities by making sense of their experiences and articulating their values and beliefs. This process of identity construction is influenced by external factors such as policy mandates and educational ideologies, which shape the narratives teachers construct about their professional selves; Antony Giddens' concept of 'sociological structuration' is one of the explanations to address the formation and change of teacher identity as depending on the dynamic interplay between social structures and individual agency (Giddens, 1984).

A common feature that is found in the literature is that teacher identity is more or less shaped or influenced by social or political context. In this sense, this section of literature review pays more critical attention to how social and political influences, regimes and policies derived from particular political or social context contribute

to shaping and changing teachers' identities, considering that fact that the current teachers in South Korea are situated in particular social and political environments, and thus become subjects and actors influenced by them. However, this section also explores discussions around the role of teacher agency as a counter-force against such political impact on their identity formation.

### **2.3.2. The Role of Policy in Shaping Teacher Identity**

Indeed, policy plays a significant role in influencing teacher identity, as it sets the parameters within which teachers operate and defines the expectations placed upon them. Stephen Ball's extensive work on education policy provides insights into how policy shapes teacher identity and professional practice. Ball (2003) indicated that policy technologies of reform construct, embed and require new identities. He examines the impact of neoliberal policies on teachers' identities, arguing that accountability measures and performance metrics contribute to a culture of performativity that constrains teachers' autonomy and professional judgment. This external pressure to meet prescribed standards can lead to identity conflicts and a sense of alienation among teachers. According to his argument, within the new policy technologies marked as market, managerialism, and performativity, teachers become 'enterprising subjects' represented and encouraged to think about themselves as individuals who calculate about themselves, 'add value' to themselves, improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live an existence of calculation. Such technologies place importance on economic liberalization policies such as privatization, austerity, deregulation, free trade and reductions in government spending in order to increase the role of the private sector in the economy and society. On the firm ground of this idea, educational policies toward ideal teachers have been formed embracing such discourses of the market, managerialism, and performativity, and competitiveness of teachers in some countries and



jurisdictions. To enact the policies, concrete systems, such as enhanced teacher's quality standards or intensified inspection standard and teacher assessment, have been placed at each level of education from institutional to national level. The systems settled in the environment that surrounds teachers, finally results in creation or changes of new teacher professional identity. Ball and Youdell (2006) discuss that policies promoting competition and choice fragment the teaching profession, creating hierarchies of performance and status that influence teachers' identities and career trajectories. This marketization of education further exacerbates inequalities and erodes the collective identity of teachers as professionals. Ball further asserts that a myriad of countries and jurisdictions are establishing or reforming policies and systems with higher performance standards for teachers, for better visible outcomes as described by numbers and data, such as the league tables of PISA. However, the intensified standard for teachers may lead to a paradoxical result of orientation toward professional development, featured as plasticity, effectiveness, performativity and low-trust rather than authenticity, beliefs, truthfulness and trust. The orientation influences or even determines the professional identity of teachers and finally turn teachers from professionals to technicians (Ball, 1999; Gray, 2006), which relates to de- or re-professionalism of teachers. The top-down approach to teacher standards that is common in many nations appears to have more to do with control and conformity than raising the quality of teaching and learning (Sachs, 2001). In similar vein, according to Evans (2011), in England there has been a drive to shape teacher professional identity through government reform leading to a demanded professionalism, focusing predominantly on teachers' behaviours rather than their dispositions and thinking about pedagogy. This is evident in the White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE, 2010), based on the Conservative-Coalition Governments' philosophy and intentions for teacher professionalism. This policy resulted in a narrowing of the professional standards, and

the goal of using these to identify and deal with unsatisfactory performance, which implies control of the professional rather than one of teacher agency (Evans, 2011). The direct consequence of the philosophy and subsequent policy is establishing a linear model of professional learning which aims to effect a rapid change of teachers' behaviours to align them with current policy (Bodman et al., 2012). The use of the model eventually makes teachers merely obtain replicative and applicative knowledge, which forms identities that arguably lack authenticity and agency.

### **2.3.3. The Role of Agency in Shaping Teacher Identity**

Despite the constraints imposed by policy and ideology, teachers demonstrate resilience and agency in navigating their professional identities. Antony Giddens (1984) explains this as his theory of 'sociological structuration'. Sociological structuration is a theoretical framework that seeks to understand the dynamic interplay between social structures and individual agency in shaping social phenomena. According to Giddens, society is not solely determined by overarching structures or individual actions but rather emerges through the recursive relationship between structure and agency. In other words, social structures provide the context within which individuals act, but individuals also have the capacity to reproduce, modify, or challenge these structures through their actions (Giddens, 1984). Applied to the context of teachers' identity formation, Giddens's concept of sociological structuration suggests that teachers' identities are not predetermined by external forces such as educational policies or institutional norms alone. Instead, teachers navigate their professional identities within the broader context of social structures, including cultural norms, organizational dynamics, and historical legacies, while also exercising agency in shaping their roles and practices. For example, teachers' identity may be influenced by institutional expectations such as curriculum requirements or

assessment standards. However, teachers also have the agency to interpret and enact these expectations in ways that reflect their personal beliefs, pedagogical preferences, and professional aspirations. This dialectical relationship between structure and agency is central to understanding how teachers negotiate their identities in the complex terrain of education. Moreover, Giddens's concept of sociological structuration emphasizes the recursive nature of social practices, highlighting how individual actions contribute to the reproduction or transformation of social structures over time. In the context of teaching, this means that teachers' daily interactions with students, colleagues, and communities not only reflect existing norms and values but also have the potential to reshape educational practices and institutional arrangements. In summary, Giddens's concept of sociological structuration offers a theoretical lens through which to understand teachers' identity formation as a dynamic process shaped by the interplay between social structures and individual agency. By recognizing the reciprocal relationship between structure and agency, we can better comprehend how teachers navigate the complexities of their professional roles within the broader socio-cultural context of education.

In relation to the Giddens' theory, research shows that such an explanation places importance on how teacher agency works in formation and change of teacher identity. Sloan (2006) investigated teacher agency amid the accountability demands and changes of 'No Child Left Behind' policy and described an important link between teacher identity and agency. The realization of agency in ways where teachers chose to respond to the accountability demands, were shaped by their identities and their pedagogical commitment (Buchanan, 2015). Kevin Kumashiro's research on education activism highlights the ways in which teachers challenge oppressive policies and advocate for social justice (Kumashiro, 2012). Through collective action and critical reflection, teachers can resist hegemonic discourses and assert their professional autonomy, shaping their identities as

transformative educators. For example, beginning in the 1970s, Finland progressively overhauled its education system by revamping its teacher preparation colleges (Fairuz et al., 2016). As a result, eight universities provide teacher education programmes based on a combination of research, practice and reflection under the national legislation featured by the philosophy of developing and promoting teachers' autonomy and agency. The policies and systems derived from this philosophy led teachers in Finland to become excellent in their field, and garner a noble reputation, akin to doctors and lawyers. One of the most striking policies is allowing teachers to escape from quantitative evaluation by abolishing school inspection practices and external standardized student testing, both of which eventually diminishes teachers' autonomy in teaching and pedagogical decisions in classroom. Instead of test-based accountability, the Finnish system relies on the expertise and accountability of teachers who are knowledgeable and committed to their students (Sahlberg, 2010a). This policy enables teachers and schools to build their own ways of constructing curricula with the permission of local governments of education. Also, there are no strict standards for a national-driven curriculum, and no guidelines for students' performance. This means teachers are teaching and learning in the environment and culture where enhanced autonomy is guaranteed. Sahlberg (2010b) argues that enhanced autonomy results in enhanced self-identity as a professional and the enhanced identity ultimately resulted in high-performance students, or even economic growth.

#### **2.3.4. Foucault's Theories and Teacher Subjectification**

The discussion around teacher identity formation and change helps us move our attention to issue of teacher subjectification, which refers to how individual teachers become subjects. According to Foucault (1982), there are two meanings to the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity

by a conscience or self-knowledge. In both senses, personal qualities of subjects are artefacts of power. In particular, personal qualities like self-esteem, empowerment, hopes, dreams, fantasies, and desires are influenced and shaped by power. If power acts upon individuals in and through our subjectivity, then that is where our resistance and struggle to be freer should be focused. According to Foucault (1982a), subjects are produced in three interrelated modes:

- Firstly, within the mode of inquiry that give themselves the status of sciences and which objectivize the speaking subject, or the productive subject, or the sheer fact of being alive. (meaning that subjects are produced through studies that claim to be sciences, which label people based on how they speak, what they produce, or just the fact that they are alive);
- Secondly, those dividing practices that separate subjects inside themselves or from others and in so doing, objectivize them (meaning that subjects are produced through practices that divide people either within themselves or from others, turning them into objects);
- Thirdly, the way a human being turns him – or herself into a subject. (meaning that subjects are produced through the ways individuals shape themselves into subjects).

(Foucault, 1982, p. 208)

These modes combine and correlate within the methods or techniques of what Foucault calls government of the self. Teacher subjectification, then, referring to the process through which teachers' identities and professional selves are shaped and often constrained by such external factors, is a crucial theme in educational research. To be specific, teacher subjectification involves the ways in which teachers' identities are formed through discourses, practices, and policies that define and regulate their roles within the education system, thus drawing attention on Foucault's concept of subjectification, where individuals are shaped by power relations and societal norms. In the context of education, subjectification can manifest through various

mechanisms such as curriculum standards, performance metrics, and professional expectations that teachers internalize and respond to in their practice.

Stephen Ball's extensive work provides a critical examination of how neoliberal policies contribute to the subjectification of teachers. Ball (1994) critiques the marketization of education, where schools operate under market principles, and teachers are viewed as service providers. This market logic imposes a performative culture where teachers' worth is measured by their ability to produce quantifiable results. Ball (2003) further delves deeper into the psychological and emotional impacts of performativity. He argues that the constant pressure to meet performance targets leads to heightened stress and a sense of professional disillusionment. Teachers are required to continuously demonstrate their effectiveness through standardized assessments and performance reviews, which can erode their intrinsic motivations and commitment to the educational missions that they personally pursue. Ball et al. (2012) explore how neoliberal policies exacerbate social inequalities in education. They argue that such policies often neglect the socio-cultural dimensions of teaching, further entrenching existing disparities and positioning teachers as mere subjects to policy enactment rather than policy actors. In line with that, Gewirtz (2002) discusses how post-welfarist policies in England have reconstructed teachers' work. The focus on accountability and performance metrics has transformed teaching into a technical profession, undermining teachers' autonomy and reducing their role to that of deliverers of pre-defined outcomes. In addition, Lingard and Mills (2007) provide empirical evidence of how performative cultures impact teachers' practices in Australia. Their research highlights the conflict between the need for standardized assessments and the desire for pedagogical creativity, suggesting that performative pressures constrain teachers' ability to innovate and adapt their teaching to meet diverse student needs.

In South Korea, the high-stakes educational environment further

intensifies teacher subjectification. Park and Kim (2011) examine the impact of educational reforms aimed at improving outcomes. They find that these reforms, often driven by global competitiveness, increase teachers' workloads and stress, pushing them to conform to rigid standards that prioritize measurable achievements over holistic education. Ham's study (2010) on middle school teachers in Korea reveals similar pressures. Korean teachers face high societal expectations to perform, which can lead to professional burnout and a diminished sense of agency. The emphasis on examination results and school rankings exacerbates the subjectification of teachers, limiting their ability to exercise professional judgment and creativity in their practice. This is why the thesis explores the evolution of current accountability policies in South Korea as well as addresses their influence on teachers professional life.

The literature on professionalism, identity and subjectification of teachers so far provides a comprehensive understanding of how external factors such as neoliberal policies, accountability measures, and performative cultures shape and erode teachers' identities, professional lives and result in subjectification, in spite of exercise of agency, autonomy and resistance-effort of teachers. Thus, the next section of the literature pays particular attention to performative accountability as a key concept defining the current teaching profession and the teachers themselves.

## **2.4. Performative Accountability**

### **2.4.1. Performative Accountability in Education**

Accountability is not an entirely new terminology in education. From the post-war era to the middle of 1990s in the West and East, accountability has been defined as 'occupational' (Moore & Clarke, 2015), where the implicit, intrinsic and autonomous responsibility based upon convictions and principles of teachers can be applied to

their educational practice (Kim et al., 2014). Therefore, some measures derived from occupational accountability, such as informal reflections and peer reviews, are usually devised and used by the educational providers, rather than for accumulating performance evidence for the authorities. However, the accountability which is based on teachers' professionalism and trust toward teachers was eroded in the face of declining trust in education where professionals were responsible for providing public services (Lingard et al., 2017). In the West, questions about their efficiency and outcomes of their work arose in the mind of public by the political construction of a crisis. For example, publishing Education Black Papers in England in 1969 opened cracks in public trust in teachers, criticising the decline in educational standards and discipline. This was the time when the notion of performative accountability emerged in the field of education.

In England, James Callaghan gave a more explicit indication of the evolution of educational accountability, when he delivered a speech at Ruskin College, University of Oxford, in October 1976:

(omission) to the teachers I would say that you must satisfy the parents and industry that what you are doing meets their requirements and the needs of our children. For if the public is not convinced then the profession will be laying up trouble for itself in the future. (omission) Therefore we demand more from our schools than did our grandparents (Callaghan, 1976).

Then, a new approach to accountability, which is embraced by the term of 'organisational professionalism' (Moore and Clark, 2015), which strongly advocates the notions and prioritisations of measurable performance and outcome in the highly-competitive quasi-marketplace of education and opened the profession up to more external control and surveillance, displaced the traditional notions of



accountability. This approach towards accountability is generally termed as ‘performative accountability’. New methods of measurements stemming from that approach began to appear in Korea in legislative direction through the landmark Education Reform in 31<sup>st</sup> May 1995 and onward.

Lyotard (1984) explores the idea of knowledge and its transformation in postmodern societies, particularly how knowledge is increasingly measured and validated through performative means rather than intrinsic truth or merit. Lyotard introduced the notion of ‘performativity’ as a metric-oriented logic where knowledge and actions are valued based on their ability to produce efficient and measurable outcomes. In his view, performativity replaces traditional criteria of knowledge, such as truth or justice, with efficiency, output, and utility. This shift from truth to performance aligns with Ball’s view of education systems increasingly valuing measurable results over deeper educational purposes. Ball (2003), drawing on Lyotard's critique, defined ‘performativity’ as ‘a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgement, comparison, and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition, and change – based on reward and sanction’ (p. 216). Based on Ball’s definition on the concept, I interpret performative accountability in education as referring to a technology that regulates the subjects who are supposed to do an educational task (or produce an expected outcome), measured against the standards set by forces who hold control (govern) and are able to enact consequences on the subjects. I prefer to term the two main participants involved in the process of accounting as ‘subjects’ and ‘forces’, rather than ‘actors’ and ‘forums’ respectively, in consideration of the idea that performativity is a technology of power as a mode of control which causes tension between value and freedom of subjects and regulation of forces.

This account characterises a policy discourse; it does not indicate the thesis’s methodological commitment to metric validation. In this study, quantification is treated as an object of analysis within

### performative accountability, not as an epistemic foundation.

The new conception of accountability in education has been influenced by the introduction of New Public Management (hereafter NPM) (Lyotard, 1992; Son, 2012; Wisby & Whitty, 2016). NPM was an effort to make the public service more business-like and to improve its efficiency by using private sector management models as a response to popular sentiment being unsatisfied with the government's public spending. One of the key features of NPM is to use market forces to hold the public sector accountable. The idea of NPM is rooted in neo-liberalism, whose central defining characteristic is an application of the logic and rules of free-market competition to the public sector (Olssen, 2016). Also, central to neo-liberalism is the displacement of general good models of governance and their replacement with individualised incentives and performance targets, heralding a new, more stringent conception of accountability (Olssen, 2016). To cope with the transition triggered by NPM, the field of education also began to adopt the newer mode of accountability, which makes use of performance data generated through standardised tests and inspections to govern schools and teachers and administrators in systems and formulate strategies for education reform (Lingard et al, 2017). Accordingly, educational actors, such as teachers, principals or schools, are expected to account to various forums, such as the professional community, national and local governments and parents, about either the process or the outputs of education by measurable data, with multiple consequences (Lindberg, 2013).

As a deliberate element in the strategy of NPM and neoliberal ideology, performative accountability urges teachers to compete according to standards and be managed through the efficiency of performance and the outcome they produce, much as businesses compete with each other and manage human resources in market environments, where students' results constitute the linchpin of the accountability system (Lindberg, 2013). Svedberg (2016) describes

how performance-based accountability works in education:

Accounts are to be given by individuals (teachers, principals or administrators), or organisations (schools or district), to various organisations in the chain of command, such as districts, states, or specialised agencies, such as inspection bodies. The accountability relationship is vertical. Accountability is mostly based upon results or outputs of organizations (qualification and/or retention rate, pupils' performances in external assessments in key grades and subjects etc.) ... Finally, the actors might have to face various consequences (symbolic or material) following this account (p. 11).

Outcome-based efficiency became a popular measure, especially in external forces such as local authorities and parental groups, where discourse took place around efficiency and choice of needs (Olmedo & Wilkins, 2017). The measure was justified by the discourses of 'good teachers', 'good schools' and, in an even wider sense, 'social good' and the mechanisms through which such accountability was achieved were increasingly accepted as part of the education system; critics of such a regime were seen as being against both progress (Perryman, 2006) and 'what works' – an example of the depoliticization of education policy (Clarke, 2012). In this accountability culture, teachers become normalised (Foucault, 1977) to the rules and judgement of particular knowledge and practices that define 'good behaviours'.

In line with that, standards and quantitative measures for schools and teachers were put in place to attempt to define and control the educational outputs: To take an example of England, after its introduction in the Education Reform Act of 1988, the National Curriculum measure has been through several reforms. The current version dates from 2014. It sets the standards and subjects for primary and Secondary schools and how to teach them to ensure children learn

the same things no matter which school they attend; The Office for Standards in Education (hereafter Ofsted) uses a criteria-based system to judge schools. It also uses risk assessment to ensure that its approach to inspection is proportionate and can focus its efforts where it can have the most significant impact. Inspectors formulate judgements on the overall effectiveness of a school based on other performative measures such as Standard Assessment Tests, which assesses academic attainment and processing of English and maths in primary schools, and report directly to the Secretary of State for Education and Parliament about the extent to which an acceptable standard of education is provided at individual and aggregate level. Schools judged as underperforming face various sanctions, including increased scrutiny, potential takeover by neighbouring schools and even closure. For example, when a maintained school is judged as inadequate (out of the four levels on a grading scale which comprises outstanding, good, require improvement and inadequate), and issued an academy order, it becomes a sponsored academy. If such an academy is judged as inadequate, it becomes either rebrokered as a new multi academy trust or placed under special measures, in which Ofsted monitors the school to check its progress and carries out a full inspection within 30 months of the academy's last full inspection (DfE, 2014); Teachers' Standards define the minimum level of practice expected of trainees and teachers for being awarded qualified teacher status (DfE, 2010). Teacher's Standards are used to assess all trainees working towards Qualified Teacher Status (hereafter QTS), and all those completing their statutory induction period. They are also used to evaluate the performance of all teachers with QTS who are subject to the English Education School Teachers' Appraisal Regulations 2012; The UK Government has published so-called school league tables since 1992, summarising the average General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and A-level 'attainment' and 'progress' made by pupils in each state-funded Secondary school in England. Schools' performances in these tables underpin the

inspections carried out by Ofsted. The tables also play a role in facilitating the quasi-market in education by informing parental school choice (Leckie & Goldstein, 2017, p. 193-194). These performance-based measures for enacting and fostering accountability have been accepted by successive governments, constituting a powerful 'regime of truth' (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984), regardless of their political views, with minor amendments and upgrades until the present day.

In the Republic of Korea, the term 'accountability' is translated into 'chaek-moo-sung,' which means duty, requirement or responsibility. In general, it is an obligation that an individual is entitled or commanded to carry out (Chung, P. J., 2017). In the education field in Korea, accountability is usually defined as a degree or ability that actors can answer, report, explain, and justify their enactments to certain tasks or duties that are endorsed to them (Shin et al, 2013), and it is usually followed by incentives or sanctions according to the result of the tasks. Byeong-Chan Kim (2014) defined the notion as a responsibility that an individual or an organisation, who is entitled to do certain tasks, accounts and clarifies the result or process of the tasks to the individual or organisation who imposed the tasks. However, some argue that the approach is the mere adoption of the notion in the field of public administration which has a completely different context from education (Elmore, 2004; O'Day, 2004; Park, 2012). They argue that school is a distinctive public organisation where tasks and decisions are being made based on the professionalism of teachers, rather than bureaucratic hierarchy or control. Also, school teachers are usually motivated by the job they are working, while administrators are usually motivated by achievement and following financial compensation. As Song (2013) and Park (2012) assert, a distinctive conceptualisation of educational accountability is required to encompass the distinctive nature of the educational field, but less attention has been paid to defining accountability in consideration of educational context.

In South Korea, the administration of Young-Sam Kim (1993-1998) imported a widely spread trend of neoliberal marketization in education since the education reform of 31<sup>st</sup> May 1995. Yong-Il Kim (2006) pointed out that the administration followed the reform trend of the United Kingdom and even imported specific policy agendas such as raising standards and school choice (Shin, 2010). The 5.31 education reform set up several core values that represented market-oriented philosophy and included accountability. This is the context in which the notion of performative accountability first explicitly appeared in the educational field in South Korea. (Please refer to section 4.3. in Chapter four for more details.) Although such accountability started after the Young-Sam Kim administration and lasted to the current government of Seok-Yul Yun, President Myung-Bak Lee (2008-2013), who was the CEO of ‘Hyundai’ subsidiaries (1987-1992), particularly emphasised performance and outcomes in education which resulted in a dramatic increase in the accountability policies and measures. These measures include the National Assessment of Educational Achievement (hereafter NAEA) in 2000 at all levels of primary, Secondary, and further education. The public were able to access the results of NAEA from the advent of the system until the removal of NAEA in primary schools. Then, inspections were conducted to measure how well schools follow the policy and produce results by inspectors from LEAs who initially visited schools directly at short notice, but this has recently changed to a more indirect ‘school self-appraisal’ since 2009. Another aspect of the measures is the Korea Education and Research Information Service (hereafter KERIS) which releases core information of all schools on the website, ‘[www.schoolinfo.go.kr](http://www.schoolinfo.go.kr)’, known as the School Information System. It contains, for example, (a) enrolment number, (b) staff numbers and qualifications, (c) school finance status, (d) curriculum design, (e) result of school inspection or self-assessment, (f) result of teacher appraisal for professional development and (g) school food information. The other significant accountability

measures are the Performance-Based Incentive System (PBIS) and the Teacher Appraisal for professional development (TAPD). PBIS is a classical financial inducement that uses a quantitative index (formula based) to improve performance. It has been applied to education since 2001 with frequent amendments of standards of grouping and differential rates of pay. Conducted since 2005, TAPD, a performance-based appraisal, has adopted a slogan of restoring trust in public education by assessing a teacher's current ability and providing suggestions for future development. It is conducted by students, co-teachers, and parents and provides evidence and directions for a teacher's individual development in diverse area of the profession.

In addition to the accountability measures on performance of teachers, it is interesting to note that different modes exist in current test-based accountability according to Lingard et al (2017). These are consumer accountability, contract accountability, performative accountability and cooperative accountability. Interestingly, the first two modes of accountability partly resemble the main characteristics of performative accountability. Firstly, consumer accountability sees students and parents as consumers in the education market where the products of schools and teachers are valued by the publication of performance data. The consumers look for the best school according to their educational preference, analysing the pros and cons of affordability, and consideration of the school types, as they do when shopping in a market. Therefore, accounts produced in systems adopting performative accountability mainly provide information for consumers to make a choice. Next, contract accountability can best be understood from the vital value of efficiency. State departments of education have started to sign contracts with managerial tenants (Lingard et al, 2017) from private sectors in the application of NPM, anticipating greater efficiency and governance. Descriptions listed on the contract paper become the base for enhancing managerial practices and demanding efficient performance. As Ball and

Junemann (2012) argued, an increasing number of and diverse set of actors, non-governmental organisations and even edu-businesses are playing an increasing role both in policy-making and enactment in the field of education.

#### **2.4.2. Performative Accountability in Education**

As discussed so far, performative accountability establishes clear expectations, standards, and mechanisms for oversight. Also, such accountability can help foster confidence in the education system and ensure that public resources are being utilized effectively. In this sense, for some, performative accountability can be viewed as a necessary component of a well-functioning public sector, providing a framework to evaluate performance, address issues, and drive improvements. Boven (2007) explains the significance of accountability as follows:

The purpose of public accountability is to induce the executive branch to learn. The possibility of sanctions from clients and other stakeholders in their environment in the event of errors and shortcomings motivates them to search for more intelligent ways of organising their business. Moreover, the public nature of the accountability process teaches others in similar positions what is expected of them, what works, and what does not (p. 463).

However, whilst performative accountability policy seems to have spread rapidly throughout the field of education with emphasis on such advantages, a wide range of doubt and criticism have been also raised about the method of surveillance and governance and its potentially damaging effects on the practices of teachers and children (Perryman, 2006 & 2009; Shin et al., 2013; Kim, 2014; Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2016;). Many point out, though the significance can



sometimes be true, careless adoption of performative accountability without consideration of its (dis)advantages in the education system can cause negative effects on a wide range of educational areas, such as social trust, the school system, teachers' professionalism and students' happiness.

At a society level, it may undermine trust between educational stakeholders in a society. As noted earlier, parents and students regard schools and teachers only as service providers that must meet their educational needs. The quality of education is evaluated by quantitative data produced through a regime of standardized tests and severe observations. This market culture of education requires service providers to react to consumers' needs by producing outcomes and evidence for consumers' selection rather than agency based on trust. Such trust that is solely based on the visible data cannot guarantee the concrete relationship between education providers and users when the outcomes are far below the expectations and results are disappointing. Parents might decide to transfer their children to another provider, just as they select a substitute when they shop for something. There can be no time and space for genuine and invisible trust to work between them.

At a school and teacher level, schools are incited to compete with one another to drive up students' performance and extract maximum outcome value from students (Ball, 2018). Performative accountability may constrain schools to develop strategic approaches for classes and management to survive the severe competition. If any institution sets its primary target on meeting the requirements of tests and inspections, most of the human and material resources will be used only for increasing the figures in official publications. The missing target rooted in the emphasis on outcome would also affect the overall design of the school curriculum and teaching strategies of individual teachers. Teachers are likely to be less risk-taking and use steady or safe lessons which do little to enhance learning. In effect, strategic measures in schools can come to exist purely to pass an inspection.

Also, as pointed out in the section 2.3., as Ball (2003) asserts, it negatively affects teachers' identity and soul because it requires individual practitioners to organize themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations. Teachers are exposed to the environment of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies (Ball, 2003).

In line with this, Perryman discussed the tendency of forming ideas in which nothing risky is done in classroom unless it directly affects the next inspection, and teachers are unable to act in a proactive manner (Perryman, 2006). Also, Perryman (2009) and Jeffrey and Woods (1998) uncovered how the inspection regime can lead to unintended consequences, for example a school fabricating documentation and strengthening management when a school undergoes a severe inspection process. Ball et al., (2012) studied four ordinary schools in England, performing at around the national average, to explore 'the pressure to deliver which bear upon English Secondary schools in relation to GCSE examination passes' (p. 513), and wrote that all of the objects and subjects, including teachers, pupils and schools, and pedagogies, procedures, performance, data and initiatives, are to be focused on raising standards. Specifically, the schools focused on the number of students gaining five or more A\*-C grades when exploring the pressure of achievement in relation to GCSE examination performance. A swarm of disciplinary mechanisms, such as timetabling for intensive revision classes, regular meetings of targeted students and staff who are not conforming to raising standards, were enacted in response to the pressure of 'raising standards' (Ball et al., 2012, p. 513). Shin et al., (2013) analysed the effects and issues of performative accountability measures, such as SIS, NAEA, TAPD and School Inspection, during Myung-bak Lee's administration in South Korea, arguing that teachers are forced to be tightly bound to higher performance and effectiveness in many ways regarding teaching and managing. For example, schools narrowed curricula,

focusing on core subjects of NAEA such as maths and reading, to gain better result on the test and intentionally omitted essential data, such as the result of NAEA, for SIS. Kim et al., (2014) point out the policies and measurements enable the state to indirectly manage individuals in a systemic way with this data, but the results serve to break trust between teachers. Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes (2016) describe the process of being governed whereby teachers are required to produce data evidences in early years education settings in the UK:

The teacher was compelled to produce and pass data on to senior management and the LA... The teacher found that the accountability data he collected was recycled back to him as percentage targets steering his pedagogy... The teacher needs to check them and drill right down into them to set challenges for himself, resulting in continuous reflective feedback, self-governance and steerage to achieve the data.

(Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2016, p. 607)

It is very noticeable that one of the head teachers in Robert-Holmes and Bradbury's study expressed his feelings of being overwhelmed and burdened with the responsibility to perform but, at the same time, confessed that he did not especially challenge the increase of accountability as it is intimately bound up with his professionalism (Bradbury & Roberts-Holmes, 2016). The headteacher became an example of normalisation, a process of being benign to dominant norms in a society. All of these strongly reflect the reality that practice of teachers is being passively steered by performative accountability policies in the disciplinary mechanism that the government set.

In the context of South Korea, a wide range of research on effects and achievements of accountability policy has been conducted and, doubt and criticism has raised from its ideological restrictions to its limited effects.

Many scholars have explored the effects of accountability polices and

measures since they were introduced in South Korea and found some visible achievements in positive outcomes. Kim and his colleagues (2014) summarised the achievements of accountability policies in four perspectives.

#### Achievements

- the policies and measurements enable the nation to manage education in a systemic way with data. Accountability policies and measures have been settled in education as a typical way of indirect management in the public sector.
- Lots of improved outcomes have been reported: such as reduction of the rate of students who are below the minimum standard of attainment through NAEA (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2012), increase of satisfaction in teachers by parents and students through the teacher appraisal for professional development (Kim, 2006)
- An educational database for decision making has been constructed by the policies and measurements. For example, the data from NAEA assist policies for schools under the minimum standard and the data from the teacher appraisal for professional development (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2011).
- Schools at all levels have become more accountable and responsible for their tasks.

However, an increasing number of case studies on teachers' school lives in the era of performative accountability have been conducted and most of them, unfortunately and commonly, include negative testimonials and feedback regarding the policies and measurements (Kim et al, 2014). Kim and his colleagues (2014) summarised the drawbacks of them in three aspects.

### Drawbacks

- Severe competition for better outcome between schools and individuals result in side effects and unintended consequences. Cases of cheating at NAEA, distorting NAEA or manipulating information for school inspection were reported.
- The school curriculum is not maintained or even ignored for the better result of accountability policies. Teachers become busy producing better evidences for standards of measurements rather than preparing better lessons.
- The school culture becomes cynical and some individuals who are considered less productive become isolated. As a result, trust and cooperation between colleagues are disappearing as schools concentrate more on outcomes.

Shin et al., (2013) analysed the effects and issues of accountability policies and measures, arguing that they are still controversial in several aspects: Firstly, the positive effects of policy and such measures are debatable because it is not certain if they reflect and reach the needs of the public. The needs of the public in education could be different from what the policies and measures are investigating. Secondly, the idea of pursuing effectiveness through competition in education would not be applicable to the context of education because educational achievements cannot be clearly evidenced and measured by outcomes or figures. Thirdly, they question the degree of autonomy schools and teachers are experiencing. If actors are still tightly bound by authorities in many ways of teaching and managing, the policies and measures would become the other means of control and hierarchical governance of the actors. Finally, there is a lack of agreement of what the policies and measures aim to evaluate and how they are applied between policy

makers and other stakeholders. Kim (2006) asserts that many of the accountability policies and measures based on performance are not educationally worthy by nature. He comments it is primarily because they stem from a neoliberal ideology which excludes the intervention of government in education, although performativity itself is a means of intervention and regulation.

## **2.5. Foucault's Conceptions of Power and Governmentality**

Foucault describes a number of different but interrelated modalities of power which help understand how power has existed and created subjects in different historical governmental context, such as feudal and modern administrative state, through his genealogical study on power: In this section, I refer to Foucault's three selected types of power, *sovereign power*, *disciplinary power*, and *biopower* and Christian *pastoral power* or the combination of the two, as well as an overarching locus of governmental technologies, *governmentality*, which encompasses such modalities of power. This is because they provide a useful theoretical framework for understanding the genealogy and the particular phenomena of current accountability regime in South Korean education, the context where surveillance, regulation, intervention and heteronomous autonomy, which is bound to the wills of the authority, are being placed on teachers.

Foucault's conception of power is significantly different from the traditional notions, represented by Hobbs' description in *Leviathan*. Hobbs sees power as concentrated and possessed by a class or group of people and exercised at a macro level as in feudal nations or absolute monarchies. It works from the top to individuals at the bottom through setting in place legislation and punishments. In this model, power is about justifying and consolidating control.

### **2.5.1. Foucault's Conception of Power**

Foucault's conception of power approaches power from a different dimension by embracing both traditional theories of power, centred on Weber, and critical theories of power. Specifically, Foucault critically engages with Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Louis Althusser's ideology, and Hannah Arendt's theory of power, while also offering a new approach to power. In Foucault's conception of power, the core principle is distinguishing it from the traditional view of power, which sees power as residing in a specific place and as a possession of particular rulers. Foucault does not assume that power can be owned or monopolized by any individual or group; instead, he approaches power as a diverse set of strategic effects. Therefore, rather than analysing who possesses power, it is essential to read the network of various relationships that are always in tension and actively at play. Therefore, the key distinguishing feature of Foucault's concept of power, which sets it apart from traditional and critical power concepts, is its deconstruction of grand theories as totalizing discourses (Jeong, 2018). In other words, Foucault, who posits that human history is a series of discontinuous chains rather than purposive development or progress, inevitably rejects the notion of a transcendental subject, judicial or ideological interpretations of power, and the concept of repression in his ideas on power-knowledge (Jeong, 2018).

That is, for Foucault, power is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes subjects rather than being deployed by them (Gaventa, 2003). In this sense, power is relational. That is, power is not wielded by individuals, classes or institutions (Gaventa, 2003), rather 'power is everywhere' (Foucault, 1998, p. 63) and 'whatever in one's social interactions or relationships that pushes, urges or compels one to do something' (Lynch, 2011, p. 19). For him, power comes from differences, inequalities or unbalanced elements in

every relation, between individuals, groups, organisations, and nations and therefore exists in every micro-level of human relationships. Thus, power is not something that can be possessed, taken away, appropriated, kept, or let go of; it is exercised through the interactions of numerous points within unequal and fluid relationships (Jeong, 2018). Power is neither an institution nor a structure. Rather, it exists within a variety of relationships spread throughout society and continuously generates these relationships. Power relations are widely disseminated through human interactions. There is a network of overall power relations that operates among individuals, within families, in educational relationships, and within political associations. Such power relationships are a result of the struggles between the parts in difference for a particular goal or purpose. Thus, power relations are like strategic games between liberties (Foucault, 1998) and are constantly changing and interacting with other force relations which may weaken, strengthen or change one another (Lynch, 2011).

Next, power is productive. For Foucault, power is not a negative force that represses and excludes; rather, it is a productive power that creates something useful and docile. By educating and correcting rather than prohibiting, for example, the effects of obedience can be maximized. Therefore, power operates in a positive and productive manner rather than in a repressive way, making institutions, educational systems, laws, and other societal structures widely accepted without question (Jeong, 2018). Power does not dominate and oppress individuals; instead, it produces a mindset in individuals that allows them to habitually and unquestioningly accept the reality of their domination. According to Foucault, the effectiveness of power and people's acceptance of it stems not merely from its prohibitive function but from its ability to permeate objects, produce, induce pleasure, shape knowledge, and create discourse. Therefore, power should be understood as a productive network that traverses the social body, surpassing its negative, repressive functions.



### 2.5.2. Sovereign Power, Disciplinary Power and Governmentality

The first is ‘sovereign power’. Foucault alludes to a power structure that is similar to a pyramid, where one person or group of people at the top of the pyramid holds the power, while the majority of the people are at the bottom of the pyramid (Lynch, 2011). The middle parts of the pyramid are composed of the people who enforce the sovereign orders. It emphasises building order by eradicating deviations according to the legal code with a binary division between the permitted and prohibited (Foucault, 2009). The legal code is enacted in the *juridical mechanisms* of violation and subsequent punishment that can take (or enslave) life, wealth, services, labour and products in the territory of a monarchy. This modality of power distinguishes between what is forbidden and what is permitted and is characterized by its ability to imagine what has not yet occurred (Jeong, 2018). In education, for example, it encompasses prohibitions such as not opposing the government, not conducting certain critical lessons, and always requiring the principal's approval. Additionally, it includes the punishment and expulsion of those who actually oppose the government or its policies.

Additionally, what Foucault calls ‘disciplinary power’ aims to regulate the individual body, aiming to produce a useful and docile subject as effectively as possible (Hoffman, 2011) by applying the *disciplinary mechanism* of surveillance and subsequent discipline (Foucault, 2009; Lim, 2016) operationalised via hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination for the reform, re-education or transformation of individuals for a particular purpose. With this type of power, individuals are constantly surveilled (or being made to feel surveilled) and told what to do through disciplines, and those who violate the disciplines are considered elements to be reformed and improved, rather than removed. Those who exercise

disciplinary power constantly develop and use technologies for effective government (Son, 2008) or governance of governance (Peters, 2010) which means imposing some control over the components of governing. Such a mechanism manages, regulates and controls subjects so that they meet the standards given to them with certain consequences by those who govern. Through the mechanism, subjects become normalised to particular standards and internalise the disciplines (Son, 2012). Discipline operates in a positive manner by actively imposing duties and training, rather than merely eliminating prohibitions in a negative way. Bodies exposed to discipline, in particular, are integrated into detailed spatial and temporal grids. In schools, actions are meticulously regulated according to temporal and spatial segments and grids, such as the distinction between class time and meal time, or the division of subjects.

Foucault says neither the sovereign or disciplinary power has been eliminated in this modern world. Rather, we have a triangle of different powers: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management (Foucault, 2009), encompassing pastoral power and bio-power, in modern times.

Before exploring the concept of governmentality of Foucault, it is important to note that Foucault considered government in modern times as ‘an incarnation of Christian pastoral power’ (Parchev, 2018, p. 340), which can disclose the ‘ingredients’ from which modern governance is composed. That is, government as exercised by modern state institutions, such as hospitals and schools, access medical, social and cultural spheres of population which reach an individual’s innermost thoughts and feelings (Foucault, 1997b, p. 332-6), much as pastoral practice and care between God as a ‘shepherd’ (or a human pastor) and a ‘flock’ of human beings in Christian theology guide a multitude of Christian believers towards individual and collective salvation, that is, wellbeing, fulfilment and so forth (Siisiäinen, 2015). In this sense, pastoral power is an ‘embryonic point’, ‘threshold’ (Foucault, 2009, p. 165) or genealogical ‘incunabulum’ (Mayes,

2010, p. 111) of governance in the modern state. Foucault argues that this pastoral governing in Christian churches is a rational and planned activity, oriented by its 'salvific' aim (Siisiäinen, 2015, p. 235), maintaining Christian believers on the 'right path' of transition, and to steer their change and development in the appropriate direction (Foucault, 2009).

At enactment level, pastoral power uses techniques, such as *self-examination* (Foucault, 2009, p. 183) or *confession* (Foucault, 2003, p.171), which are based on determinate relationships between shepherd and flock at the individual as well as collective level, which make individual souls not only a subject but also an object of knowledge and faith (Lee, 2015). These techniques are specifically linked to the theological practice of *purification* from sin, a relentless struggle of men against Satan inhabiting their souls, and *penitence* in monastic institutions, and 'the soul/subject is obliged and encouraged to generate and maintain a reflexive relation to itself' through the 'self-exploring gaze' that enables it to see, seize, separate and identify all the thoughts and ideas flowing inside the soul (Siisiäinen, 2015, p. 237). For Foucault (1982), pastoral governing is a meticulous technology of power/knowledge that makes Christian believers into subjects and objects of a particular purpose, by putting forth the pastoral gaze that surveys their innermost mind.

In addition, to explain 'biopower', Foucault uses the analogy that if juridical power is like dealing with leprosy and disciplinary power is like dealing with the plague, then security is like managing smallpox, in his lecture series at the College De France in 1978-79 (Foucault, 2010). The power model for leprosy involves expelling the leper from the community. In contrast, the disciplinary model for the plague divides the sick from the healthy, assigning detailed roles to individuals. Movement is restricted, and at designated times, individuals must show themselves to prove they are alive and not infected. Distinguished from these, the power technique of security within biopower is exemplified by the management of smallpox

through vaccination. This approach targets the population as a whole, not individuals, administering vaccinations to maintain normal infection and mortality rates within the group. The goal is not to eliminate smallpox in every individual but to manage the incidence and mortality rates to maintain a statistical norm. The focus is on regulating the overall health of the population rather than eradicating disease in each person.

In this sense, biopower means power over population as a human species who has biological desires and problems and as a public who are socially grown (Foucault, 2009). Thus, the new mode of power mainly focuses on the needs, such as matter of birth and death, of population for they are crucial for economic prosperity. The extent of biopower derives from the way it spreads throughout state institutions, penetrating all social and cultural objects overseen by science such as medicine and institutions such as hospitals and schools, alongside appealing to person's adherence to a homogeneous identity (Parchev, 2018).

Like pastoral power, this type of power uses the technology of *self-control*, *reflection*, and *responsibility* in the mechanism of security or apparatuses of security that establishes an average considered as optimal and a bandwidth of the acceptable that must not be exceeded (Foucault, 2009) regarding the inherent risk of population such as famine or disease and the instruments and techniques are used for maintaining the average and boundary and guaranteeing security of the risk. In the mechanism of security, individuals are allowed to freely experience freedom of their own, for example in economic activities, but, at the same time, constantly reflect and regulate themselves to discern what to do or not in the boundary of aims and purpose of government (Lim, 2016) with assistance of scientific estimation and statistics that sets the average for the best security of entire society. Then, state institutions and laws serve the preservation of the biological need such as life, health, and the physical and mental stability of populations, whilst not expressing a dominant ideology or

hegemonic relation to class (Parchev, 2018). Individuals are being cared and become stabilised as a unit of population within the purpose of the best optimisation for productivity. This was an evolution of power exertion to adapt highly sophisticated society for successful government.

Finally, Foucault suggest the notion of ‘governmentality’, which arguably articulates a mixture of different modalities of power and governmental technologies (Jeong, 2018). The term ‘governmentality’ was coined by Foucault during his research into the genealogy of the modern state's emergence. It encompasses various concepts and themes that constitute Foucault's social theory, such as power-knowledge, techniques, strategies, subjectification, ethics, and the self, which might initially seem separate (Lemke, 2002; Dean, 2010). Governmentality is a compound word, where ‘government’ and ‘mentality’ or ‘rationality’ are combined (Perryman et al., 2017). Foucault makes it clear that government is different from ‘reigning or ruling’ and not the same as ‘commanding’ or ‘laying down the law’, such as the modality of sovereign power. It is also different from ‘disciplining’ with subsequent award or punishment in disciplinary power. He defines government as the ‘conduct of conduct’, which means an organised and specific activity of steering behaviours of individuals or group of people to a particular direction under exertion of power (Dean, 1999; Lee, 2009). That is, in other words, the ways in which the object of power is the conduct of its subjects’ mind, reason and behaviour, so subjectivity and conduct of the subjects are shaped in certain ways in relation to certain objectives (Rose, 2004) (by the self and others) in myriad different sites (Spohrer & Bailey, 2018). In this sense, government via governmentality is not about oppression or external coercion over actors or population but about recognizing and utilizing their abilities for specific purposes (Rose, 1999) and aligning them with the aims of power through their own free will.

Thus, for Foucault, governmentality is a set of calculated practices or

organised and specific activity for the best arrangement of people which controls ways of thinking and behaviours of subjects (Dean, 1999, p. 11), and, more broadly, life elements of subjects, such as the economy, climate, habits, life and death (Foucault, 2009). Foucault draws ideas from the literature of Guillaume de La Perrière's *Le Miroir politique, contenant diverses manières de gouverner* (1555) to describe what 'organised and specific activity' means. According to La Perrière, it is an action of governor to ensure the greatest possible amount of wealth and arrangement or disposition of subjects and things related to govern them, employing tactics based on knowledge of the things, for an end suitable for each of the things to be governed. Such activity includes formation and dissemination of discourse and employment of various rationalizing techniques. Here, discourse is a concept that combines knowledge, techniques, apparatuses, and practices. Consequently, institutions and institutional analysis, interpreted in the context of social, rational, and historical institutionalism, are integrated into Foucault's theory as discourse and governmentality (Jeong, 2018). In particular, discourse, as a technique of governance, leads individuals to develop and act upon patterns of certain behaviour they believe to be true and moral within a specific context, thereby integrating them into the realm of power. As subjects voluntarily develop behaviour patterns aligned with the aims of power, the dualisms of domination and subjugation, and freedom and constraint, dissolve. Therefore, for Foucault, governmentality is a set of calculated practice of particular governmental rationalities for the best arrangement of people that controls the way of thinking and behaviour of subjects, and, more broadly, things of life of the subjects that affects their soul, such as economy, climate, habits and life and death (Foucault, 2009).

With such understanding, it reaches the insight that governmentality embraces complicated governmental technologies and the mixture of them targeting populations or groups of people. To be specific, particularly in modern era, governmentality is linked to 'three key

ingredients' of bio-power: the *population* as its target, *political economy* as its major form of knowledge, and the *apparatuses of security* as its essential technical instrument (Foucault, 2009).

Based on Foucault's own scattered comments on this, the population encompasses humans as a social, cultural, moral, behavioural and especially economic being (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 10) as well as a biological being, which is what Dean (2010) calls 'bio-economic' and 'bio-sociological' forms (Spohrer & Bailey, 2018), having biological needs and desires in, for example, health, sanitation, birth rate, longevity, race' (Foucault, 1997a, p. 73). The population is managed, regulated and controlled by 'political economy', which uses scientific techniques such as statistics to access (economic, social and biological) problems of populations and provide solutions for effective political control. In this way, the body becomes a key locus of the operation of power – that is, both the individual body and the population. At the enactment level, governmentality works within 'apparatuses of security' and takes 'freedom' which specifically means 'letting things take their course' and 'self-regulation' as the main technologies of government (Foucault, 2009). More specifically, within the apparatuses of security, individuals are allowed to experience their own freedom, for example in economic activities, but at the same time constantly reflect, compare and regulate themselves in discerning what to do or not to do in the boundary of aims and purposes as set by the government (Lim, 2016), which results in subjectification (Miller & Rose, 2008). Then, state institutions and law serve the preservation of biological needs such as life, health and the physical and mental stability of a population, through various knowledge in political economy, while not expressing a dominant ideology or hegemonic relation to the class system (Parchev, 2018). Vaccination and inoculation of state's security apparatuses in epidemic outbreak are good examples of technique of political economy to sustain the average and the boundary of death rate for security of the population. The technologies are rooted in the theory

that freedom will produce the universal benefit of the population if they are allowed within a certain limit, based on what utilitarian philosophy says in the ‘principle of utility’, which states ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong’ (Bentham, 1776). How the technologies works are well described in the Foucault’s example of the apparatuses of security for tackling grain scarcity in eighteenth’s century in France, which was given in the second lecture at the College De France in 1977-78:

The anti-scarcity system up until seventeenth’s century had failed. What happens in the eighteenth century, when there is the attempt to unblock this system? Freedom of commerce and of the free circulation of grain began to be laid down as a mutation of technologies of power, the instrument of the technique of apparatuses of security, and the fundamental principle of economic government. It means allowing prices of grain to rise where their tendency is to rise. We allow the phenomenon of dearness-scarcity to be produced and develop on such a market, on the whole series of market, this reality which we have allowed to develop, will itself entail precisely its own self-curbing and self-regulation. So there will no longer be any scarcity in general...

(Foucault, 1977-78 (ed.) in Davidson, 2009)

This type of power, rooted in bio-power, uses self-control, reflection, and responsibility as technologies within security mechanisms, or ‘apparatuses of security.’ These mechanisms establish an optimal average and a bandwidth of acceptable limits that must not be exceeded (Foucault, 2009). Such measures are applied to manage population risks, such as famine or disease, by employing instruments and techniques that maintain the average, enforce boundaries, and ensure security against these risks. In the mechanism of security, individuals are encouraged to constantly reflect and regulate themselves to discern what to do or not in the boundary of aims and purpose of government (Lim, 2016) with assistance of scientific



estimation and statistics that set the average for the best security of the entire society. Individuals are being cared and become stabilised as a unit of population within the purpose of the best optimisation for productivity. This was an evolution of power exertion to adapt highly sophisticated society for successful government.

On top of the discussion on governmentality of Foucault, it is noteworthy that *governmentality* and *governance* are linked in many aspects contemporary government. *Governance* refers to an evolved mode of government, which steers conducts of population mainly through heterarchical network of organisations, where a dense fabric of interdependent actors are involved in delivering services and exchange resources (Rhodes, 1996). The emergence of a heterarchical network as a new mode of government implies a reorganisation of existing power relation within the context of what Ong (2007) calls 'neo-liberalisation, which refers to the governing of society, in part, through the production of willing, self-governing, and enterprising subjects (Olmedo and Baily, 2013).

Governance within heterarchical network articulates important aspects of governmentality: First of all, it denies the exclusiveness of monarchical sovereignty of those who hold superiority in power relation and the functional approach to power of Marxists who argue that a power serves as a mean of maintenance of the dominant economic structure (Lee, 2009). This is especially relevant to the current democratic state of modern states because governmentality and governance is a type of power exertion which considers states as a supporter of self-involvement and motivation of diverse networks for tackling diverse social problems, rather than something can exercise sovereign power. Thus, network governance based on involvement of individual increases democratic participation in policy making and policy thinking can be influenced by more people and voices and leading to increased civic participation (Sørensen and Torfing, 2007). As Osborn & Gaebler (1992) argues, this is the era of less government and more governance. In addition, it concedes the

fact that power exertion is enabled by the strong link between institutions, organisations, and social systems that are interconnected in everyday life of population like capillaries in our body (Lee, 2009). In this sense, charities, hospitals, schools, and many other professional groups of specific professions are the actual arena of governance, where diverse types of powers, mechanisms, and technologies can struggle. Finally, it emphasises the importance of concepts related to 'autonomous self' (Miller & Rose, 2008) and the language of 'freedom', 'autonomy', and 'choice' in rationality of government. The recognition of the autonomous-self began to arise amongst individuals with the reconceptualization of citizenship in the 1980s, when the control of state was evident and reached its climax (Rose, 1999). As a counter response, when the states' control transforms as an amalgamation of various governmental practices - what Foucault calls the governmentalization of the state (Foucault, 2008; 2009) - individuals began to regard themselves as an individualistic being that can freely and actively exercise his or her personal preferences amongst a variety of options, rather than a social being whose powers and obligations are articulated in the language of social responsibilities and collective solidarities (Lee, 2009). Thus, in this framework, the shift from social responsibility to personal autonomy aligns with neoliberal ideologies, where individuals increasingly see themselves as free to make choices from a range of options, focusing on self-empowerment and personal responsibility. Such phenomenon was a fundamental question to rationality of government and a significant shift that dismantles the strong bond based on social contract in which individual and society had mutual claims and obligations, thus enables social welfare programmes such as free education to work. Thus, a new rationality of government and new technologies that guarantee the freedom for such autonomous-self are required. Governance targets the autonomous subjectivity of individual and takes it as a primary self-regulatory mean of control. In this frame, the values such as self-

realisation, the skills of self-presentation, self-direction and the self-management were both personally seductive and economically desirable (Miller and Rose, 2008) and individuals become ‘an entrepreneur of him or herself’ (Foucault, 2010), but also of others and, importantly, social reform (Olmedo and Baily, 2013). Ironically, freedom of individual became the target of control.

A brief introduction to Foucault’s concepts of power, mechanisms, governmentality, and governance will serve as the framework for examining the current state of accountability in South Korean schools. While neither sovereignty nor disciplinary power such as surveillance have completely disappeared, governmentality continues to influence subjects (Perryman et al., 2017) in the South Korean context of education. Further discussion of the literature in the following sections will discuss neo-liberalism as a dominant political rationality as well as the governmentality of the era in the subsequent section and consolidate the relationship between power, government and accountability in education and discusses empirical realisations of power and its effect on education and underscores the necessity and originality of this thesis in the section after.

### **2.5.3. Neoliberal Governmentality**

Neo-liberalism is a belief system or ideology that holds that the most ideal outcomes can be achieved when everything, including the economy, politics, society, and personal daily life, operates according to the principles of the free market, grounded in the freedom and spontaneity of rational individuals (Eikenberry, 2009). Neo-liberalism highlights sanctity and effectiveness of global market forces, as the best way of managing the economy and distributing scarce public resources, the existence of freedom among citizens, with reduced power and intervention from government (Thorsen & Lie, 2006). It worships ‘wealth creators and generators’ and the ‘trickle-down effect’ and promotes the ‘mini capitalist,’ particularly via an education

system that regards children as ‘human capital or resource.’ It is associated with several key ideas of market principles such as choice, privatisation, de-regulation, and public spending cuts as a means of promoting ‘efficiency,’ ‘competition’ and ‘effectiveness’ of services. These ideas and practices above are well summarised by David Harvey (2005, p.2):

Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture.

Foucault (2008) believes that neo-liberalism relies on a ‘rational model’ derived from the field of economics; the market is the most effective means of governance. At the same time, he points out that these rational thoughts and forms have produced a variety of political technologies that govern society and individuals in a way that reflects neoliberal ideas. Michel Foucault's examination of neo-liberalism, particularly in his 1978-1979 lectures at the Collège de France, titled *The Birth of Biopolitics*, provides a profound analysis of neo-liberalism as a rationality of governing. Rather than viewing neo-liberalism merely as an economic doctrine, Foucault presents it as a comprehensive governmental rationality that reshapes the relationship between the state, the market, and individual subjectivity. That is, for Foucault, neoliberalism, is seen as a rationality that extends market principles to all spheres of life, transforming the state’s role from one of direct intervention to one that creates and maintains the conditions

for market functioning (Foucault, 2008). This shift implies a redefinition of governance, where the state's primary task is to foster a competitive environment conducive to economic activity. Central to Foucault's critique is the concept of 'homo economicus', or the economic man, which under neoliberalism evolves into an entrepreneurial figure. Unlike the classical liberal view, where individuals are seen as passive market participants, neoliberalism conceptualises individuals as active entrepreneurs of themselves, constantly engaged in self-investment and optimisation (Foucault, 2008). This reconceptualization transforms personal and social domains, compelling individuals to approach life through the lens of market logic and efficiency. Foucault highlights the neoliberal critique of the welfare state, such as its perceived inefficiencies and constraints on individual freedom. Neoliberalism posits that social policies should be designed not merely to provide safety nets but to enhance human capital and ensure returns on investment in the population (Lemke, 2001). This perspective reorients social policies towards market-friendly outcomes, prioritizing economic productivity over social welfare.

A crucial point is that Foucault (2008) believes that neo-liberalism's key feature is the extension of 'market logics' to non-commodified areas, implying that it includes public sectors such as education, though he didn't discuss neoliberalism and education specifically, for effective control. That is, neoliberal ideas could be strategically used for effective government in tackling the economic and political problems. Therefore, neoliberal discourse claims that the introduction of market forces into public sectors, such as education, will solve these problems of inefficiency, quality and standards as it provides a playing field of competition, diversity of providers and consumer choice where schools compete with one another for achieving higher quality and standards across the country.

Neo-liberalism as a governmentality means that it is a form of government that embodies the belief system which asserts that the

principles of liberalism, based on individual freedom and spontaneity, can produce the most ideal outcomes when restructured according to the principles of the free market (Jeong, 2018). Under this belief, neo-liberalism redefines and organizes areas traditionally considered non-market domains—such as individuals, families, communities, civil society, and even the state—into market-oriented domains (Foucault, 2010; Lemke, 2001). In this process, the neoliberal system erodes the public interest character of the state and other public domains through the corporatisation and marketisation of the public sector, deregulation of the economic sphere, reduction of welfare, and the promotion of policies that favour a small government. Through this process, it has transformed individuals into atomised ‘homo economicus’, who view the maximisation of economic benefits through rational calculation as the highest virtue. Jeong (2018) summarised the characteristics of this neoliberal governmentality as follows:

- Neo-liberalism is not merely a state policy or an economic phenomenon, nor is it a simple ideology.
- It is a governmentality based on the market model.
- Rather than signifying a retreat of the state or a reduction in power, it is interpreted as a fundamental change in the state's role in governance. The state is tasked with creating the conditions for neoliberal governance to operate, rather than directly governing.
- Neo-liberalism governs through informal forms of organization and the freedom and spontaneity of individuals, rather than through official sovereign powers like the state. In education, if traditional duties were centralized in the education office, the Ministry of Education, or the central government, neo-liberalism encourages active participation from private entities, schools, parents, and teachers, effectively delegating the state's role. This situation reflects how neoliberal governance transforms everyone into both subjects and agents of governance, expanding to ensure that actors govern themselves and the society they create.
- Various strategies and tactics are employed to shape

individuals into subjects compatible with neoliberal governance. Notably, individuals are encouraged to view themselves as enterprises, organizing their lives as businesses, surrounded by market discourses of management, efficiency, and expertise.

(Jeong, 2018, p. 196)

However, what is noteworthy in neoliberal governmentality is the fact that it intensifies and its core ideas into new areas (Harvey, 2005). That is, neoliberal principles extend beyond the economy into non-economic spheres such as education, healthcare, and social services. They still maintaining the competition, marketization and deregulation strategies of neoliberalism, but further adopts ideas of efficiency, managerial know-how, and entrepreneurialism into the social sphere such as in sectors traditionally managed by the state, and social services (Harvey, 2005), transforming individuals into subjects who meet social responsibilities with an entrepreneurial attitude (Jeong, 2018). Such extension prioritises individual autonomy and self-regulation, viewing individuals as self-governing agents responsible for their own success and well-being. This focus on autonomy involves promoting personal responsibility and reducing reliance on state intervention (Rose, 1999). In addition, expert knowledge and professional discourses are crucial. Policies and practices are often justified through appeals to expertise in public sectors, and professionalisation becomes a means of regulating behaviour and ensuring compliance with normative standards, which is associated with de-professionalisation. This is evident in fields like education and healthcare, where professional standards and benchmarks guide practice and assess performance (Ball, 1994). Thus, there is a marked shift from welfare state models, which emphasize state responsibility for social welfare, to workfare models that emphasize employment and self-sufficiency. Social policies increasingly incentivize work and aim to reduce dependency on state support through conditional welfare programs and active labour

market policies (Jessop, 2002).

Neoliberal governmentality eventually creates mechanisms where individuals act as agents of social responsibility, effectively taking on roles traditionally fulfilled by the state. In the context of educational reform that includes discourses of professionalism, it emphasizes teacher subjectivity, autonomy, responsabilisation of individuals for management of their own risks whether related to health, employment, or financial security (Beck, 2012) and accountability on one hand, while on the other hand, inscribing ideas of efficiency, management know-how, and entrepreneurial spirit into the domain of education. This transforms teachers into subjects who are to fulfil educational responsibilities with an entrepreneurial attitude (Jeong, 2018). Using neoliberal governmentality as a lens to understand the Korean context of accountability highlights how Korean teachers, like their counterparts in other neoliberal settings, are increasingly expected to internalise state-driven goals of accountability and self-regulation. This perspective reveals how Korean teachers are positioned not only as educational professionals but also as self-managing agents responsible for achieving outcomes that align with market-driven values of efficiency and entrepreneurialism. By examining accountability through this lens, I aim to uncover the ways in which Korean teachers translate these pressures in their practices, illuminating the complex dynamics of control and autonomy within the South Korean educational system.

## **2.6. Conclusion**

The literature review explores several key notions for in depth understanding of how power operates through policy and its impact in education: performative accountability, teachers' professionalism and subjectivity, and Foucault's conceptions of power.

The emphasis on performance and outcomes in education has led to a



reconfiguration of what it means to be a teacher, with a shift towards a more managerial, entrepreneurial, and performative model of teacher identity. This model prioritizes qualities such as efficiency, productivity, and adaptability, often at the expense of traditional educational values and practices. The literature suggests that this shift has significant implications for teachers' professionalism and subjectivity.

Within this problematisation, the literature review explored and critically examined the evolution of performative accountability in education over the past several decades. The concept of performative accountability, which emphasizes measurable outcomes and performance metrics, has significantly impacted education policies and practices globally. This system of accountability has been critiqued for creating an environment where educational institutions and teachers are primarily driven by the need to meet specific performance indicators, often at the expense of genuine educational development and teacher autonomy. The literature highlights the adverse effects of this approach, such as heightened competition among schools and teachers, strategic behavior aimed at meeting performance targets, and a narrow focus on test results and inspections.

Foucault's notion of governmentality provides a valuable framework for understanding these dynamics. In particular, governmentality refers to the way in which the state exercises control over the population through a combination of governing techniques and self-regulation. In the context of education, this involves the use of performative measures to shape teachers' behaviour and practices in alignment with state-defined standards of 'good teaching.' The review discusses how this form of power operates through mechanisms such as surveillance, self-appraisal, and the internalization of norms, leading teachers to self-regulate in ways that reinforce the state's educational objectives.

One of the key themes in the literature is the paradox of autonomy and the technology of the-self in a complex accountability context like South Korea where performative accountability is evident. It means that, while systems like the SSAS purport to enhance teacher autonomy by involving them in self-appraisal processes, this autonomy could be often limited and constrained by overarching performance metrics and standards. Teachers are expected to exercise self-regulation and autonomy within a framework that ultimately serves to reinforce state control and accountability measures. As will be explored later, this creates a situation where teachers may feel they are exercising professional autonomy, but are in fact adhering to externally imposed standards and expectations and this triggers doubt about whether or not the SSAS promotes true professional autonomy of teachers or a means of control and advanced technology of government.

In conclusion, the literature review underscores the need for a critical reassessment of contemporary education policies and accountability measures. It calls for more empirical research into the effects of systems like the SSAS on teachers' practices and professional development. Indeed, the SSAS proclaimed itself a key for turning the tide of accountability from its focus on performance and outcome to autonomy and responsibility in the practices of teachers. In addition, the new scheme aims at transforming schools into a place where collective professional ability is actively developed. However, the blueprint doesn't necessarily guarantee all the things that it states. A pressing need for rigorous research exploration of how government of power or autonomy of teachers is achieved in the new system of accountability policy and how it affects teachers' teaching practice. That is, research is required to examine how these systems operate in practice and to see whether or not to these systems genuinely support educational improvement and teacher autonomy. The following chapter, however, will firstly provide some more contextual background about the process of the formation of the unique

accountability culture, system and policies in South Korean education and then explore the key ideas and components of the SSAS, as an introduction to the research project.

# **Chapter Three. POLICY CONTEXT: GENEALOGY OF DISCOURSE AROUND ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH KOREAN EDUCATION**

## **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I explore the particular context of South Korea, describing how diverse hegemonic political rationalities competed, evolved and produced a set of performative accountability policies, with a particular attention to appraisal policies on teachers. This is an interesting task itself, but it also provides the political and historical context from which the current school's self-appraisal system, which is an object of scrutiny of this thesis, stems. The exploration outlines and highlights the problems of the current accountability context for Korean teachers, which I mainly investigate in the thesis, and provides a way to evaluate the way and means in which such a political manifestation of power emerged and is generated.

First, this exploration includes examining ways of exertion of governmental power in the game of truth by capturing and critiquing the increasingly diffuse, fractured nature of policy processes (Huskin, 2016, p. 35) and tracing the trajectory of performative and accountability discourses. The focus is the contemporary discourses on performative accountability policies and their connection, combination, interaction, and evolution in South Korean education for the last three decades, from the 1990s to the present. Second, this exploration involves explanations of specific accountability policies that have been and are being enacted in the Gyeonggi-do, the local state where the largest number of students (in total 1,635,657 in 2023 (Korean Educational Statistics Service (KESS), 2023)) is registered.

These explanations are derived from the messy process of the games of truth or discourses around teacher accountability. Within this, genealogical description and discussion inspired by Foucault is employed to describe and chart a complex but important picture of the political context around performative accountability, unveiling the power relationships inscribed in and articulated by accountability policies for the control and management of teachers. Foucauldian genealogy of discourses is a process of writing, developing and problematising the historical account of the power mechanisms and discourses around them that govern the policy subjects and population in a broad sense. This process is referring to, if needed, and described by Foucault's idea of power, such as discipline and bio-politics when necessary. This is accomplished through an analysis of the unseen and untold principles and strategies of governance by 'uncovering and disrupting the taken-for granted discourses' (Huskin, 2016: 37) and 'unmasking the ideological dimensions, values and assumptions of public policy' (Doherty, 2007, p. 193).

This means that I intend to write a brief but critical genealogy on the relationship between education policy on accountability and how power is exerted at each vital moment of a particular discourse in 'the endless repeated play of dominations' (Foucault, 1984b, p. 150) of the modern history of education in South Korea. This will involve 'revealing the hidden micro mechanisms of its operation' (Tamboukou, 2003, p. 140), which are aimed at the further extension, reproduction, or creation of social control.

To do this, as mentioned, I will try to revisit several moments of reform and political change in the history of performative accountability policy when the ways of power exertion in which policy was materially-discursively articulated, or disposed (Bailey, 2015, p. 73), particularly in accordance with the three modalities of power Foucault identified: 'sovereignty (or juridico-legal)', 'discipline' and 'governmentality' (Lemke, 2011), each of which was discussed in depth in the literature review. Foucault described them as

a ‘triangle’, that is, there is not a series of successive elements in modalities of power, the absolute replacement of the old by the new. ‘There is not the legal age (of sovereignty), the disciplinary age, and then the age of security (governmentality)’ (Foucault, 2009, p. 8). Therefore, when I use Foucault’s notions of power as tool of unpacking the genealogy for the performative education policy in South Korea, I will place each genealogical moment under the lens of the three modalities of power that sometimes work together or independently.

In the first third of the rest of this chapter, I trace back to the beginning of the first South Korean government, or a bit before that when modern education was established by U.S. army military government in Korea (hereafter USAMGIK) and follow the pathway up to the 5.31., which means 31<sup>st</sup> May, education reform in the mid of 1990s. Then in the second third of the chapter, the time after the reform, I pay particular attention to the alignment with neoliberal ideas, more precisely ‘performativity,’ and its evolution within neoliberal discourses. Then, in the last part of the chapter, I visit the recent discourses around the SSAS under the broader policy of innovation schools. As these are to provide policy context that explains the nature of the self-appraisal for promotion of understanding of the target policy, practical manifestation of accountability policies will also be discussed with the proper level of details to provide a particular focus on inspection and appraisal policy for schools. Some context and examples of the English education system and policies may appear where relevant to promote further understanding of the Korean context, as they are tightly bound together.

### **3.2. Pre-Performative Accountability: from Universal Education to Industrialisation**

As a prologue to the critical history, in this section, I would like to visit the crucial moment when nationwide modern education was initialised, then walk along the timeline to where we are situated in the political and educational contexts of several significant policies during the evolution of South Korean education, then move right up to the beginning of the current neoliberal education, in the belief that the retrospective snapshots will provide a richer background and broader landscape for the story of education policy, particularly as regards performative accountability and power.

### **3.2.1. From 1910s to 1950s**

The first Korean provisional government was established during the 1910s; however, Korea was under Japanese colonial rule until 1945, and South Korea saw the establishment of a democratic and independent government in 1948. It was headed by the first president, Seung-Man Lee, after two years and eleven months of control by the USAMGIK. Initial attention should be paid to the political relationship between Korea and USAMGIK in the closing year of World War II, and the subsequent independence of Korea. As soon as the second world war ended, the U.S. army government started to rule the southern part of Korean peninsula, describing themselves as ‘an occupation force’, in contrast to the Soviet Union (hereafter SU), which ruled the Northern part of the peninsula, describing Korea as a ‘liberal state’ and considering themselves as ‘a liberation army’. Unfortunately, the U.S. military government considered Korea to be the spoils of war following their surrender, which resulted in lack of sympathetic care for the Korean people (Cumings, 1981; Kim, 1988; Lee, 2012, p. 223) as citizens of an independent country. This perception by the US army is well represented in what Lieut. Gen. John R. Hodge, who was the commanding general of the US armed forces, said in his speech:

Korea is a part of Japan which is an enemy to U.S. Thus, they must obey the conditions of surrender. In addition, at least in the beginning, the policies for occupation should be delivered by Japanese administrations. As far as I know, the policies for liberation of the country have not been made though the Koreans desperately want to have it.

(Cumings, 1981. Translated by the author)

The political discourse of colonial consciousness and unpreparedness on the part of the Koreans in one of the crucial initial moments, though it was after the war, implied that there were no options for people to choose other than simply obeying the colonial rules, which emphasised social stability and solidarity in every part of social and economic life of individuals, including education. In addition, USAMGIK worked closely with the colonial government of Japan who advocated for the pro-Japanese collaborators and reported progressive politicians, nationalists and the communist party as dangerous groups, in attempts to figure out who Koreans are and share core information for control of Koreans, such as the characteristics of and the ways to effectively rule the Korean public (Hyun, 1994; Lee, 2012, p. 224). In this context, the group of people who were ideologically different from the conservative values of the US became excluded from politics and important positions in the new government, whilst the group of people who supported the liberal democratic values and many of the pro-Japanese collaborators took up important roles in the process of the restoration of the country, supporting the interests and rationale of the U.S.

In this political context, through the genealogical lens, discourses critiquing any thoughts of political-left leaning sentiments in the process of restoration of national education, as well, urgent agendas in education were overwhelmingly favoured and became dominant. These were mainly supported by the advocates of the political right and the U.S. education system as well as the groups who supported liberal democracy in politics and a capitalist economy. According to



Hyun (1994), this group of people were regarded as ‘elite educators and practitioners’, most of whom had worked for Japanese imperial colonization in educational institutions, and shared several common features: many had come from affluent socio-economic backgrounds, many had studied at higher level in the US and had fluent English skills, many of them were familiar with American liberal democracy and regarded it as an ideal political system, and many of them were believers in Christianity which values social order and consensus thus potentially against Marxism or communism. They were appointed to and functioned as a think tank, a strong representation of the power in place, and became members of the ‘Chosun Education Deliberation Commission’ (hereafter CEDC), which was an advisory body for education policy during the governance by the US, and actively participated in the process of education policy development and also played a significant role in strategic exclusion of the group of people who contested the American way of education or ideology, namely the Marxists, communists and more broadly the political left. This strategic exclusion of the groups of people who held perspectives such as communism and nationalism, for example the ‘Democratic Education Research Association’ and ‘Educators Council’ who advocated democratization of education in line with the ‘Southern Labour Party’ in decision making was the stance of the military government of the U.S., based on the assumption that people in South Korea lean more towards the political-left as well as a survey result which gauged the political inclination of the public and showed 70% as socialist supporters and 7% as communist supporters (Dongah-ilbo, March 1946). This political strategy is illustrated in an interview of one the ministers of USAMGIK, Archer L. Leacher, on 7th March 1947:

On (the) surface, the American democratic education system was set up, aiming for repressing the progressive and nationalism propensity of the population, rather than for ending the colonial education of Japan. However, it was

aimed at enhancing the centralised and hierarchical structure of education system which was established by Japan.

(Dongah-ilbo, March 1947. Translated by the author)

The power game in education at this stage was characterised by a clear dominance of the political-right in key positions in several key educational apparatuses, such as the ‘education and management bureau’ (hereafter EMB), which was a department in charge of overall national education, the ‘Korea Education Committee on Education’ (hereafter KECE) which was an advisory organisation with ten members, under USAMGIK, and the CEDC (Hyun, 1984; Lee, 2012). Many of the members were from the ‘Hanmindang,’ which is a political party consisting of the pro-Japanese collaborators as well as anti-communists, and ‘Huengsadan,’ which was formed in San Francisco before independence to achieve the goal of gradual independence of Korea by cultivating and developing their independent power and skills whilst strongly resisting communism (Cumings, 1981). The political stance of these were exactly in line with the interests of the occupation forces who weren’t concerned about the attempts of these people to delete what they had done in the colonial period for Japan, which made them able to ‘launder their identity and the past’ (Hyun, 1981, p. 48, 51).

The asymmetry of power I observe under the control of USAMGIK, and their dominance has characteristics of what Foucault called *sovereignty*. The power of USAMGIK worked as sovereign from the top to those individuals at the bottom through setting in place legislation and punishments or sanctions. In the very beginning of the new era, power was about justifying and consolidating control for the interests of dominant stakeholders without any specific technologies or strategies apart from intentional and explicit exclusion of opponents.

Meanwhile, under the rule of USAMGIK, the two influential

institutions which played key roles in building foundations or restoring national education (to clear away the remnants of education during Japanese colonialism) at the start of the post-war era were the KECE and the CEDC, which was the successor of KECE with around 100 educators and professionals from different fields of study who tried to develop an overall education system and policies that fit the context of Korea at that time (Lee et al., 2015). Two of the key issues discussed in depth in KECE, CEDC and the government was establishing compulsory education as well as the elimination of illiteracy, and to place priority on developing a policy for these. USAMGIK released a proposal for the national compulsory education with dedicated support of the CEDC in September 1945 and it led to the legislation of the first Education Act (Decree no. 16) in Korea, which provided the statutory foundation for national education (Green, 2015) in September 1949. The act mainly stipulated (1) the philosophy and purpose of national education (article 1-4), (2) compulsory education at primary level and equal opportunity (article 8), (3) 6 years of primary, 3 years of lower Secondary, 3 years of upper Secondary and 4 years of higher education as the school system (article 97, 104, 108) (4) equivalent treatment for public and private schools and teachers, and (5) a guarantee of teachers' status (Lee et al., 2015). Scaffolded by the law, the aim of compulsory education at primary level was achieved, albeit the lack of enough infrastructure such as classrooms and school buildings led to a 96.13% school enrolment of all school aged children in 1959. This was the situation soon after the '6 Years Completion of Compulsory Education Plan'. A sufficient budget for staff and buildings for compulsory education of the children was finally reserved in 1971 (Lee et al., 2015). In 1945, about 78% of Korean adults were illiterate. The ministry of education began to teach letters to students and citizens and the ministry of home affairs encouraged them to participate actively. The ministry of national defence took charge of education of military forces. As a result, the illiteracy rate dropped to 4.1% by 1958 (Lee et al., 2015).

The extraordinary emphasis on educational reform during the initial stages of the nation enabled the supply of human resources for Korea's industrialisation in the 1960s.

### **3.2.2. From 1960s to mid-1990s**

In 1961 the military junta led by Chung-Hee Park, a former Major in the army, overthrew the previous civilian government by force, and instituted several reforms in education for the sake of improving the national economy through a discourse of 'industrialization' and 'productivity', based on the human capital theory (Becker, 1993), which states that education and training enable human beings to be more productive for economic growth. That is, the military coup government used the discourse of industrialisation and productivity as a dominant political and economic way of control and regarded and used education as a means of human reformation to support the needs of the nation's economic development (Lee et al., 2015). The leader of the coup, who later became president in 1963, and his supporters established the 'Supreme Council for National Reconstruction' (hereafter, SCNR), where key decisions for legislation, jurisdiction, and administration were made. This body produced diverse education acts, such as the Private School Act 1963 (Decree no. 1362) and rolled out policies to increase the level of control at all levels in education for rapid industrialisation using sovereign and disciplinary power armed with military force. The schools within the growth of the industrial landscape were based on 'a hit and miss method of mass production, often inadequate buildings with few resources' (Ball, 2013, p. 40). The state teachers in the front line and head teachers in bureaucracy taught knowledge and skills, putting extra emphasis on science and technology to produce an industrious individual. Slogans and signs proclaiming the importance of raising productive individuals aiming for a wealthy nation were put in places everybody could see in almost every school (Lee et al., 2015). The cooperation

between schools and industry was highlighted and strengthened by establishment of new schools related to industry, for example agricultural and technical high schools (Lee et al., 2015). In addition to and in line with the instrumentalization of education for national industry, a political initiative of ‘Saemaul Undong’, which is also known as the ‘New Community Movement’, was launched in April 1970, aiming for successful modernisation and development of the rural economy across the country, by educating people in all age groups in conjunction with schools as a centre of regional human resources. The movement rapidly disseminated into every corner of the country and education was regarded as a means of ‘production of human forces’ suitable for such an economy driven society. It must be noted that the connection between industry and education in which education provides the skills and technologies of human capital for industry, was frequently and timely emphasized by a series of allocation statements, from 1963 to 1973, by President Chung-Hee Park (The Research Institute of Korean Education, 1974).

Along with the development of the economy, an increasing number of people could proceed to Secondary, tertiary and higher education after graduation from primary school. The ministry of culture and education gradually met the enthusiasm for education of the public by enlarging the scope of compulsory education to lower Secondary schools from 1985 to 2004 (Lee et al., 2015). The expansion of free and compulsory education resulted in the expansion of opportunities for upper Secondary schools and universities. Though some argue that the gradual expansion of compulsory education in South Korea was a series of gradual responses to cope with the anticipation of citizens needing to move toward a better life through education (Kim, 2010; Lee et al., 2015), others argue that the expansion of compulsory education opportunities were clearly linked to the expansion of the nationwide economy (Lee et al, 2010; Korean economy six decades of growth and development, 2011; Son, 2011).

The more education opportunities were provided, the more attention

was paid to the quality of education, though there were no explicit references to accountability in the first half a century of Korean education. However, it cannot be said there was no accountability at all because it naturally required that individuals or organisations should account and prove both the process and the results of tasks that are given to them. In this sense, accountability in South Korean education in the initial stages operated not as a forced mechanism, but as an ethical mechanism for individuals and organisations, especially in the public sector (Park, 2014). This particular type of accountability, ethical accountability (Hargreaves, 2000; Day, 2002; Cambell, 2008; Groundwater-Smith and Mockler, 2009), is centred on the responsibility of educators to uphold moral and ethical standards in their professional practice. This involves a commitment to fairness, integrity, and the holistic development of students. Day (2002) discusses the importance of professional integrity in ethical accountability, stating, “ethical accountability requires teachers to consistently act with honesty and integrity, reflecting a deep commitment to their professional values” (p. 134). This perspective emphasizes that teachers must align their actions with their ethical beliefs and professional standards. This conception had been accepted in the South Korean context of education. Ethical accountability in South Korea revolves around the commitment of teachers to uphold moral and ethical standards, ensuring the well-being and development of students. In particular focus on the cultural foundations of Confucian heritage, Lee (2016) argues that ‘South Korea places a strong emphasis on the moral duties of educators to act as role models and to foster the ethical development of students’ (p. 42) and Jang (2014) suggests that ‘ethical accountability in South Korea requires teachers to navigate the balance between adhering to traditional values of respect and authority and meeting contemporary expectations of fairness and equity’ (p. 89). Kim (2018) highlights the professional responsibility of teachers in South Korea, stating, “ethical accountability in South Korean education involves a

profound commitment to professional ethics, where teachers are expected to demonstrate integrity and fairness in their interactions with students” (p. 101). This reflects a shared global standard of ethical accountability in the teaching profession.

On top of that, under the proliferation of ethical accountability, teachers were not only asked to be morally responsible but also were highly trusted as accountable agents who are professional and responsible (Kim, 2014). This time would be alike to the situation in England during the post-war era up to the beginning of 1980s often referred to as the ‘Golden Age of public education’ (Adams, 2014, p. 117; Whitty, 2006).

Inroads on the trust of teachers’ professionalism and support for their autonomy arose from multiple factors. One of them is the wave of ‘globalisation,’ which proceeded from several western countries such as the U.K. and U.S.A. In general, globalisation means the process by which the world is becoming increasingly interconnected through massively increased trade and cultural exchange based upon the advancement of technology and transportation. In sociology and economy, however, it means the connections between societies and the emergence of an increasing global cultural system, resulting in the following changes: ‘increasing economic dependency’ and the ‘development of global patterns of consumption’ both in products and services (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p. 125). The enhanced proximity in economy between states and countries means enhanced international competition in products and services in public sector as well as private sector, and it brought an enhanced focus on the competitiveness of education as a primary and key means of national prestige and advantages. Another was the declining societal trust between the autonomous professional community and the public (Lingard et al., 2017), triggered by the global financial crisis and economic downturn in 1990s. Questions about efficiency and outcomes of teachers work, in the particular sense that regards them as a public servant who are funded by tax, arose in the mind of public

and opened cracks in public trust in teachers. In this context, to escape from the crisis, the discourse about the needs of the ‘new knowledge economy’ has led to an emphasis on the improvement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the public education system (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2008), which gave way to subsequential discourses of ‘competitiveness’, ‘cost-efficiency’ and ‘choice’ in education.

This followed the global trend of education reform that Pasi Sahlberg (2017) calls ‘Global Educational Reform Movement’ (hereafter GERM, an analogy for an epidemic that describes the rapid spread of the reform movement focused on higher competitiveness, standards and efficiency being embraced or enforced across the world) or the globalised education policy paradigm (Ball, 2003; 2012b; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010), which is based upon neo-liberalisation of education (Ball, 2012b) that will be specifically referred to in the following section. This paradigm emphasises ‘a package of three interrelated techniques: markets, managerialism and performativity on one hand and related to how power inscribes itself through the neo-liberalisation on the other’ (Ball, 2003. p. 215; 2016), having resulted in a kind of epidemic of education reforms across the world. This movement started in 1979 under the Thatcher government in the U.K., and under that of Ronald Wilson Reagan in 1981 in the U.S.A., as set out in the discourses ‘Education Reform Act 1988’ in England and the ‘A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform (1983) report’ in America. The movement was continued by the 5.31. education reform under Young-Sam Kim government in 1995 in South Korea.

### **3.3. Emergence, Permeation and Normalisation of Performative Accountability in South Korea: Post-industrialisation, 5.31 education Reform and After**



### **3.3.1. From mid-1990s to 2009: Discourses that Gave Birth to Performative Accountability**

The South Korean government in the middle of 1990s was the one of the states which eagerly embraced the GERM and the neo-liberal education reform (Kim, 2020). In 1994, the president, Young-Sam Kim, introduced a roadmap to become a globally competitive country during a press conference in Australia, on the way back to South Korea after the economic leaders' meeting, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Park, 2014). In a part of the roadmap, the Presidential Committee on Education Reform (hereafter PCER) was established as a presidential advisory body in 1994 and produced a series of reports which embarked on educational reform, aimed at setting up 'a new system of education' which could produce human capital to compete in the globalised world:

The change we are facing is not the simple change from 20th to 21st century. This change is a change of historical civilization. The civilization we have experienced was the civilization of industry. (Omission) The new type of civilization that gradually arises is described as 'information society' and 'knowledge society,' along with globalization. (Omission) The best approach to the new type of civilization is to set up 'a new system of education.' (Omission) The emergence of the era of globalization gives us several implications: Firstly, our education should make a leap to the world class quality.

(PCER, 1996, p. 47-54. Translated by the author)

What 'a new system of education' means was described in the report of PCER a year before:

Schools at all levels should be given autonomy and compete with each other in terms of provision of quality education

service. Students and parents should be provided enough and tailored information according to their talent and ability for school choice. Staff in school should be the actors of education reform and be actively involved in the process of the reform to create a new environment of education.

(Omission) The government should provide results on assessment of the quality of education service of each school, build an infrastructure for distribution of educational information, and ensure the equality of education service between types of schools, social classes, and regions.

(PCER, 1995, p. 27. Translated by the author)

What the series of reports proclaimed above were the basis of a series of reform schemes in 1994, 1995 and 1996, known as 5.31 education reform, which were rooted in the discourse of ‘quality’ and ‘standards’. These reform schemes set up several core values that represented their philosophy: quality education, student-centeredness, creativity, choice of school, diversity, character education, academic excellence, autonomy, accountability etc. (Committee of Education Reform, 1995; Lee et al, 2015, p. 186). Among these, the reform put particular emphasis on accountability and autonomy of schools (which implies how power controls teachers and schools as we will see), as a means of strengthening the competitiveness of education provision of state schools. State schools were placed in the particular external context that they should compete with other schools for promotion of standards for the general national competitiveness in the global economy and internal context that they should not fall behind by systematic private tutoring institutes, called ‘hagwon’ (Lee et al, 2015). The shift of approach was enacted by means of specific policies, some of which I will refer to later on, that required teachers to become more accountable for their performance and outcomes by the subsequent governments that more or less adopted the approach as described in the above quotations.

To take a step further, what is explicitly and significantly shown in the

above statements of PCER for describing the new system of education is the language of economics (Kim, 1997) in the discourse of 'quality' and 'standards' in education. The phrases of economics like 'compete,' 'service,' 'choice' and 'distribution' became a set of key languages and phrases all of which fed key discourses shortly to usher in the next era of education. Such a significant paradigm shift in the values framework of education (Ball, 1994) of the time, a shift from comprehensive to market values (Gewirtz et al, 2009), can be also found in the five goals of the new education system in the PCER report in 1994: (1) to provide high quality education; (2) to aim for a demand-centred education (consumer/learner driving the demand); (3) to diversify education; (4) enhance autonomy and accountability of providers in management; (5) strengthen the support for development. In addition, PCER suggested 'autonomy and competition,' 'equity,' and 'quality management through systematic assessment' as the vital principles of the new education system (Ahn, 2015). Such rhetoric, which employs market principles in the discourse of 'quality' and 'standard,' is clear evidence of the neoliberal influence on education in S. Korea in 1990s.

In this process, being labelled as the GERM, neoliberal ideas started to influence the public sector education, in particular relevance with the emergence and thriving of the concept of performative accountability and discourses around it, as Ball describes that performativity is a quintessential example of neoliberal governmentality (Ball, 2012). It has shaken and shaped the entire geography of education. Ball (2003) delves into how performativity, as a mechanism of neoliberal governmentality, impacts education and teachers. He discusses the pressures and demands on teachers to perform according to market-oriented metrics and standards, illustrating the pervasive influence of neoliberal rationality in educational settings. He commented on this phenomenon that "within policy, education is now regarded primarily from an economic point of view. The social and economic purposes of education have been

collapsed into a single, overriding emphasis on policy making for economic competitiveness and increasing neglect or side-lining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposes of education” (Ball, 2015b, pp. 11-12).

In tandem with such emphasis on performativity, discourses of ‘deficit,’ ‘derision’ in addition to ‘classroom collapse’, all of which targets and scapegoats teachers as a source of the failure of state provision of education. It appeared to justify such a dramatic political change and change of perception: from viewing education as a public good to education as a private good in the political and economic unrest. In particular, the discourse of ‘teacher quality’ or specifically ‘the deficit discourse’ (Ball, 2016) in quality and professionalism in the broader discourse of accountability and competitiveness of education, specifically focused on the lack of teacher accountability and an appraisal system for teachers and schools as a measure of such quality (Shin, 2010, p. 266).

Teachers are being devalued due to massive provision of teaching qualification (through diverse routes) and lack of professional knowledge. (Omission) Qualities of professional teacher should be elevated and the curriculum in teacher education should be specified. Extensive opportunities of teacher training should be provided and the personnel management system should be based on merits of individual teachers.

(PCER, 1995, p. 112)

Once school appraisal is rigidly designed and applied to schools, teachers cannot but try to meet the standards.

(A teacher in Sungsil high school in an interview / Chosun Daily Press, June 1995)

If a school doesn’t put effort on improvement of teacher quality, the government must take the role over.

(Hangyoreh Daily Press, March 1998)

Education will revive only when teachers revive.

(Hangyoreh Daily Press, November 1998)

Such claims for a higher quality of teachers arose from the sense that state education is in danger of collapse on one hand, and the argument that state education is not cost-effective on the other. The popular sentiment on the crisis of education triggered the placement of the issue of teacher quality as an urgent political agenda, which provides power an opportunity to use it as a way of filling the deficit of accountability of teachers.

It is interesting to see that such discourses were also pervasive and embraced in the time of education reform in England which is the state, a key laboratory of neo-liberalism. Ball (2017), referring to several moments in the late 1970s in England, such as the *Black Papers* which were produced by right-wing educationalists and politicians and supported by the right-wing press, and James Callaghan's Ruskin College Speech when he was a Labour Prime Minister, and sections of Media, such as *Daily Mail*, pointed out that the discourse of derision raised questions about the value for money of educational spending, subsidising as it did incompetent teachers and unsatisfactory standards of school performance (p. 82). Even though critics said the 'discourse of derision deploys exaggeration and ludicrous images, ridicule and stereotypification ... a caricature has been developed and presented to the public as an accurate depiction of the real' (p. 201), the deployment of derision gave a way to creating rhetorical spaces within which to articulate a variety of market-driven reforms. These include the policies of the 1980 Education Act, which introduced a raft of mechanisms with their basis in market principles. The 1986 Education Act took such matters even

further. Finally, the 1988 Education Reform Act ‘mandated the most sweeping changes to the educational landscape in England’ (Adams, 2014, p. 81).

I should note that such critical view on teachers in Korea has emerged in response to the high expectations placed on educational outcomes and the performance of teachers within the evolving educational landscape. As briefly discussed in previous sections, in the aftermath of the Korean War, South Korea prioritized rebuilding its educational system as part of its national reconstruction efforts. The government enacted rapid educational expansion to improve literacy and general education levels. The societal emphasis was on rapidly increasing educational accessibility, which often meant that the quality of teaching and teacher training lagged behind (Sorensen, 1994). In such context, once a minimum level of educational infrastructure had been equipped and neo-liberalism had been embraced as a dominant political ideology, the government introduced new curricula and policies to foster creativity and critical thinking. However, these changes were accompanied by increased scrutiny and criticism of teachers' abilities to adapt to new teaching methods and the perceived inadequacies in their training and performance. This era saw a shift towards greater accountability and evaluation of teachers, often framed within the deficit discourse. The public and policy-makers frequently portrayed teachers as ill-equipped to handle the new educational demands, which placed significant pressure on the profession (Seth, 2002). After that, the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998 had profound effects on South Korean society, including its educational sector. During this period, there was heightened criticism of public institutions, including schools and teachers. Economic pressures led to increased demands for educational outcomes that would ensure economic competitiveness. Teachers were frequently criticized for not meeting these heightened expectations, and the discourse often cantered around their supposed inability to prepare students adequately for a competitive global economy. This period

intensified the scrutiny of teachers, with calls for stricter evaluations and improved accountability measures (Kim, 2001). Throughout these periods, the enactment of teacher evaluations became a contentious issue. Policies aimed at improving educational standards often relied on performance metrics that placed significant pressure on teachers. Public discourse frequently portrayed teachers as lacking in skills or dedication when schools failed to meet set targets. This narrative was prevalent in both government policy documents and media representations (Paik, 2001).

This discourse of ‘deficit’ was glued to the discourse of ‘derision’ drawing on the discourse of ‘classroom collapse’ as the definite picture of a crisis in education. In the framing process of such discourses by the press, teachers were described as lethargic and feckless to the problematic behaviour of pupils in school life, for example sleeping during lessons, unauthorised absence, and deliberate interruption, and thus don’t care for the achievement of pupils. Then, their failures were contrasted to the success of private tutoring academies and their tutors in terms of their ability to make pupils focused on studies and academically successful. Many of the press drew on interviews of students saying that schoolteachers are less competitive compared to private tutors in terms of skills and knowledge thus lack proper quality. It is thus clear that what ‘classroom collapse’ means in this particular discourse is a relative levelling down of quality of state teachers compared to those of private sector as in the following editorials:

The more poor teachers increase, the faster schools collapse.  
Many students will rely on private tutors in private sector.  
This is why the global North take policies like strengthening  
teacher qualifications, banning poor teachers, and closing  
down poor schools.

(Jungang Daily Press, Dec 2007)

The quality of teachers is also a problem. Once employed, they would not be fired until they retire even if they just spend time with no effort for improvement. I have seen a math teacher who cannot solve an easy math problem. Who would make their children to study abroad if teachers in the schools are good? Parents will pay more if the teachers are at the same level of private tutors in terms of teaching quality. Teachers who press and control students with authority but lack ability would be disrespected by students.

(Josun Daily Press, April 2001)

Another issue that the discourse of ‘classroom collapse’ pointed out was that the education of that time had not suited groups of students who have diverse needs and wants. This criticised the policy of ‘equalisation of state education’ or ‘open education’ directly, since that policy pursued the provision of equal quality education whichever school one goes to, arguing that such a policy in the end resulted in levelling down of state education and students were naturally led to seek private tutoring because they couldn’t get a proper level of education that suited their level, merit and ability. Being continuously defined as ‘deficient’ and ‘incompetent’, teachers were increasingly brought into the massive blame, ridicule, and derision of the public within such diverse discourses aimed at amplifying teachers’ weaknesses or faults reported concerning particular issues, events, and beliefs by the press (Kim, Y. S., 2013).

Following this, the discourse of ‘education as a service’ was generated as a solution to such failures and problems. Some argued that education should be regarded the same as with other services for profit in the private sector, rather than a public good that is equally provided for everyone. This literally meant education becomes a commodity that can be traded in a market and the providers of such a service, for instance teachers and schools, compete under market



principles for improvement and better quality, as many government officials and press in South Korea argued:

(omission) education is one form of services of teaching and learning with which consumer, such as students, and provider, such as schools, exchange

(Josun Daily Press, 09. Jan. 1995)

We (the government) will find ways to make teachers, the source of state education, to be more qualified and be alert when teaching, just like other sectors.

(Deputy Prime Minister of Education, Feb 2004)

The discourse of ‘education as a service’ allowed teachers to be seen as subjects of reform, eventually justifying broader and general education reform from the mid-1990s to the 2000s that involved teacher policy, based upon market principles. Within the discourse, just like what the discourse of ‘classroom collapse’ did, teachers were described as not only individuals who are incapable for competing with the sector of private education but also the ones who lack responsibilities for taking care of and disciplining children especially when they behaved poorly by several major press outlets. This pushed criticism and suspicion in terms of quality of education and competence aimed at public teachers, at the same time highlighting private tutors in the private sector as competitive and competent providers.

On top of this, perhaps as a natural consequence, several more neoliberal discourses taking aim at the public sector education, such as the discourse of ‘school choice’ coupled with ‘diversity of provision,’ were gaining attention from the public and rapidly became interconnected with the other discourses that have been discussed so far. According to the ideas embedded in such arguments, parents

could make choices about the school their children attended or choose the educational track for their children (Ball, 2003) examining plural school or track options that might choose some or all of their students. That is, parents are expected to be given freedom of making choices for the schools their children attended, even though their school choice does not necessarily guarantee the place for their children when competitive. Alongside this, local states and even the central government are expected to provide diverse school options, allowing assistance from external funds, to provide more choices for consumer parents. This desire for choice saw the introduction of diverse forms of ‘autonomous schools’ which are non-regulated independent grant-maintained schools (64 out of 2,379 high schools in 2023 according to (KESS, 2023)) and ‘schools for special vocational purposes’ (487 out of 2,379 high schools in 2023 according to (KESS, 2023)), and ‘school for special academic purposes’ (162 out of 2,379 high schools in 2023 according to (KESS, 2023)), such as science-focused school, foreign language-focused high school and international school, all of which created a new hierarchy of schools based upon visible outcome such as the number of prestigious university admissions. Proponents of choice argued that ‘choice-in-general’ was a means to promote equity because everyone could pursue individual needs and desires, thus improving ‘fairness’ and meeting the needs of consumer parents who are fundamentally egoistic and self-regarding, and always seek the largest possible self-interests in their choices based on their welfare (Olmedo & Wilkins, 2017).

This principle of choice along with diversity of provision is very much tied in with some key neoliberal ideas of economy such as promotion of ‘competition’ for better quality and pursuit of ‘efficiency,’ allowing education to turn into a quasi-market where consumer students secure places at better schools by socio-economic class advantages and provider schools compete for better achieving students. Also, under such culture and system, students are asked to become the enterprising subject, characteristic of what Ong calls

‘small 'n' neoliberalism’ (reference). Foucault also talks about this in his discussion of ‘homoeconomicus’ or the economic man which under neoliberalism evolves into an entrepreneurial figure. Unlike the classical liberal view, where individuals are seen as passive market participants, neoliberalism conceptualizes individuals as active entrepreneurs of themselves, constantly engaged in self-investment and optimization (Foucault, 2008). This reconceptualization transforms personal and social domains, compelling individuals to approach life through the lens of market logic and efficiency.

What is involved is the generalisation of forms of ‘enterprise’ by diffusing and multiplying them as much as possible, enterprises which must not be focussed on the form of big national or international enterprises or the type of big enterprises of the state. I think this multiplication of the ‘enterprise’ form within the social body is what is at stake in neo-liberal policy. It is a matter of making the market, competition, and so the enterprise, into what could be called the formative power of society.

(Foucault, 2010, p. 148)

Seo, D. H. (2003) points out, within such an amalgam of messy discourses, that teachers and state education are viewed only as the press directs and the powerful sees them. In addition, Kim, J. C. (2009) argues, pointing out that the problems of the failing of state education and thus increasing private education is not a new issue, these discourses ignore and silence the problems of structure and system that produces gaps between the public sector and private sector by accusing teachers of being the only source of such failing, using languages like ‘responsibility’ and ‘sense of guilt’.

In this accountability system and culture that is firmly founded on the basis of neoliberal discourse, standards and quantitative measures for schools and teachers were put in place to attempt to define and control

the educational outputs. It seems to be clear that, from England to many other modernized societies including South Korea, the marketization and neoliberalisation in broader terms of education was 'ratcheted up' (Bailey & Ball, 2016, p.128) towards the policy goals included increasing parental choices, diversifying school with more freedom, and improving educational 'standards' via competition (West & Bailey, 2013).

### **3.3.2. From mid-1990s to 2009: Proliferation of Performative Accountability Policies**

In this particular context, the most significant consequences of mixing such diverse discourses were the political use of teacher accountability focused on performativity under neo-liberalism and the birth of various school and teacher appraisal systems in the mid-1990s and the 2000s, that evolved into the schools' self-appraisal system in 2009. It means that performative accountability is closely linked to the combination of disciplinary regime and technology of power exercised through diverse forms of data-based assessments and increased surveillance and control under which teachers and schools find themselves being judged in terms of outcomes and performance (Perryman, 2006, p. 150). Indeed, the PCER (1996) stated that 'the government should provide results on assessment of the quality of education service of each school', and that 'staff in school should be the actors of education reform and be actively involved in the process of the reform to create a new environment of education'. Together, this indicates governing through agency, which is an evolved, or advanced, neoliberal way of governing.

The use of the idea of performative accountability was practically enacted by means of multiple specific policies and practices that required teachers to become more accountable for their performance and outcomes by the subsequent governments who adopted the

approach and enacted these policies: ‘School Appraisal’ (1996); ‘National Assessment of Educational Achievement’ (hereafter NAEA, 2000); ‘Performance-Based Incentive Scheme’ (hereafter PBIS, 2001); ‘Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development’ (hereafter TAPD, 2005); and ‘School Information Publication System’ (hereafter SIPS, 2008), all of which significantly transformed accountability culture and teaching practices into outcome and competition based ideology (Kim, 2014). These are thought as technologies of government in Foucauldian perspective, as Miller and Rose (2013) put it:

If political rationalities render reality into the domain of thought ... “technologies of government” seek to translate thought into the domain of reality, and to establish “in the world of persons and things” spaces and devices for acting upon those entities of which they dream and scheme’. In this sense, South Korea saw a proliferation of political technology of performative accountability in the field of education, most of which aimed at teachers as subject to reform (p. 32).

The inspection scheme is a good example, and turning our eyes to England is a good starting point as it has influenced the inspection scheme of South Korea in 1990s. Ever since the Education Reform Act of 1988 in England, the National Curriculum measure has been through several reforms. The current version dates from 2014. It sets the standards and subjects for primary and Secondary schools and how to teach them to ensure children learn the same things no matter which school they attend; The Ofsted, the biggest inspectorate in England, uses a criteria-based system to judge schools. It also uses risk assessment to ensure that its approach to inspection is proportionate and can focus its efforts where it can have the most significant impact. Inspectors formulate judgements on the overall effectiveness of a school based on other performative measures such as Standard Assessment Tests, which assesses academic attainment

and processing of English and maths in primary schools, and evidence-based observations and interviews with participants, such as teaching staff and students on effective delivery of the National Curriculum. Then, it reports directly to the Secretary of State for Education and Parliament about the extent to which an acceptable standard of education is provided at individual and aggregate level. Schools judged as underperforming face various sanctions, including increased scrutiny, potential takeover by neighbouring schools, which is the process of acadmisation, and even closure. For example, when a maintained school is judged as inadequate (out of the four levels on a grading scale which comprises outstanding, good, require improvement and inadequate), and issued an academy order, it becomes a sponsored academy. Such an academy is placed in 'inadequate' and becomes either re-brokered as a new multi academy trust or placed under special measures, in which Ofsted monitors the school to check its progress and carries out a full inspection within 30 months of the academy's last full inspection (DfE, 2014). Along with such inspection, the English Government has published so-called school league tables since 1992, summarising the average General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and A-level 'attainment' and 'progress' made by pupils in each state-funded Secondary school in England. Schools' performances in these tables underpin the inspections carried out by Ofsted. The tables also play a key role in facilitating the quasi-market in education by informing parental school choice (Leckie & Goldstein, 2017, p. 193-194). These performance-based measures for enacting and fostering accountability have been accepted by successive governments as a 'regime of truth' (Foucault, cited in Rainbow, 1984), regardless of their political views, with minor amendments and upgrades until the present day.

Inspection schemes in education using the technology of performative accountability up to 2000s in South Korea were not strikingly different from that of England. The 'school appraisal' in particular, which was the former framework of the 'schools' self-appraisal',

which is the main accountability policy under scrutiny in this research, was one of the representative policies, and thus warrants being discussed further here to provide some explanation and comparison between how it was in the past (school appraisal) and how it is in the present (school's self-appraisal).

The school appraisal was introduced by the 5.31 education reform and initiated in 1996, aiming to check and raise standards of education service of a school under the control of the government, both in quantity and quality, and gain improvements of the service. In the beginning, it was simply a part within the broader appraisal by the central government in the body of the ministry of education, on the sixteen county offices of education. Thus, the county offices are mandated to carry out comprehensive inspection and observation on all state-funded schools within the jurisdiction with their own frames of inspection. This type of school appraisal is called the 'county-level school inspection.' This appraisal was coupled with another school appraisal which was a nationwide, direct inspection and observation of a selection of sample schools identified via stratified random sampling. This additional type of appraisal was carried out by the Korean Education Development Institute (hereafter KEDI), which is a state-funded independent body of research, based upon a contract, with its own frame of inspection between 2002-2005. This was therefore a period of double appraisal for the chosen schools. This type of appraisal is called the 'state-level school inspection.' After that, a mixed approach which included the involvement of both the central government and provincial offices with different roles in the processes had been enacted between 2006 to 2009, which was right before the schools' self-appraisal' was initiated. In this period, the central government was involved in developing and updating the frame of inspection for the sake of county offices of education and practical inspection took place by the departments for inspection in the offices.

The county-level school inspection had taken place once every one to

three years by an external team of inspectors, comprised of four to five people from various professional backgrounds such as educationists and representatives of civil organisations from local offices of education. They paid particular attention to curriculum, educational projects enacted by policies and the overall school management (Han & Kim, 2008). It took place for all primary and middle schools and once every three years for high schools in the sixteen county offices of education, using diverse yet mostly quantitative ways of measurement. Despite some specific differences in details, once the appraisal started in a school, the inspectors resided there for a couple of days and examined different pieces of evidence, such as schemes of work, comprehensive plans of school curriculum and management, subject action plans and school reports, interviewed teachers, and observed the everyday educational activities of the school being inspected (Han & Kim, 2008). Inspectors visited schools in the beginning of an academic year with a truly short notice, and near the end of academic year to assess conduct and performance according to the plans and standards which informed decision-making, such as reports, grades, sanctions, and ranking. K.O. Song (2013), based on his critical analysis on accountability policies in education after the 5.31 education reform, suggested that the county-level school appraisal has the five following features, implying that it was a twin policy to the Ofsted inspection in England: 1) the policy was introduced as a way to raise standards, to promote global competitiveness and to enhance accountability in education; 2) there is a very obvious distinction between the party of assigning account, which is the actor or the state in the case of the school appraisal, and the party of providing account, which is the forum or the teachers in the case of the school appraisal; 3) the policy focuses on how well the frontline meets the guidelines and performs the standard as they are given; 4) when being developed the policy used a unified frame for inspection, which referred to three other documents: the National Center on Educational Outcomes of USA, National Study of School



Evaluation of USA and the standards of Ofsted in England; 5) the policy uses external sources of motivation and means of inducement, such as financial or administrative reward and regulation.

In particular, Song points out that the county level school appraisal had been imposed in a top-down manner by the state through the offices of education in districts, using mostly quantifiable standards and rigid ways of assessment, which paid too much attention on the degree of enactment and performance and as such exerted prominent levels of pressure. Many argued that the initial version of school appraisal lacked one of the most vital factors of assessment of teacher accountability: the outcomes for students (Han & Kim, 2008) which could possibly be assessed by a nationwide standardised test. This argument explicitly brought the issue of student outcome within the broader demand of enhancement of teacher accountability, especially from the consumer parents. This led to the initiation of the ‘National Assessment of Educational Achievement’ (NAEA) in 2000, which assesses academic attainment and processing of the five core subjects: Korean, English, mathematics, science, and social studies, at primary, Secondary, and any further education. The results of NAEA were available for access on the website, *www.schoolinfo.go.kr*, known as the ‘School Information Publication’ (hereafter SIP), until the removal of NAEA in primary schools. The SIP allowed people to produce a league table that ranked schools in a hierarchy according to the attainment and admission rate of pupils in prestigious universities and made it easy to hold teachers to a higher level of accountability. This table then played a role in facilitating the quasi-market in education by ‘informing parental school choice’ (Leckie & Goldstein, 2017, p. 193-194), coupled with the diversification of school types mainly under Myong-bak Lee administration (2008-2013) (Kim & Kim, 2015), which resulted in the expansion of inequality and competition in education (Ahn, 2015). NAEA and SIP played a key role in asking for more explicit performative accountability of teachers as a specific manifestation of diverse market-based

discourses in the neo-liberal education system.

The state level inspection, however, took a different approach from the county level inspection in many aspects. In fact, this type of inspection was introduced as a response to the consequences of the county level inspection, including: lack of autonomy of teachers; their feeling of resistance and pressure to competition and rankings; teachers' lack of motivation and engagement with the appraisal, their overly detailed attention to the tasks that are quantifiable, and manipulation of teaching for visible results, such as teaching to the test. Thus, the state level inspection placed greater emphasis on how well schools provide quality educational activities, such as lessons and school trips, and effective support for the educational activities, than on how well they increase standards and produce outcomes. In line with this, the appraisal embraced processes of provision as a main area of assessment and excluded outcomes such as academic achievement and quotes of effectiveness and satisfaction of provision (Kim, 2014). In terms of measures, the state level inspection used qualitative approaches. Interviews and observations were used as a primary way of assessment and surveys were only used as a complementary purpose. The inspectors, the majority of whom were researchers, abandoned the frame of inspection to point out what is right and wrong and actively deployed their professional knowledge and judgement to get a comprehensive context and deeper understanding of that context of the participant schools (Kim, 2014). In addition, the written feedback of inspection was primarily used as data for further consulting and development of the schools, with no link to any kinds of rewards or sanction, thus the data was not used for comparison and criticism (Kim, 2014).

As mentioned above, the mixed approach was adopted from 2006 to 2009. In this period, though the state-level inspection was scrapped, the central government still intervened in the inspection process in two ways: by allowing KEDI to develop and update the national frame of school inspection and by asking county offices of education

to report the result of inspection. The county offices of education were encouraged to use, or at least refer to, the framework of KEDI, featuring an emphasis on performance and outcome in education, using the main standards or a combination of their own standards to inspect and observe the school and its provision of education. The practical inspection took place through the offices and measurement was made by professional inspectors chosen by them. This role division in terms of function aimed at better quality inspections based upon cooperation between the central government and the local offices, despite controversy in the practical effectiveness of this approach.

The other significant policy which involves appraisal as a technology of power and arose based upon performative accountability and the neoliberal discourses was the teacher appraisal system, specifically called the 'Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development', started in 2004. This is also one of the key disciplinary technologies that inculcates teachers into neoliberal regime of truth.

Teachers should accept the popular sentiment on the idea of TAPD from consumers of education, such as parents and students, to improve school.

(The deputy school head in Nockchun primary school in an interview, Chosun Daily Press, June 1995)

Authority of teachers is not the absolute right that should never be invaded. Their authority can only be protected only when teachers are in continual professional development. We need to introduce TAPD and it will motivate teachers and schools.

(Hangyoreh Press, July 1998)

The idea of TAPD was first discussed by researchers in around 2000 based on the discourses of 'deficit', 'failing', 'derision', 'classroom

collapse' and even of 'suspicion' which were related to quality of teachers and education service. Before the introduction of TAPD, individual teachers were only assessed by the 'performance/service rating system,' which were only meaningful to those who wanted to be promoted to school management positions. The system has been blamed very widely as its prime focus was on ranking teachers to discern who is suitable to be promoted mainly by examining performance data such as the hours of lessons per week and the amount of paper work done per week, as well as the quantitative data of evaluation from line managers, rather than evaluating areas of professional development such as teaching, continuous improvement of teachers, or informing teachers on what and how to improve (Shin, 2010, p. 270). On top of that, a discourse of 'teachers' complacency' arose with an analogy of 'iron bento' or 'canteen' (Chulbabtong in Korean) which symbolises the security and stability of the teaching profession in state schools but also concurrently taunts and criticises teachers' unwillingness for improvement. This resided in the stability of the job due to the reasonable salary based on service time and a generous pension (Hangyoreh, June 1999). Teachers were described as a strongly lazy cohort in the public sector, incapable people and anti-innovative in the transitional era of ideology toward neoliberalism. According to a survey flagged for the 5.31 educational reform conducted by Hangyoreh press and the Office of Education in Seoul Metropolitan City in 1998, on the perception towards teachers around issues such as teacher quality, the two most urgent tasks for successful education reform were the reform of attitude and self-awareness of the authorities of education (43.2%) and teachers (19.2%), followed by the improvement of the infrastructure (16.3%), increase in funding (8.2%) and a reformed attitude from parents (6.3%) (Hangyoreh, July 1998). It was surprising that 65.2% of teachers also thought they needed a new system of teacher appraisal (Hangyoreh, July 1998). In this context, teachers became the target or object of critique and discipline of the market and the neo-

liberal regime of truth that wanted them to be more efficient and accountable, both by the extrinsic forces and intrinsic motivation.

As a result of and response to such context of blaming teachers, TAPD is a system of assessment aiming to diagnose areas for improvement and support for continual professional development of teachers, striving for enhancement of the satisfaction of students and parents and accountability of teachers (Bae & Joo, 2014). As mentioned above, the discussion and research for TAPD started in the early 2000s but the policy was practically enacted in all schools in S. Korea only in 2011, after a five-year period of pilot studies (Bae & Joo, 2014), on the statutory basis made by the amendment of the Presidential decree related to teacher training. In the scheme of TAPD, teachers' practice on teaching and pedagogy are assessed using eighteen sub-areas/criteria under the two main areas, teaching, and pedagogy, by students, parents and colleagues including school leadership. Schools must report the result to the head of the office of local education they belong to, and teachers get the result in a report with grades and comments of assessors on their educational practices from the head of the local office of education. Once the teachers get the report, they must set an action plan for the area for further improvement which will lead them to be involved in various training programmes at personal and school level (Bae & Joo, 2014). The teachers ranked in the top group are given a paid research year for them to explore the area of study in education they are interested in as a reward. However, the teachers who could not meet the minimum standard that is those who get below 2.5 points out of the maximum 5 points on average from the manager, peer, pupil and parents' evaluation, are forced to take compulsory training programmes for improvement of teaching and pedagogy, from a minimum of 60 hours to a maximum of 6 months depending on the points they get.

I must note here that this way of conduct, the use of school appraisal and TAPD is a typical example of an assemblage of different surveillance technologies that demonstrate how power regulates

subjects in the disciplinary mechanism of surveillance (Foucault, 2009; Lim, 2016). How TAPD is operationalised is linked to hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination (Perryman 2006; Hoffman, 2011) for the reform, re-education or transformation of individuals for a particular purpose. The problem is that the acceptance of the increasing culture of performativity meant not only that teachers are examined but also that they are constantly observed and surveilled through ‘vigilant eyes of power which is increasingly everywhere’ (Perryman, 2006, p. 148). That is, within the exertion of this type of power, teachers are constantly surveilled by students, parents, line managers or even colleagues as well as external examiners through both intended or unintended observations, such as informal and unnoticed classroom visits, data and performance, and the standards set in the appraisal. Those who do well and meet the standard are regarded as good examples to follow, whereas those who do not are considered the objects to be reformed and improved. The technologies of control justify the measures for observation and surveillance, such as formal or informal intervention or lesson observation, and judgement, such as straight comparison and ranking between staff, and subsequent reward and punishment, such as modelling both in a positive and negative sense.

Consequently, such a mechanism steers and transforms teachers into the ones who understand the knowledge, but more significantly, it transforms the subjects into the ones who do the knowledge in practice, as either a useful docile policy actor, with a full or partial internalisation of it, or at least a useful pretender (Kim & Kim, 2015), who has no internalisation and resistance. Both of them are under effective control as meaningful change in behaviour of the subjects are seen, though there could be the other cohort of teachers who resist the mechanism and are out of control. The former group is perhaps best described in the metaphor of Panopticon that Foucault presents, adopting Bentham’s idea, in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977). The Panopticon is, as described in depth in section 2.5.4., a circular

prison with a central watchtower, making inmates feel constantly observed, which compels obedience and subjects to change their behaviour. These mechanisms and consequences of TAPD is further evidenced by empirical research findings.

Kim & Kim (2015) identified two roles that teachers tend to take on under performative accountability policies: the 'benign policy actor' and the 'useful pretender.' In their case study of a primary school in Gyeonggi-do, they observed that one of the main ways teachers responded to the TAPD was to follow the policy's guidelines without much pushback. This approach, referred to as "do as it let me do," means that teachers aligned their practices with what the policy allowed them to do. For example, they actively informed students and parents about TAPD and encouraged participation in the assessments. Teachers did this without significant resistance, meaning they complied with the policy rather than opposing it. This behavior illustrates how teachers adapted to the expectations of the policy while maintaining their roles in a way that was beneficial but didn't challenge the system. Meanwhile, the study also found that teachers 'pretend to do' the policy as they were not happy with the idea of TAPD in general and distrusted the credibility of the result they got. More importantly, they were not happy with the fact that they should be forced in direct comparison with their colleagues who do similar jobs in school by peer evaluation technique, as well as the evaluation of students, parents, and managers, in TAPD. Many felt frustrated by the particular culture in which their colleagues devalue them in the actual evaluation and give lower grades than what they expected with no significant reason and signs of a sense of distance, antipathy, or hostility (Kim & Kim, 2015). One participant argued that this practice of giving low grades to other colleagues is because they are put in direct comparison with others and many of them want to be graded higher than others (Kim & Kim, 2015) as being in lower grade can cause a significant negative consequence and reputation on them. This doubting of results and the technique of comparison led teachers to

become a pretender of the policy, who superficially accepts the result, reporting their next step for improvement with no specific action plan and taking no serious action on the feedback they got (Kim & Kim, 2015). These findings of Kim & Kim are the evidence for change in behaviour, thus lead to passive subjectification, through normalization via various techniques of hierarchical observation, judgment and examination in the panoptic accountability.

I argue that the production of such an obedient policy actor and such a pretender is a sign of success of effective government of power, as they gradually shift their mind, attitude, perception and practice in the complicated interactions and reinforcement between techniques and technologies of disciplinary power. In this process of shift, 'discourse constrain possibilities of thought' (Ball, 1990, p. 2). In these appraisal schemes, therefore, teachers constantly restrict their autonomy and time for meeting the standard and get a routine to meet the accepted norm of good teacher. This means that school and teacher appraisal have been justified by the discourses of 'good teachers' and 'good schools' that show them what, ideally, they should perform and, by an even wider sense discourse of 'social good' they internalize the structures through which accountability was achieved. This phenomenon has been increasingly accepted as part of the education system; critics of such a regime were seen as being against both progress (Perryman, 2006) and 'what works' – an example of the depoliticization of education policy (Clarke, 2012). Under such control using disciplinary technologies backed up relevant discourses, no space and opportunity for review, interpretation or resistance is hardly given subjects under the rigid control. What is more, they became 'ethical exemplars' of the new norm and this gave a way to another discourse, such as the discourse of performative teacher which consolidates and responds to the former discourse of deficit.



### **3.4. Evolution of accountability since 2009: The Schools' Self-Appraisal System**

As discussed so far, the discourses of standard, quality, deficit, derision, classroom collapse, suspension, complacency, service, performativity etc., have been formed, accepted and worked to shape the culture of performative accountability since the 5.31 education reform in South Korean education. They have been tightly interwoven, enhancing one another, exchanging cause and effect, and producing policy technologies and techniques including various performance-based measures such as surveillance, to justify and foster the performative accountability culture rooted in the neoliberal 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1984a). As a counter discourse, around the mid-2000s, extensive criticism arose: many teachers feel frustration; the neoliberal market-based policies does not suit the teaching profession as a distinct profession from the private sector; state schools are transforming into private/business-like institutions; NAEA is levelling down the quality of lessons accompanied by lots of cases of manipulation of results and cheating; teachers are suffering from feeling the burden that comes from increasing pressure about outcome, performance and admin work; the teaching profession is becoming cliquish, passive and authoritative.

As a response to such criticism, new approaches and discourses around teacher accountability arose as a political sway in the frontline education and resulted in truly messy picture of the accountability culture on teachers. First of all, the discourse around teacher 'well-being' and 'work-life balance' was gaining significant attention (Lee & Kim, 2010; Kim & Cho, 2014). This discourse emphasized the need to address the high levels of stress and burnout experienced by teachers, which were largely attributed to the demanding educational environment and societal expectations. South Korean teachers historically faced significant stress due to long working hours, large class sizes, and the high expectations placed on them by society and

the education system. The intense pressure to perform and produce high-achieving students often led to burnout and job dissatisfaction. This recognition of stress and burnout led to calls for reforms aimed at improving teacher well-being. This discourse set the stage for policies that would later support innovative school environments that consider teacher well-being as a cornerstone for effective teaching (Lee & Kim, 2010; Kim & Cho, 2014). The discourse around work-life balance highlighted the need for teachers to have sufficient time and energy to devote to their personal lives outside of their professional responsibilities (Kim, S. J., 2015; Park & Shin, 2016). This was seen as essential for maintaining overall well-being and long-term career sustainability. Efforts to improve work-life balance included policy proposals for reducing administrative workloads, providing more substantial support for teachers' professional development, and creating a more flexible work environment (Kim, S. J., 2015; Park & Shin, 2016). These initiatives aimed to make the teaching profession more attractive and sustainable, thus encouraging a culture of innovation and creativity within schools.

In addition, there was an increasing focus on creating supportive work environments that could help mitigate the challenges faced by teachers. This included promoting a collaborative school culture, providing professional counselling services, and ensuring that teachers had access to resources that supported their well-being (Choi & Lee, 2013; Kang & Han, 2017). Innovative school policies later incorporated these elements by redesigning teacher workspaces to promote collaboration, introducing wellness programmes. These changes were considered essential in fostering an environment where teachers felt valued and supported, thereby enhancing their capacity for innovation.

However, ironically, such discourses paying attention to empowering teachers and their working environment have, it will be argued here, enhanced accountability on teachers. For example, as a response and a way for teacher empowerment, professional accountability has

emerged and emphasized the responsibility of teachers to engage in continuous professional development and to maintain high standards of professional practice (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This discourse supports the idea that teachers should be accountable not only for student outcomes but also for their own professional growth. As a result, specific policies have been introduced to provide ongoing professional development opportunities and to create professional learning communities (hereafter, PLCs) under innovative school policies. These initiatives foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation among teachers, ensuring that they are well-equipped to enact new educational strategies and technologies from the governmental body.

In tandem with it, building a sense of community and collaboration among teachers is recognized as crucial for fostering a supportive school culture (Vangrieken et al., 2017). Collaborative accountability highlights the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility among teachers. This discourse promotes collaborative practices such as team teaching, peer monitoring, mentoring and evaluations, and shared goal-setting to improve instructional quality and student learning, and shared professional learning experiences in small groups between teachers, many of which are practically realised as a policy in innovative schools.

Another dominant discourse found around teacher accountability was the discourse of ‘data-driven teacher accountability’. This discourse cantered on the systematic collection, analysis, and use of data to evaluate teacher performance and inform educational policy and practice. The primary aim was to ensure that teachers were held accountable for student outcomes, thus driving educational improvements and reforms (Han & Lee, 2010; Kim, J., 2012). The use of student performance data as a primary metric for evaluating teacher effectiveness became prevalent. This approach emphasized standardized test scores and other quantifiable student achievements to assess the impact of teaching on learning outcomes (Han & Lee,

2010; Kim, J., 2012). On top of that, another attempt to incorporate and manage various data in education was initiated and this effort saw the introduction of the National Educational Information System. Some argue that this is a means of data-surveillance, fostering data-driven teacher accountability. The integration of sophisticated educational data systems facilitated the comprehensive tracking and analysis of various educational metrics, including student performance, attendance, and behavioural data. These systems aimed to provide a more holistic view of educational outcomes and teacher effectiveness (Kim, S., 2015). The discourse on data-driven teacher accountability played a crucial role in shaping educational policies and practices. Emphasizing the use of student performance data, integrating educational data systems, reforming teacher evaluations, and tailoring professional development based on data analysis were key aspects of this discourse. These efforts laid the groundwork for the later introduction of innovative schools, where data-driven approaches continue to play a significant role in ensuring accountability and fostering educational improvement.

The other discourses include those of autonomy, school democracy, innovation, and school as learning organizations etc. The discourse of autonomy in educational policy emphasizes granting teachers greater control over their curriculum, teaching methods, and classroom management. This approach seeks to empower teachers to gain ownership on their educational decisions that best suit their pupils' needs and contextual realities. Such autonomy increases teachers' accountability by making them feel more responsible for the outcomes of their pedagogical choices (Park, S. J., 2020). It fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility towards student learning outcomes. Many argue that increased teacher autonomy leads to better educational outcomes (Chosun Ilbo, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014) and emphasize the positive impacts on educational outcomes (The Korean Herald, 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2013). On the other hand, school democracy involves participatory decision-making processes where teachers, students, and

other stakeholders collaborate in the governance of the school. This discourse promotes a more inclusive and transparent educational environment. School democracy leads to shared accountability, where teachers are accountable not only to administrators but also to their peers, students, and the community (Lee, M. & Kim, S., 2020). This broadens the scope of accountability and ensures that teachers are answerable to multiple stakeholders. In addition, the discourse of innovation in education emphasises the adoption of new teaching methods, technologies, and practices to improve learning outcomes. This involves fostering a culture that supports experimentation and creative problem-solving. Innovation demands that teachers be accountable for staying current with new educational trends and integrating effective innovations into their practice. This accountability extends to the effectiveness of these innovations in improving student outcomes (Kim, Y., 2018). The Hankyoreh, one of the biggest presses in Korea, explores the adoption of innovative technologies in Korean schools, describing how these innovations have redefined teaching practices and student learning experiences (The Hankyoreh., 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023). The article discusses various pilot programmes and the integration of digital tools, which have enabled teachers to personalize instruction and facilitate collaborative learning. The Korean Herald discusses the classroom innovation in education and how Korean schools are leading the way (The Korean Herald, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019).

These discourses having been discussed across the chapter emerged, competed and sometimes forgotten, subsumed and thrived. However, some of them become dominant and have collectively reshaped conceptions and policies on teacher accountability such as appraisal system in significant ways and it was the moment when a reform of accountability/appraisal systems was initiated based upon the culture that emphasises the agency, autonomy, and self-involvement of teachers as well as individual and collective responsibility of them, by several large local offices of education, such as Gyeonggi-do and the

Seoul Metropolitan region.

It should be noted that school transformation as one of the mainstays of education policy around late 2000s was initiated before the reform of accountability culture. The educational authority of Gyeonggi-do, for example, launched a pilot school, ‘Hyeoksin Hakgyo’, literally an ‘Innovative School’, where all participants in education of a school, such as teachers, students, parents, etc., collectively aim at levelling up the quality and equality of education through an extended level of autonomy and encouragement of active self-involvement in core areas of school education and management, such as in finance, curriculum and appraisal. Innovative schools therefore experience far more flexibility and freedom than normal schools in restructuring or selecting how and what should be taught, and in using funds both in practice and theory based on relevant laws and governmental instructions. This new type of school aims at transforming itself into an ‘autonomous learning organisation,’ where professionals, such as teaching staff, pursuing common and individual purposes continuously evaluate and weigh them, self-modifying them according to their value and streamlining the methodology involved. This school transformation policy is expanding, employed by 14 out of 17 LEAs, under different names such as ‘Dahondi School’, which means ‘altogether’, in Jeju-do and ‘Masterpiece School’ in Gyeonsangbuk-do. According to the latest statistics, in 2021, 1,393 schools out of 2,445 schools across all levels, including primary, middle and high schools, were nominated as innovation schools, which take up 56.97% of the total (Gyeonggi-do Office of Education (hereafter GOE), Oct 2021) and the percentage is gradually increasing (Park, K. Y., 2018).

Along with the introduction of innovative schools in 2009, a new accountability measure, called the ‘schools’ self-appraisal scheme’ (GOE, 2020), was adopted in line with the purposes of this new type of school. The new measure emphasises autonomy, agency, self-involvement and responsibility of teachers and is designed to best

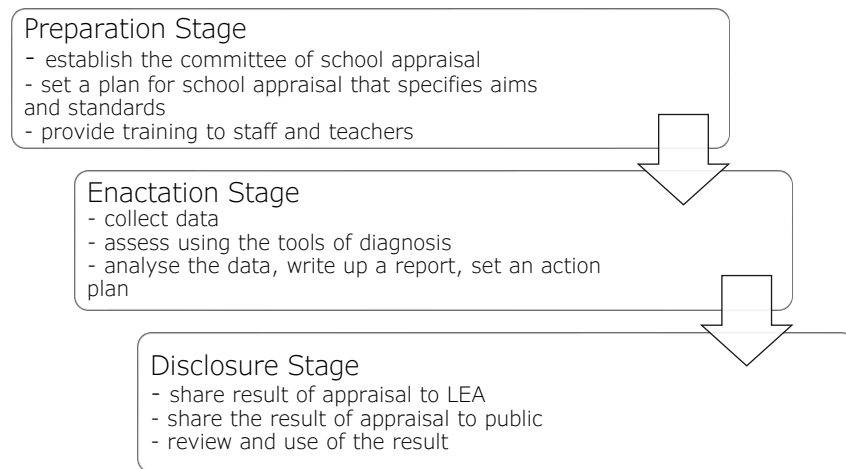
work in schools across the entire process of appraisal from planning to reviewing. The new accountability measure differs significantly from the previous ones, such as the SI and TAPD, both of which are still currently being enacted, in terms of the approach and methods of appraisal. In addition, the school appraisal has been replaced by a new form of inspection, called ‘School-Driven Comprehensive Inspection’ (hereafter, SDCI), which also take similar approaches with the school’s self-appraisal system in that it seeks agency, autonomy, self-involvement, and responsibility of schools. The overall picture of accountability policies in GOE therefore became even more complicated as it has multiple means of systems and schemes that look superficially different one another in how to measure teachers and their education. In other words, the current accountability regime in contemporary schools in South Korea, the loose amalgam of the old and the new is regarded as a truly complicated policy-context in which heterogeneous logics, mechanisms and technologies of modern government are assembled together.

The new system of school’s self-appraisal is presently being enacted at all state-funded schools in Gyeonggi-do, including all innovation schools. Gyeonggi-do publishes guidelines of the self-appraisal system each year and the prime aims of the self-appraisal system for the latest year are as follows (GOE, 2019):

- to promote autonomy in school appraisal for establishing school self-management;
- to assist the growth of schools by enhancing education quality and lowering accountability; and
- to develop collective professionalism as a learning organisation and intra-school cooperative network through participation, communication, and cooperation.

The system aims at maximising autonomy throughout the entire process of appraisal. Below is a brief flow of the process of the self-

appraisal system which is currently applied to schools.



[Diagram 1. Flow of the Current Self-Appraisal System of GOE  
(GOE, 2019)]

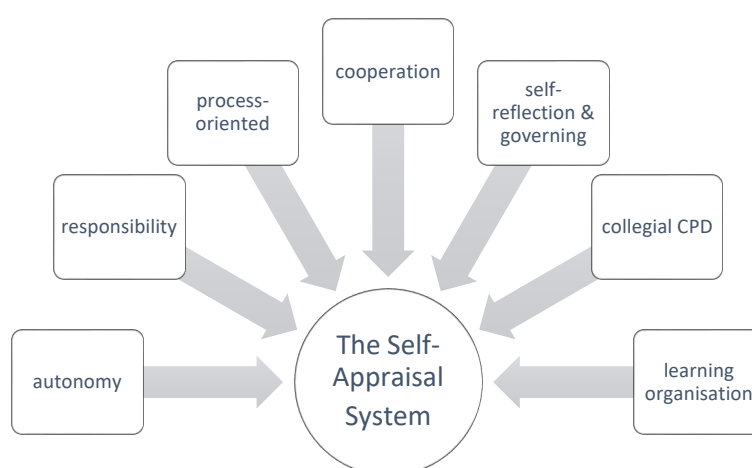
In the self-appraisal system of Gyeonggi-do, the entire procedure of appraisal is planned, enacted, and released solely by professionals and communities in a school, based on the principles of autonomy, self-reflection, and the peer observation. For example, according to the guidelines (GOE, 2020b), professionals and communities, such as the students and parents of a school, collectively discuss and set standards for self-appraisals based on a reflection of the result of the preceding year, referring to other diverse relevant information, such as school statistics, and guidelines for standards produced by GOE. Then, teachers apply standards for their practices and professional development throughout the year, whilst constantly reflecting upon themselves and observing others. At the end of an academic year, the results of the year are produced, which may give teachers further opportunity for self and collective reflection on the entire year.

However, it should be noted that there have been three different stages of the SSAS since it began in 2009 in Gyeonggi-do, and they can be identified by how the self-appraisal standards were created. The first



phase was the time when the self-appraisal standards were simply imposed by the GOE and that was between 2009-2013. The next phase was the time when the self-appraisal standards were guided by the GOE's guidelines, references, and good examples from other schools but meant to be developed by each school independently and that was between 2013-2018. The final phase was the time when there were no guidelines, but references and good examples were provided, meant to be developed by each school independently and that is from 2018 and onward. Since the beginning, once they are given, the standards were meant to be discussed and created independently by each school in the initial stage for moderation and contextualisation in the committee of schools' self-appraisal. The process of creating appraisal standards usually requires more meetings and engagement from teachers, and thus autonomy is obviously guaranteed, required and accepted.

Diagram 2 shows the core values imbedded in the new system.



[Diagram 2. Core values embedded in the self-appraisal system of GOE]

According to GOE, the new system meets the necessity of a shift aimed at trusting teachers as professionals and activating their

intrinsic motivation based on morality and conviction in the process of asking for accountability and measurements which has been repeatedly suggested by a number of researchers.

### **3.5. Interpretation of the Current Picture of Accountability**

In this section, as a scaffolding to the analysis and findings from the case study on the SSAS in the following chapter, it is worthwhile to apply the conceptions and understanding of power of Foucault discussed so far to the current context of accountability in South Korea. As discussed so far in this chapter, the accountability context is identified as a complicated policy sphere where a mixture of different technologies, discourses and modes of power are operating,. That is, the presence and influence of performative accountability is still significant alongside the emergence of a new approach, the SSAS.

The performative accountability measures are mainly being played with disciplinary mechanisms. According to Foucault, the exercise of disciplinary mechanisms is especially successful due to its use of three technologies: hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and examination (Perryman 2006; Hoffman, 2011), all of which are central to ‘panoptic performativity’ (Perryman 2006). Foucault adopted Bentham’s metaphor of the Panopticon, as a tool of hierarchical observation in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1977). The Panopticon is a specific type of prison where a circular tower, called the dark tower, meaning the relentless gaze from power, is surrounded by the cells that are shaped like a circle. In this structure, power is visible in the form of the dark central watchtower, the inmate is exposed, and the potential watcher is hidden in such darkness. So, the do not know if someone is watching from the tower, but just disciplined to obey the prison rules at all times, because they think

they are continuously observed even though they may not be. This surveillance ultimately aims for human beings to become subjects who are marked in particular ways and constrained to follow the norms that the powers of the tower define. Gradually individuals become more and more incapable of resistance to the power exerted (Murphy, 2013). Additionally, power is used as the mechanism for individuals to behave in a prescribed manner through acceptance and the ongoing replication of normalizing judgement based on a set of norms as criteria for reward and punishment. The technology of judgement has several characteristics: (1) all deviants and rule-violation are punished; (2) exercises are used as a behaviour correcting technique and punishment; (3) reward and punishment are used to establish a hierarchy of good and bad behaviour; (4) rank/grades/etc. are used as punishment and reward. Finally, the technology of examination combines hierarchical observations with judgement by creating extensive documentation of information about every observed subject and comparing the results to the norm (Hoffman, 2011).

A number of performative accountability policies, techniques, and measures, which are listed in the previous section 2.3., are devised to economically realise such technologies and the governmental strategies of power behind it in the empirical field of education. Inspection is a significant realisation of such panoptic technology using accountability which is strongly and particularly linked to one of the Foucault's technologies: the examination. Pointing out how power controls teachers in England, Perryman (2006) argues that Ofsted forms the disciplinary regime and mechanism in education. In the disciplinary mechanism, teachers perform in ways dictated and initiated by a discourse of inspection: feeling a sense of being perpetually under surveillance, as they experience inspections (Perryman, 2006). Practices of teachers, such as pedagogies and lessons, are performed in a rigidly prescribed manner, because inspectors see behaviours in a framework aimed at by the disciplinary

governance. The use of fiscal data in performative accountability is another specific intentional example that helps the technologies of hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement-related work effectively. For example, the data produced by measures such as Standardised Assessment Tests (hereafter SATs) help to judge where teachers are compared to norms such as national averages and the gap between their locations and standards urges teachers to be constantly normalized. Also, this fiscal data provides plausible evidence to justify why such observation and normalisation are required within the discourses of 'effectiveness', 'choice' and 'raising standards', all of which are the neoliberal governmental rationality in England emphasises on, because it is believed, in general, to reflect the objective and transparent realities of teachers and schools, even though numbers, actually, exclude many variables such as the socio-economic context of measurements. Son (2012) argues that fiscal data is a primary mean of remote government in which governors simply observe and judge how well teachers perform through the data which is accessible regardless of a specific space and time. The fiscal number is a key instrument that enables hierarchical observation and, in effect, normalises judgement.

On the other hand, as introduced in the proceeding section, the paradigm shift in accountability has been made by the introduction to the Schools' Self-Appraisal System (SSAS) in 2009 in South Korean education settings. It encourages autonomy and the active self-involvement of responsible teachers and communities in school where it is in operation, and teachers appear to be the key professionals in this community, rather than just asking them explicit performance according to performative standards. Thus, teachers seem to be given opportunity to exercise autonomy in deciding what and how to measure and use in their practice throughout the year under the self-appraisal system. However, if the particular context of the initiation of the appraisal system is considered, the necessity of wearing a different lens for looking at the appraisal system is brought to the

forefront. In particular, when the self-appraisal system was enacted by the local education authority of Gyeonggi-do in 2009, they initiated it without eliminating the major performative accountability measures, such as PBIS and TAPD, which are combined with disciplines and contribute to produce particular kinds of discourse, such as ‘efficiency’ and ‘quality’. Teachers are now in a situation where they follow the given standards (of government) to be accountable for their performance, and at the same time, follow the standards developed through self-governing to be accountable to their own criteria.

Unlike the performative accountability measures before 2009, which aimed at elevation of performativity via a rigid and strong central panoptic disciplinary government mainly using external and invisible surveillance and control, the self-appraisal scheme aims at elevation of quality via post-performative or post-panoptic accountability (Page, 2016; Perryman et al, 2018; Charteris, 2022) using ‘increasingly decentralized and normalised visibility’ (Page, 2016, p. 995), self- or ‘intrapersonal surveillance’ (Page, p. 995), as well as collective surveillance. All of these employ autonomy of teachers as main technology of governance. In relation to post-panoptic accountability, Lyon, Haggerty, and Ball (2014) identify three key trends in contemporary surveillance: Surveillance extends beyond state control, involving individuals monitoring each other in workplaces and on social media; While CCTV cameras and data collection are increasingly visible, the practices and uses of surveillance remain opaque and hidden; Surveillance now targets powerful groups as well, with the public and media scrutinizing authorities through technology. These trends show surveillance becoming more participatory, pervasive, and reciprocal, which is why I will be exploring this as a key political technology when arguing that the SSAS is a political governmental technology. What is apparent from even a brief discussion of these trends is that surveillance should be seen as an ‘assemblage’ (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000), a collection of individual technologies and strategies

that combine to provide ever more comprehensive means of 'visibility' and data collection, 'providing for exponential increases in the degree of surveillance capacity' (Haggerty and Ericson, 2000, p. 610).

In schools embracing this culture, teachers become surveillance workers (Smith, 2014) who are encouraged to monitor each other, as seen in open-plan workplace settings and through social networking. Campaigns like the UK's 'if you suspect it, report it', though this slogan is specifically linked to terrorism, exemplify this trend (Page, 2017). In addition, teachers become normalised into collective audit and reflective practices where collective surveillance is accepted and welcomed as in classroom observation, learning walk, lesson consulting, PLCs, whole school staff meetings etc., under the campaign of democratic education. As a consequence, teachers become willing to participate in such activities of self- and collective surveillance and even take the culture as an opportunity for improvement. Contemporary teachers now have to reside, survive and prove to be accountable in a highly fragmented and complicated accountability context where the gaze is everywhere in diverse forms and measures, with different modes of panoptic and post-panoptic surveillance being operationalised. In this sense, Piper and Stronach (2008) argue that there are three overlapping types of surveillance that oversee/overlook the work of teachers (see diagram 3): Vertical Surveillance - this includes oversight by Inspectorate, school leaders using CCTV, teaching observations, learning walks, and even students recording teachers with mobile phones; Horizontal Surveillance - this involves peer observation among teachers, staffroom monitoring, and parental surveillance through direct action or networks; Intrapersonal Surveillance - this refers to self-surveillance by teachers through reflective practice and self-monitoring. Central to the argument is that these categories are not distinct but overlap significantly, reflecting the fluid nature of contemporary surveillance (Bauman and Lyon, 2013). Surveillance is embedded in all aspects of school life,

mirroring its pervasive presence in broader society, making it a dominant organizing practice (Lyon, Haggerty, and Ball 2014).

In addition, the whole picture of accountability context where seemingly counter accountabilities in Korean school can be explained when the concept of governmentality is accessed. That is, the particular context of amalgam of different accountabilities can be regarded as the locus of heterogenous governmental technologies of different power modalities. In addition, according to Foucault, governmentality is an evolved form of power which governs the soul as well as body of subjects which inform subjectification. The new paradigm, in particular, tackles the inner self by emphasising the autonomy and responsibility of subjects both as individuals and as part of a collective, through the ‘technology of the self’, that is, a constant engagement in self-reflection, self-understanding, and self-reinvention (Perryman et al., 2017), whilst the ‘technology of domination’ is still there in the overall picture of accountability. Specifically, in the evolved neoliberal modern government and governance, power makes teachers believe that they are the ones to be changed, especially when their educational outputs such as exam results of the pupils are not sufficient compared to sets of standards. They consequently self-reflect via examining, monitoring, comparing and judging themselves to the ‘good teacher’ standards for better productivity, efficiency and performativity. Through this procedure, teachers become a ‘reflective practitioner’ within the discourse of ‘good teacher’ framed by the government (Perryman et al., 2017). It eventually requires teachers to practice ‘self-ordering’, not based upon individual moral judgement but upon meeting externally applied edicts and commands (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2010) and the self-set standards. Through Foucault’s lens, such discourse can be interpreted in terms of their normalizing effects – an and average that subjects should reach in the apparatuses of security. In this sense, the self-appraisal system, along with pre-existing performative accountability measures, can be interpreted as a complex of

technologies of power and governmentality.

Following those arguments, as specified in the chapter for research questions and methodologies, I would like to address the following questions: What is the SSAS in term of political realisation within the whole picture of the current accountability policy in South Korea? What technologies/techniques of government are used and being practiced within the SSAS? Are teachers really experiencing an extended autonomy of their own, or are they merely surveilled, governed and controlled and being asked greater accountability via the SSAS? How are subjectivity and professionalism of teachers transformed in relation to the exercising government via the SSAS? These fundamental questions evoke the urgent necessity of critical reinterpretation for the contemporary accountability policy in the context of development of power and knowledge, especially for teachers who unwittingly shape themselves to fit into a designed mould in this rapidly changing society.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

As discussed so far, the evolution of educational policies in South Korea, particularly focusing on accountability and teacher appraisal mechanisms, reflects a significant shift from traditional ethical values towards a neoliberal, performative framework. This transition is not merely a change in policy but implies a profound transformation in terms of exertion of power and powerful political rationalities.

Initially, South Korean education was deeply rooted in Confucian values, where accountability was largely ethical and moral. Teachers were considered moral exemplars, entrusted with the holistic development of students. This era emphasized intrinsic ethical accountability, allowing teachers significant autonomy and professional integrity. The approach mirrored the "Golden Age of public education" in England, where teachers had the freedom to



practice their profession without much state intervention. During this period, the educational system relied on the professional and ethical standards upheld by teachers. There was a collective understanding that educators were responsible for nurturing not only the intellectual but also the moral character of their students. The focus was on cultivating a well-rounded individual, grounded in ethical principles and societal values. This intrinsic form of accountability created an environment where teachers were trusted to act in the best interest of their students and society.

The landscape of South Korean education began to change with the increasing influence of neoliberal policies in the late 20th century. These policies introduced a market-oriented approach to education, emphasizing efficiency, standards, and measurable outcomes. The shift marked the beginning of performative accountability, characterized by increased external inspections and the enactment of school appraisals. This transition mirrored the changes seen in the UK post-1988 Education Reform Act, which introduced rigorous standards and outcomes-focused measures to enhance educational quality. In South Korea, performative accountability aimed to align educational practices with global competitiveness and economic efficiency. Schools and teachers were now evaluated based on quantifiable performance metrics, a significant departure from the earlier emphasis on ethical and moral responsibility.

Along with such shift of accountability both in conception and approach, the genealogy of discourse in South Korean education has revealed a significant transformation from ethical to performative accountability, driven by global neoliberal trends, since the education reform in 1988. The birth of performative measures on teacher accountability, in particular teacher appraisal systems, have been working within the principle of the disciplinary mechanisms and panoptic ideas around surveillance and control.

However, further discourses around empowerment of teachers have

recently emerged. The introduction of the school self-appraisal scheme in 2010 was a pivotal moment in this transition. This scheme sought to balance internal self-regulation with other pre-existing external scrutiny, reflecting a strategic shift in accountability practices. The move towards performative accountability can be understood within the broader policy context of neoliberal governmentality, where power that seek a new method of control based upon post-panoptic ideas, such as permanent visibility and self- and collective surveillance through autonomy.

The historical and genealogical discussion on accountability policies and discourses in the Korean context demonstrates and implies that accountability is indeed a political idea and a technology of power aimed at effectively controlling frontline teachers. This area has traditionally been a space where political initiatives, technologies, techniques and efforts are examined, experimented with, and competed, resulting in the current complex picture of teacher accountability. Multiple ideas regarding accountability such as ethical, professional, performative, and post-performative, are now complicatedly intertwined, leading to the simultaneous operation of various policies measuring accountability in the teaching profession. The task of scrutinitising the SSAS will uncover how contemporary power operate on contemporary teachers through accountability as a political technology in the education system.

In what follows, I therefore examine the enactment of the SSAS—not as top-down implementation, but as situated translations through which schools, leaders and teachers produce local versions of accountability.

## **Chapter Four. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I introduce the research questions and discuss the methodology of my thesis, providing information about the key research methods used to tackle the research questions, and how they are suitable for exploring them. In addition, I discuss the method for data analysis, providing information about how data was unpacked and decoded to draw on findings. Finally, I discuss the ethical issues of the research, and how the research was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **4.2. The Research Questions**

This thesis investigates the accountability policy, specifically, appraisal measures for teachers, in public education in South Korea. This study explores two main and interrelated phenomena: the teachers' perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of the current accountability policy, the SSAS; and the formation of teacher subjectivities, including a critical exploration of the impact of the self-appraisal accountability policy on teacher professionalism. I constructed the following overarching research questions to address each phenomenon of interest, which shape this doctoral thesis:

- How has accountability policy evolved in South Korea?  
How have accountability policies in South Korea been related with power?
- How do teachers translate, interpret and experience the

current accountability policy, and in particular the schools' self-appraisal system?

- Does the self-appraisal system recognise and extend autonomy of teachers, or is it a new means of governmental control?
- How is teacher subjectivity and professionalism impacted by accountability policies in South Korea?

This thesis critically explores the current context of accountability policy in the public sector of South Korean education. The research questions analyse aspects of the current power/knowledge inscribed in accountability policy, with particular focus on the appraisal system for teachers, by investigating the perception, practice of the newly introduced accountability measure, called the Schools' Self Appraisal System, and transformation of teachers' subjectivity and professionalism under the accountability policy, so called 'subjectification' (Miller & Rose, 2008). The perception is about initial feelings of the participant teachers about the appraisal system comparing with other accountability/appraisal policies they have experienced. The practice is about whether or not the current appraisal policy promotes the intrinsic autonomy of the teachers or enhances subordination through the exertion of governmentality, thus it is regarded as technology of government. The transformation is about how teachers understand and negotiate their subjectivity and profession in which they are positioned, albeit not necessarily aware of (Bailey, 2015). The investigation of the research questions will provide an in-depth explanation for understanding how the exertion of governmental power/knowledge normalises and regulates teachers.

### **4.3. The Research Methodology: Case Study**

Research on teachers' perception, practice and experience of an accountability policy and transition of subjectivity and professionalism

due to it is a complicated task, as attention should be paid to the various factors that influence teachers' thoughts and behaviour within the given policy context. In addition, critical problematization or reinterpretation of the current policy culture and context that participants encounter is required as it must be fabricated, based on Foucault's ontological view towards reality, and can provide a crucial foundation for understanding the phenomena of interest. Therefore, the research questions cannot be accessed and understood by simple numbers or percentages displayed in surveys or charts or any type of quantitative techniques that are used for evaluating the meeting of the standards of the policy, or even by some qualitative methods, such as observation. This is why a case study is chosen as the main methodological strategy for examining the question.

Epistemically, the aim is not law-like generalisation but thick, situated explanation. The value of the findings rests in transferability—the degree to which readers can recognise family resemblances to their contexts—rather than in statistical generalisation.

As Yin (1994, p. 1) says “Case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are posed, when the investigator has little control over events.” Through the method, teachers' perceptions, practice, experience, translation and transformation with the current accountability policy was explored during the process of appraisal throughout an academic year of schools. The use of case study was intended to uncover how subjectivity and professionalism of teachers are affected and transformed in the current policy were the critical area of attention of analysis to uncover ways of power exertion through technologies, mechanisms and tactics. The probable rationale, aims and strategies of the policy scheme were gathered via interviews with several policy-makers and texts of the guidelines of the policy. Consequently, the study looked at the case or phenomenon in its real life-context (Cohen et al., 2011) and explored a phenomenon in rich detail (Yin, 2009). There has been ongoing debate on the issue of

generalisation in the use of case studies in research. As Stake (2000, p. 21) points out: ‘when explanation, propositional knowledge and law are the aim of an inquiry, the case study will often be at a disadvantage’, but I am convinced that this research is not designed to produce a theory or a generalisation which can apply universally, but to give interpretation and insight into the particular topic of interest and to add to the body of knowledge and shine a light which can speak to other contexts and people.

For ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973) of the micro-settings of how power and knowledge relations play-out and manifest in the current education policy (Ball 1994., cited in Bailey, 2015), I used two techniques of investigation in the academic year, from March 2022 to February 2023.

Firstly, face-to-face interviews for teachers were used for data about: (1) perception of the target accountability system and the past experience of the former accountability system; (2) practice and experience of the accountability system regarding autonomy, surveillance and control via accountability; (3) influence of the policy on their professionalism and subjectivity. Also, interviews with policy-makers and developers of the guidelines for the self-appraisal system were used to collect further data about: (4) the rationale behind the policy and the strategies that may not explicitly be seen in the policy publications.

The semi-structured interviews took place with sixteen teachers in four innovation schools and two past/current policy-makers from the Gyeonggi-do Office of Education(GOE), South Korea, during Summer 2022. **The schools were purposively selected to maximise contextual and theoretical variation, not to claim statistical representativeness of all Korean schools.** The sample of school participants was theoretically chosen by considering the criteria: level of innovation schools, school size, socio-economic background, and geographical location. Relevant factual information on the schools

were gathered from looking at the webpages of the School Information System. Additionally, an instrumental selection of four schools was done so as to have two schools at a beginning stage (Innovate and Pre-Innovate), and another two schools at a leading stage (Model Innovate) of the innovation school scheme, based on the categorisation/grading scheme for innovation schools of the GOE. As this research seeks to compile a detailed picture of the self-appraisal system and the other accountability policies present in schools, the diversity of cases is guaranteed since they were selected to represent examples of regional and graded differences in practice. The followings table provides details about the participant schools of the research:

School Name	Location (City/Town)	Type	Size		Level of innovation
			No. of Teachers	No. of Students	
Water	Gwangmyeong City	State-Secondary	39	466	Model Innovate
Sky	Namyangju Town	State-Primary	11	45	Innovate
Mountain	Hwaseong City	State-Secondary	73	1066	Model Innovate
Forest	Gwangju Town	State-Primary	40	538	Pre-Innovate

[Table 1. Detailed Information of the Four Participant Schools, 2023]

I approached four state schools, two in primary and three in Secondary level, by emailing them to gain access. I have no prior connection with them, but all of them were very supportive with the goals and value of the research I undertake as researcher who was a former teacher. The chosen schools are selected in consideration of their level, size and location. Fortunately, I was able to gain access to

all the schools, though the impact of Covid-19 was still there. The sampling criteria for teacher choice were whether or not they teach a specific subject and the length of service. It means that head teachers and the staff teachers who provide services such as counselling or medication were excluded, as the appraisal standards for them would be significantly different from those for subject teachers. The teachers who are in their initial year of teaching were also be excluded as they would possibly be distracted by diverse unfamiliar systems for teaching, student evaluation, administration and so on to adapt to, rather than paying attention to self-accounts. In the selection process, teachers' professional background, such as the role in the school and their level of experience in the teaching profession, were considered for balancing participants' diversity. The other personal factors, such as gender or age, were not be considered in the selection process. With those selection guidelines, I asked the head teachers of the participant schools to recommend appropriate teachers for the research and, as a result, I could make the list of participant teachers. I personally approached them via either phone-calling or email and explain the research and how data collection would take placed, and recieved their consents individually. In addition, I invited the current policy-maker of the Schools' Appraisal System and the former policy-maker of the policy to interview to get the picture of the policy from the perspective of policy-makers and operators. The following tables display the details about the participant schools and the organisation and the participants/interviewees of the research:

No.	School	Name	Years of Service	Subject-Teaching	Middle-leader
1	Water Secondary	River Banks	14	Y	Y
2	Water Secondary	Brooke Stone	24	Y	Y



3	Water Secondary	Reed Lake	18	Y	Y
4	Water Secondary	Sidney Stream	28	Y	Y
5	Sky Primary	Skyler Breeze	4	Y	N
6	Sky Primary	Aurora Cloud	12	Y	N
7	Sky Primary	Draft Orion	14	Y	Y
8	Sky Primary	Starlight Planet	10	Y	N
9	Mountain Secondary	Cliff Summit	19	Y	Y
10	Mountain Secondary	Sierra Peak	22	Y	Y
11	Mountain Secondary	Peyton Pine	8	Y	N
12	Mountain Secondary	Aspen Ridge	30	Y	N
13	Forest Primary	Birch Greenwood	18	Y	N
14	Forest Primary	Cedar Arbour	6	Y	N
15	Forest Primary	Logan Leaf	24	Y	Y
16	Forest Primary	Maple Vale	13	Y	Y

[Table 2. Detailed Information of the Sixteen Teacher Participants, at the point of data collection (2022)]

Institution	Name	In Service as a policy-
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		maker
Gyeonggi-do Office of Education	Terra Field	Y
Gyeonggi-do Office of Education	Clay Sands	N

[Table 3. Detailed Information of the Two Policy-Maker Participants, at the point of data collection (2022)]

As introduced, the questions for interviews for teachers were designed to draw out the intention of the system in terms of power relations, with a particular focus on whether it promotes the intrinsic autonomy of teachers or enhances control and a particular kind of subjectivity of themselves. That is, the interviews had two purposes: to give voice to the participants, exploring their views, experiences and perceptions; to explore how they are constituted as subjects through the accountability policy, subjecting their talk in the interview to an analysis which centres on the operations of power. The interviews with two officers who were responsible for making the policy and guideline followed a similar pattern.

All interview questions were devised with a deep consideration of theory, framework, aim, and the depth and breadth of research. They were open-ended (or explanatory) and semi-structured. Sub-questions and prompts were added if the responses of participants are vague or ambiguous and require further elaboration. The actual interviews took place in a quiet venue, which was booked in advance such as a seminar room or meeting room, at the institution each participant teacher or policy-maker belonged to. At the beginning of the interview, a very brief introduction to the research had been remarticulated, including the key points regarding ethics, then the questions followed. Each interview lasted for around one to one and a half hours. All the conversations during each interview were recorded and concurrently transcribed with the help of digital technology. The

interview ended with information about the future timeline of the research to let them know about when they could read the actual thesis.

Additionally, textual data collected through examining archival documents such as the policy texts and plans, reports of LEAs, schools, and teachers for school's accountability, were used in comparing and contrasting reality to the policy blueprint. I believe that languages, syntax, and expressions used in the documents, are revealing what those in governance intended to accomplish in making such policies.

#### **4.4. The Method for Data Analysis: Thematic Analysis**

At the analysis stage, thematic analysis was employed to decode and interpret the raw data and to form the arguments informed by the voices from the research participants.

The raw data attained from interviews were recorded and personally transcribed so that I became familiarised with the vocabularies of participants. Transcriptions include features of participants' speech, such as word emphasis, false starts, or repetitions, but omitted conversational fillers such as 'umm' to streamline the text and make it easier to read and analyse. The raw and secondary material were imported into NVivo, a computer based qualitative data analysis programme, for both storage and codification based on deductive and inductive categories. This categorical structure proposes general family codes (concepts) based on the literature review and theoretical framework of Foucault, whilst leaving space for the emergence of unforeseen themes from the data itself. The theoretical framework for analysis are based upon the types of power, mechanisms, technologies and processes of normalization grounded in Foucault's series of lectures in France (1977-78). The transcriptions of all data sets were

then printed off from the NVivo programme, where they were initially analysed using a paper-based approach comprised of highlighting and annotating interpretations and initial codes in the margins. This approach for initial interpretations allowed me to respond to the data in a flexible manner (Gibbs, 2012). I then conducted a more sophisticated version of highlighting themes, reallocating phrases, sentences and paragraphs into relevant categories and drawing significance from them. I constantly reflected on Foucault's concepts during the process of decoding so that the frame of power and *governmentality* yielded a 'speculative analysis' – researching with quite an open mind, and adjusting accordingly (Woods, 1986, p.121., cited in Perryman 2007), and 'spiral of understanding' is achieved – in which 'insights were escalated through moving backwards and forwards between observations and analysis and understanding' (Woods, 1986, p.120., cited in Perryman 2007).

## **4.5. Ethical Considerations**

### **4.5.1. The reasons for Fieldwork**

In this research, I adhered to the British Educational Research Association's guidelines (2018) for ethical practice and the IOE's guideline. This means that some ethical strategies were used in the process of collection of personal data. In addition, I was aware that the unprecedented situation related to the pandemic due to Covid-19 raised (ethical) concerns about face-to-face data collection during research. However, the case study I designed for this research is all about real life context, using multiple sources of evidence. **In this thesis, however, drawing on multiple materials is not pursued to converge on a single truth (triangulation). Instead, I treat interviews, documents and observations as a constellation that reveals plural—sometimes conflicting—discursive formations. Analytic value lies in**

juxtaposition and contrast, not in adjudicating which source is “more valid.”

In addition, social science usually doesn't do context independent theory or research and context-dependent knowledge is viewed as more valuable than context-independent. Particularly, case studies reflect and react to real life situations and have loads of details, such as the physical and spatial arrangement of the place of research and the varied reactions of participants situated in this context, which will be useful for examining nuance and developing skills. Thus, conducting a case study through online contact simply doesn't make sense, since by its static nature it cannot follow the real context of participants, which is the most significant part of the data analysis. In addition, the main techniques for the research case studies would be interviews, and it wouldn't be only about interviews in themselves, but the participants' response in interviews, interpretation and subjectivity in their own situations and the observations of their practice in their daily professional life, as related to a particular accountability policy. In other words, it means that the research will be meaningful only when the researcher is physically situated with the participants and interview them whilst they inhabit their particular surroundings which reflects their accountability culture. The researcher's perception of the contexts and the participants who are a part of them is inevitable in the data collection, which cannot be replaced by any other means of data collection. Thus, though the IOE position was that research fieldwork should be conducted by remote means, with in depth consideration on how sufficient data can be collected, I conducted the face-to-face data collection, after long waiting period due to lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, as it could not be replaced by any other methods and it is the only way to guarantee the success of my research project.

I need to clearly note that Face-to-face data generation was essential throughout the whole data-collection process because the situated production of accounts, practices and interactions within schools

constitutes the very materials of analysis in this study.

#### **4.5.2. Researcher Effect**

Along with the particular context regarding data collection, there were several ethical considerations. Firstly, there was a concern related to researcher effect. As mentioned in section 3.3.2., the participants and schools were chosen in consideration of several theoretical criteria in no particular relation to researcher variables, such as accessibility or familiarity to particular schools or individuals. In addition, I made sure there was no prior personal relation to a school or individual who took part in the research to minimise any probable researcher effect. I also let the participant schools and individuals know that the research is completely independent and not connected to any governmental body in any way, so that no external force was exercised and associated with actions undertaken during and after the research.

#### **4.5.3. Researcher Positionality**

In a social-constructionist / poststructural study, the researcher is not a neutral instrument but a participant in the production of knowledge. This thesis therefore acknowledges that my standpoint, relations in the field, and analytic preferences shape what counted as a meaningful problem, which materials were generated, and how they were interpreted.

This project arose from sustained engagement with questions of accountability, professional subjectivity, and school reform. I was drawn to the Schools' Self-Appraisal System (SSAS) because it condenses these concerns in everyday practices. My interest is neither to celebrate nor to denounce policy, but to ask how particular policy technologies make up teachers and schools in specific ways.

I adopt a Foucauldian orientation (governmentality,

power/knowledge, subjectivation, *dispositif*). Epistemologically, this means I do not seek universal laws or predictive generalisations. Instead, I aim for thick, situated explanations that trace how truths are produced and circulated. Validity rests on reflexive coherence, transparency of analytic moves, and attention to heterogeneity, rather than on neutrality or triangulated convergence on a single truth.

My position in relation to participants and institutions oscillated between proximity and distance. Proximity afforded access to routines (e.g., PLCs, goal-setting meetings) and to documents that made the SSAS actionable; distance helped me treat familiar practices as analytically strange. I recognise that rapport, collegial expectations, and organisational rhythms can orient what is sayable and showable; these dynamics are part of the field of power the study examines.

Interviews and documents are not “found data” but generated materials. Question framing, follow-ups, and translation choices shape what appears as evidence. I used iterative elaboration (returning to participants for clarification where appropriate) and kept a reflexive log to record how my prompts and translations steered the talk and texts.

Analytically, I treated the corpus as a constellation of heterogeneous materials rather than a set to be triangulated toward one truth. I wrote analytic memos that explicitly asked: *Which discourses are being mobilised here? Which objects are being made visible? What forms of self-relation are being invited or required?* I also sought out discrepant cases and counter-narratives to complicate dominant readings.

Because my standpoint co-produces the inquiry, the claims offered here are situated. Their value lies in transferability—the extent to which readers recognise family resemblances in cognate settings—and in the analytic traction of the Foucauldian tools (e.g., pastoral power as care and salvation; autonomy/self-surveillance as co-implicated). I present policy as enactment rather than implementation,

and power as relational and productive rather than a possession.

My theoretical lens foregrounds discourse, routines, and subjectivation; it risks under-stating material constraints (time, class size, budgets). I have tried to mitigate this by attending to the practical conditions that enable or inhibit certain enactments, while keeping the analysis accountable to the effects of power/knowledge that the lens is suited to reveal.

I understand confidentiality and care for participants not as neutral compliance but as an ethical practice of research that aligns with the study's orientation: to make visible how particular arrangements govern conduct, while avoiding harm and respecting the practical worlds in which teachers work.

#### **4.5.4. Issues regarding Coronavirus**

Regarding the the coronavirus in South Korea, where face-to-face data collection took place, there was a far smaller number of total cases of infection and death in relation to the virus than in many other countries in the world, as shown in the press release and almost perfectly under control. According to the guideline released on 4th February 2021, which was right before the data collection (please refer to the attached 'Updates on COVID-19 in Republic of Korea (4 Feb 2021)'), South Korea had only 429 new daily cases and only 7 new death and is at level 2.5 in the national alert system, which allowed all businesses to open and up to 4 people to freely travel and meet inside as well as outside. All who were infected through tests were at hospitals and the people who were in close contact with the patients were under supervision and control of the national health system. The central government devised and updated a specific guideline for the public according to the level of national regulation and all educational institutions, such as schools, have their own version of policy based on the government's (please refer to the



attached ‘Response Guidelines to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 at Public and Multi-Purpose Facilities’ in the appendix). This thorough test and control system and sophisticated citizenship of the country resulted in outstanding international reputation as a good example in Covid-19 response and the following evaluation as a low-risk area. The data collection of this research firmly adhered to the latest guidelines of the relevant government and the participant institutions.

I assumed that once the data collection had started in the presence of coronavirus and its variants, several ethical issues could be raised, so thorough risk assessment and proper measures were put in place to address the possible safety issues. Most of all, the interviews and observations followed the latest national or local safety guidelines, such as wearing face coverings and keeping social distance as applied by the participant schools or organisations. Interviews would mean to be paused if the local or national guidelines had restricted visits or meetings in later updates, to guarantee the safety of participants. Fortunately, such a situation did not occur. In addition, all the possible risks were thoroughly covered and specified in the risk assessment and I was supposed to report it to the participants in the process of getting permission. The risk assessment was done in cooperation of participant schools or offices and it included the participant factors, such as their current physical health and mental wellbeing, and site factors, such as capacity of meeting room and its readiness and fumigation. The risk assessment was double checked by myself, supervisor and participants 72 hours before the interview or observation started.

If a safety or health issue/concern had been raised by any participant before or during the data collection, the researcher would take it into serious consideration and the process of data collection with the particular participant(s) would be stopped, postponed or replaced by other participant(s) if necessary. In case of an emergency regarding the virus, the researcher was supposed to directly contact the nearest medical centre which can provide relevant treatment for the

participant.

All the information on possible hazards and risks, provision of safety measures and clear guidance were specified in the consent form and the risk assessment form and they were provided to all participants before the data collection starts. Despite the measures, participants were reminded that involvement in the research project is voluntary and they can withdraw it at any time with any reason or no reason. It meant that the physical and mental wellbeing of participants were the top concern during the entire process of data collection.

In addition, the interviews were conducted as minimal as possible, to lessen the possibility of infection or transmission of the virus. Please refer to the risk assessment for more details.

#### **4.5.5. Issues regarding Consent**

The research involved 18 subject teachers and several policy makers. I obtained the necessary permission from the relevant authorities and consent of participants was sought, before the start of interaction with the participants. All the participants were provided with information about the research (please see the section for ‘INFORMED CONSENT’ in the appendix for more details). That is, all the participants of the study was given a brief summary of the study consisting of the aims and objectives, methodology, how the data was going to be collected, stored and used, the potential impact of the study, and dissemination of findings. The participants were informed clearly that their participation would be entirely voluntary. They were explicitly informed about their right to withdraw the consent to participate at any time before the submission of the final thesis. They were informed that they do not have to give reasons for the withdrawal if they decide to do so. They were also informed that in case they withdraw their consent, the data collected from them would be destroyed, and neither be used nor be reported in the study. I

received the necessary permissions from the concerned school authority and the participating teachers for the purpose of audio recording of the meetings.

#### **4.5.6. Issues regarding Interviews**

During the interviews no personal or family background, their cultural or religious beliefs, socio-economic status, their personal likes and dislikes or any other aspect of their life which might be considered sensitive were studied or sought.

Nevertheless, I excluded any specific words or particular terms that may imply or be assumed as an indicator of a specific person in a specific position at participant schools, even though they are anonymised. Every single word and term was thoroughly assessed and identified in the process of data interpretation and they will not appear in any type of dissemination or publication. This point had been clearly conveyed to every participant, so that they could be involved in the interviews without any unnecessary worries.

Consequently, this project will not seek any information about any of the aforementioned aspects. Furthermore, the setting of the study were at the schools or offices where they work, but it was not be the places where they feel interrupted, inspected or being watched for minimising the influence of spatial setting to answers of the participants. Thus, the study did not involve any contact between the researcher and the participants outside the school or workplace, which includes social media, too. The participants were informed clearly about their rights, such as right to opt-out or reject as mentioned. The interviews were be audio-recorded and noted for analysis.

#### **4.5.7. Issues regarding Data Security and Storage**

Anonymity was given to any and all data in order that no personal

data was collected. Participants (both schools and individuals) were assured that their school's name, their name, their position at the school and any hints that could lead to them being identified were removed from the data and they were identified simply as school with names found in nature, such as sky and mountain etc., and teacher as relevant pseudonyms, such as starlight and cliff etc. All the data collected by the interviews was cited with pseudonyms before reporting. The raw physical data such as interview and notes were kept secure in a locked cabinet to which only I, as a researcher, have access. The digital data such as all the audio recordings and transcripts are stored on a computer with password protection. Only I have access to the computer. All this information was conveyed explicitly to all the participants.

Once this research project is finished, digital data such as interview recordings and transcripts will be stored on UCL N: Drive with password protected access. Data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on UCL N after the research is completed and I have also successfully completed UCL's online training on this. All this information was conveyed explicitly to all the participants.

#### **4.5.8. Issues regarding Dissemination and Use of Findings**

The thesis consists of the motivation and context for the study, the research questions, relevant literature review, methodology, data generation and analysis, synthesis of analyses of the diverse data into findings and conclusions, and implications. The whole report or a short summary of its findings will be made available free of cost to any of the participants on request. The report will be available to the various stakeholders in the domain of education as per the rules and guidelines of IOE. A summary of findings and recommendations

from the study will be shared with the participants and will also be widely disseminated to professional groups and networks through seminars, conference presentations, blog posts, podcasts, and journal articles.

## **4.6. Conclusion**

In this research, the use of Foucauldian genealogy served as a methodological framework to analyse the evolution of accountability policy in Korea, focusing on the dynamics of power and knowledge that have shaped educational policies over time. The genealogical method aimed to trace the pivotal points where authorities and policymakers made crucial decisions, which led to lasting changes in the accountability policies affecting the education sector. Through collecting and analysing various materials such as policy briefs, official government documents, and even physical objects like school architecture, the research attempted to uncover the dominant discourses of specific historical moments and their impact on current policies.

The study also incorporated a detailed case study of a local school district in Korea to illustrate how these broader policy changes manifest at the ground level. The case study provided concrete examples of how current accountability policies on teachers, represented by the Schools' Self-Appraisal System, are enacted in practice and how power control and affect the daily operations of schools and the experiences of teachers. This localized investigation added depth to the genealogical analysis, showing the interplay between national policy decisions and local educational practices.

In summary, while the genealogical approach employed in this study provided a critical lens to examine the evolution of accountability policies, the case study and exploration of teachers' professional experiences on the SSAS enriched the analysis.

# Chapter Five: THE INITIAL RESEPNSES TO THE SSAS

## 5.1. Introduction

Accountability, particularly within the public sector, such as education, has traditionally been perceived as a mechanism of ‘political control’ (Olssen, 2016, p. 140) over individuals, emphasising performance and improvement of teachers whilst undermining their freedom and autonomy (Ozga, 2013). This perception is especially evident when accountability is associated with a specific political ideology, for instance, in the case of neo-liberalism. More discussion on this topic of accountability in education triggered by neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality is already presented in the chapter of literature review.

The contemporary Korean context, since the introduction of the 'Schools' Self-appraisal System' (SSAS), the latest accountability measure, as a means of accountability raises the question of whether this latest accountability policy strengthens control over frontline teachers or, as stated in the policy, empowers them and grants them greater autonomy, particularly when considered alongside existing accountability measures.

The shift from SI to SSAS is best read as a change of gaze: from episodic external inspection to internalised pastoral vision. Teachers learn to see themselves through codified rubrics and shared exemplars; they are cared for and, simultaneously, called to redeem deficits in the direction of an imagined “good” teacher/school.

This first chapter of data analysis explores the perception and responses of teachers to the SSAS, which is said to support the freedom and autonomy of teachers, by examining the data obtained in my research. Specifically, this chapter firstly examines how the policy was initially perceived in the particular context of Korean education,

where multiple accountability measures have been discursively operated, based on Gyeonggi-do, the largest regional state in South Korea in terms of population and numbers of students who are registered in state and state-funded independent schools. In particular, the first two sections of the chapter investigate how past experiences of participant teachers regarding the former accountability measure, called ‘school inspection’ (SI), which aimed to scrutinize teachers’ performance and impose sanctions for underperforming teachers, have affected the perception of the new accountability of the SSAS. The sections also describes the specific context and the picture of accountability when the SSAS was first introduced, though readers can also refer to the chapter of policy context to understand the broader context. The following parts of the chapter pay attention to multiple and complicated negative and positive feelings found toward the new accountability policy among the participant teachers. The sections also investigate and theorise where such feelings come from.

In analytic terms, I treat the SSAS through governmentality: power operates capillarily through routines, artefacts and self-work rather than as a possession. Pastoral power here is double—an ethic of care and a salvational telos that orients teachers toward becoming the “good” professional and the school toward an ideal of “goodness.” Read this way, what follows traces policy enactment (situated translations) rather than linear implementation.

## **5.2. The Perception and Responses to the SSAS**

### **5.2.1. Recalling the Past**

As shown in the methodology chapter, many of my interview participants are experienced in the education system, which meant they could recall their experiences with the former framework of performative accountability, the SI, one of the main accountability mean before the SSAS. Most of the experienced teacher participants

and the former and current inspector participants, linked it with negative experiences, where they were overwhelmed by heavy and strict surveillance and accountability and less autonomy.

These negative memories of being under tight control via the SI are significantly different from their experience of the SSAS, despite some negative responses of the latter during the initial state, as we will see. The predominantly negative experiences of teachers in regard to the era of the SI suggests a few important findings on how teachers were controlled and how such experiences relate to both the negative and positive first experience of the SSAS in terms of control, as will be discussed in this and later chapters.

The SI, at county level in particular, as described in the chapter dealing with policy context, was introduced by the 5.31 education reform initiated in 1995, aiming to check and raise the standards of education service by a school under the control of the government, using diverse yet mostly quantitative ways of measurement. Once appraisal was started in a school, inspectors examined different pieces of evidence, such as schemes of work, comprehensive plans for the school curriculum and management, subject action plans and school reports; also, they interviewed teachers, and observed the everyday educational activities of the school being inspected (Han & Kim, 2008). **Taken together, these elements form a dispositif—a strategic arrangement where heterogeneous pieces (training, rubrics, audit trails, talk) align to make certain actions thinkable and doable. The dispositif is the level at which pastoral care and salvational telos are practically fused.**

One prominent finding regarding the SI from my participants' comments is that there was usually a negative feeling towards accountability through their perception or recognition in terms of external surveillance and pressure.



There was fear of being guilty and categorized as mistake-makers by inspectors whose role is to accuse and surveil our faults. (omission) That is more to do with negative (sense of) responsibility, which I wanted to avoid.

(Reed Lake, middle manager, Water Secondary)

In the past, the feeling of being overlooked and being controlled and the penalties if you were not doing something were there only for the purpose of overseeing. In the past, if we didn't do something, we felt like we need to be responsible for it.

(Cedar Arbour, teacher, Forest primary)

As described and implied in the quotes above, teachers were under strict supervision or surveillance combined with negative sanctions, such as penalties, within the SI and this caused feelings of passive responsibility. In addition, based on my personal experiences when I was a teacher under the SI, such external inspection made teachers feel more accountable as well as guilty through disciplinary mechanisms. They include direct and obvious surveillance, overseeing and pressure, followed by accusation and sanction such as getting the lowest band of incentive payment from the PBIS. The effect was to make them feel as if they are merely a guilty person who made terrible mistakes or breached some laws or rules that they must keep. Such responsabilisation of teachers was enabled by strict standards and guidance and performance targets, not only focused on raising students' achievement but also overall quality of education, heralding new and more stringent conceptions of accountability (Olssen, 2014). These negative responses to the appraisal system can be explained by drawing on research findings about negative consequences for teachers when they are placed in neoliberal and panoptic accountability systems across the world (Perryman, 2007; Culver & Warfvinge, 2013; Buchanan, 2015; Moore & Clarke, 2015). They commonly argue that pressure to meet accountability targets and

demonstrate student progress can significantly contribute to teacher stress and feeling of guilt. Constant scrutiny, surveillance and evaluation based on standards and performance metrics can create a high-pressure work environment that negatively impacts teachers' perceptions of accountability.

In addition, in terms of how to assess teachers, the SI can be arguably said to be highly panoptic, in the sense that it uses hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and examination (Perryman, 2006). This mechanism of panoptic surveillance is seen in the SI.

In the past, when schools were evaluated, the evaluation team came and stayed at the school, so we just gathered all the documents, showed it to them, and when something gets pointed out, as you said earlier, it felt like the evaluation thought schools to be a place of wrongdoings. I think we are doing it systematically but to some extent, I think it is necessary for a third party to evaluate. I think it's necessary, but it was a bit uncomfortable to be looked down on by teachers who were too coercive and authoritative. Then, at some point, the school evaluation (the SI) quietly disappeared. We don't know how or why it disappeared.

(Cliff Summit, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

In the quote, Summit expresses feelings of discomfort due to various hierarchical observations and judgement from the inspectors. This recalls the concept of what Page calls 'vertical surveillance' (Page, 2017), which is a predominant process of the external inspection. On top of that, other multiple ways of 'horizontal' and 'intrapersonal surveillance' (Page, 2017) such as peer lesson observation, learning walks and progress checks of teachers by self-reflection, peers and from the school leadership were also frequently used particularly in the process of internal mock preparation for inspection.

Clay Sands, a participant as well as a former inspector at GOE, points

out that in the past, teachers were under the control of certain performative mechanisms of appraisal. Then, new appraisal mechanisms, such as the SSAS, were introduced with the aim of promoting teacher autonomy. She interpretes that, in the current teacher appraisal system, teachers find themselves placed within a system where both mechanisms are at work. According to her analysis, this situation is highly political because the authorities utilize what they observe regarding teachers' performance in order to deflect claims and criticisms of the government from the public. She argues that their goal may be to secure potential votes from the public who demand better performance from public officials, including teachers. She takes an example of the TAPD, which is one of the main accountability measures of the past era before the SSAS was initiated and which still operates alongside the SSAS:

It is the same with the 'Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development'. This social gaze itself is one of looking at the school, so there must be an evaluation from the outside. Then, the society is still looking at the current school with an unfavourable view, and if the current 'Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development' is cancelled, it is difficult to avoid the criticism from the public opinion, so it is not easy to make political judgments readily. Right now, I'm just personally looking at it that way.

(Clay Sands, former inspector of GOE)

The political use of diverse performance-focused surveillance mechanisms in a panoptic sense has generated negative perceptions and experiences among teachers regarding the teacher appraisal system and policy ever since the 5.31 education reform. The issue is that many of these mechanisms, such as the SI and the TAPD, rooted in performative and panoptic accountability concepts, are still extensively employed in education alongside new policies such as the SSAS. This implies that they are not only closely associated with new

policies but also exert a substantial influence on teachers' perception, experiences, interpretation, and enactment of the new policies.

Rather than locating power in a single mechanism, autonomy and surveillance are co-implicated: as teachers gain discretion, they also intensify self-management.

Taken together, rubrics, PLCs, audit trails and talk form a dispositif: a strategic arrangement where heterogeneous elements align to make certain actions thinkable and doable. The dispositif is the level at which pastoral care and salvational telos are practically fused.

### **5.2.2. The First Impression and the Initial Responses**

To gain the initial picture to start with for further discussion on the matter of control in the following chapter, the rest of this chapter discusses the perception of teachers in reference to the SSAS through exploring their initial responses to the new accountability scheme.

These supportive arrangements work as technologies of the self that combine confession (disclosing lacks), examination (measuring against the norm) and direction (setting next steps). Their efficacy rests less on coercion than on subjectivation—teachers learning to tell the truth about themselves in the system's terms.

Recalling the moments when they were first introduced to the SSAS at the initial stage, many of the participant teachers predominantly expressed diverse negative responses including feelings of cynicism, concerns over workload, rejection, dejection, apprehension and doubt, though some found positive sides. It is interesting to see that they mentioned feeling overwhelmed by several common negative responses at the very beginning, which might reflect their previous experiences regarding the influence of controlling power exercised through the pre-existing accountability policies. Ambivalence generates micro-tactics—temporal deferrals, selective compliance, re-wording indicators—that do not exit power but re-route it. These

moves show governmentality at work: subjects act within the field of power to bend its trajectories.

However, these initial responses gradually turned into more positive ones, with some expressing positive expectations about exercising professional autonomy and escaping from the tighter control of governmental power. That relief is not merely affective; it is productive. Pastoral care binds desire to institutional ends. The promise of recognition functions as a salvational horizon—a telos that legitimates ongoing self-examination and effort. These responses indicate that most teachers in this study welcome the new appraisal system, which they perceive as allowing them to experience greater freedom in their professional capacity, despite their predominant initial negative perceptions.

#### **Negative Perception and Responses: Cynicism, workload, confusion, rejection, apprehension & doubt**

Many of the teachers I interviewed expressed a cynical view of the self-appraisal scheme, seeing it as a mandatory task that added to their workload, especially when they recalled the moment the SSAS was introduced. These sentiments were particularly strong among teachers who had been in the profession for a longer period, such as experienced teachers and middle managers. These individuals were used to producing visible and measurable outputs and to raising the standards of school performance within the previous accountability system. In contrast, relatively newly employed teachers seemed less affected by these concerns. They tended to accept the scheme as suggested, without criticism, and did not perceive it as an additional burden on their workload and performance. The following quotes exemplify these differing views.

Crucially, the pastoral is teleological. Guidance is not neutral support; it is oriented toward saving the subject from deficiency through progress markers, evidence files and dashboards. The “good” is both ethical and statistical: a moral vocabulary of improvement sutured to

numerate traces.

When I entered the profession, the self-appraisal was settled in. No experience of other systems I had had. So, I just accepted it as it is. I thought this (appraisal) goes this way.

(Skyler Breeze, teacher with 4-year experience, Sky primary)

So everyone works a lot. I thought so too and when there were lots of policies coming out, the greatest virtue and ability there was how to deal with the numerous policies as simply and easily as possible. So yes when the policy came out it is a bit annoying. Despite thinking 'why would I do this?' There was hardly any discussion on how to enact the policy and the reason for it. I just think 'It has to get done, I need to do it.' and then 'How can I do it? How to make it easier?' (omission) Although there were tons of policies, I didn't really think about why it is needed most of the time. Since I only considered how to make it easy, in a passive way, hardly anything was constructive.

(Brooke Stone, middle manager with 24-year experience,  
Water Secondary)

The acceptance of the appraisal approach by Breeze is understandable when considering that he has never experienced other appraisal systems before. While he could have been critical of the appraisal framework, the way he is assessed, or even the concept of appraisal itself, it was a period for him to settle into the profession, and he may not have had ample opportunity to thoroughly evaluate the appraisal system. However, scepticism arose among experienced teachers, possibly due to the constant introduction of different appraisal policies and their changes, as highlighted by Stone's experience at Water Secondary. His testimony suggests that teachers have been subjected to a constant policy churn without clear understanding of their purpose and enactment. This cynicism is also arguably due to the SSAS being a novel approach, requiring active involvement from

teachers for perhaps the first time. Experienced teachers might intuitively and instantly perceive that the new appraisal system asks greater involvement of their time and effort. Indeed, this commitment includes developing appraisal standards and participating in the entire appraisal process, a departure from what teachers were used to. Consequently, the new approach was viewed as an additional workload, particularly because it involved multiple meetings during the busiest period of the academic year, as described in Stream's quote below.

There were meetings between subject and year-group leads prior to the school-size assessment meeting and they took so long hours. One day one of them completed around half past 1 am. Then, we thought it was waste of time as we spend too amuch time for just an appraisal. We thought that we need to plan rather than to appraise to make next academic year better.

(Sidney Stream, middle manager, Water Secondary)

The quote from Stream implies that Water Secondary started to have multiple meetings for the new self-appraisal for the next academic year from November or December of the previous academic year. Her testimony is exceptionally shocking to see that some meetings went over 1:30 am, which realistically can be felt as a marathon race. This clearly demonstrates that greater workload for the teachers involved in the season of the end of the academic year.

On top of that, different sources of the feeling of confusion, rejection, dejection and doubt were also expressed. These included rejection of the policy due to the lack of support or specific guidance on it, which meant teachers didn't know what was expected of them and how to go about developing the standards. Teachers also had reservations about the level of difficulty, and doubt about the effectiveness and feasibility of the policy.

However, when we were told that we could set indicators by ourselves, the whole community found it a bit confusing as there was no education or training or guidelines on the purpose or how it has come to this something like that. So, when we had a look at the documents, we knew it meant well and serves good purpose so we knew that it should get done but it felt like more work so we found it a bit tough.

(Sierra Peak, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

Such feeling of confusion of the teachers towards the new appraisal was experienced as the new system of appraisal was just given to them with insufficient prior and thorough preparation or training for enactment. In addition, in a practical sense, they felt it was too difficult to self-appraise using self-set-standards that should, necessarily and eventually, be expressed in specific languages of their own based upon the abstract languages and conceptions that the GOE emphasises.

Well, when it was first brought up in the lead meeting, the terminology was quite hard and getting into specific details also felt like a lot of work.

(Logan Leaf, middle manager, Forest Primary)

Yes we received the document and we might have understood it but at the back of our minds we weren't really up for it to take a lead and push. So yes we got how it works but last year we referred to the previous indicators most of the time.

(Sierra Peak, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

From the testimonials of Leaf in Forest Primary and Peak in Mountain Secondary, it becomes clear that the policy text employs abstract, conceptual or complex language to convey its objectives to frontline schools and teachers. Leaf talks about difficulties in understanding terms of the policy and Peak is not sure whether or not



she fully comprehended it. Words such as ‘innovation,’ ‘creativity,’ and ‘collective improvement’ that are frequently adopted in many policy texts related to the SSAS are often used without clear and specific definitions to explain the goals of the SSAS. This is also clearly shown in the guidance book (GOE, 2020b) that suggests several references for drawing up the self-set standards. In one of the references, the one suggested by the GOE itself, example standards are stated with such abstract, vague and difficult terminology, such as: ‘formation of dynamic and democratic school culture’ (p.21); ‘school structure as a learning organisation’ (p.22). As a result, teachers can become perplexed about what the government expects from them and how they should incorporate these characteristics into their self-appraisal standards. In this sense, teachers said they felt lost and destabilised because they were expected to produce their own criteria of appraisal from ‘something out of nothing’, as described in interview by Lake in Water Secondary:

When I first heard about it, I just had no clue of what to do. I felt like I needed to make something out of nothing. And on one hand, I thought ‘can we not just continue what we have been doing?’

(Lake, middle manager, Water Secondary)

Such lack of clarification in the policy texts and guidance, alongside a lack of support, resulted in the practice of copying and rehashing rather than creating original appraisal standards.

It's because I've adjusted a lot of items from the existing ones. So, after trying it here, I thought that this would fit in this part better instead, so when we shared opinions, existing ones were mostly used, and yes, there are not many new items (self-made standards) that have just created a new area like this. I made the structure that way. I reduced the overlapping parts, so the number of items was reduced a lot. Yes, I think there were five areas or something like this last time. I've

narrowed it down to three areas now.

(Cliff Summit, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

Several experienced teachers and middle managers who also teach, said they did not believe in the self-appraisal, including Birch Greenwood in Forest Primary who has been for 18 years in the profession. She expresses doubt:

People said that the appraisal is very hypocritical. The curriculum lead and other senior teachers said that it is difficult to enact and this makes schools feel more exhausted. This was the general perception towards the appraisal. (Omission) The reason why they said this makes schools feel obsessed is that it needs too much time and effort of the teachers with endless meetings, rather than discontenting with the goals or intentions of the policy.

(Birch Greenwood, experienced teacher, Forest primary)

Here, Greenwood reported a strong doubt and the feeling of being obsessed that arises in the minds of senior teachers, criticizing the practicality of self-appraisal and pointing out the potential time and effort it may require for enactment.

Greenwood's testimony is also worth noting as she was a researcher involved in one of the research projects for the development of the SSAS, which was directed, funded and enacted by the GOE with the teachers within the organisation. According to her, there was doubt about the effectiveness of the new appraisal system among researchers during the policy development stage.

In fact, I participated in the research for developing the self-appraisal system when this research first started, people (the researchers in the research project for development of the

self-appraisal) had doubts about whether this would actually work.

(Birch Greenwood, experienced teacher, Forest primary)

While it is not clearly testified what these doubts were, Greenwood notes here that there were some concerns between researchers in the project, as stated.

On top of that, a few teachers even felt a different sort of doubt, the doubt on effectiveness. That is, some thought that it was not worth the effort it took because it would not make meaningful changes and eventually be the same as what they have always done in the past.

Now, I guess this policy now gives some room for change. But to be honest, I don't think it is that different from what we had. For example, one of the criteria related to learning, and after the change two years ago, we did get a chance to make the criteria, but we didn't make everything from scratch. We decided whether to include or exclude what we originally had or even modify some of the criteria. This is in the case of our school.

(Maple Vale, manager of a year group, Forest Primary)

From the data related to negative feelings of apprehension and doubt, I observed a trend of passive involvement and enactment. This is reflected in the practice of repackaging, such as copying or relying on previous appraisal standards, which may be caused by a receptive culture of policy enactment resulting from the lack of consensus on certain policies that are given in a top-down manner from the authority, the GOE. In such culture, 'translation' of a policy, by which teachers recode a policy with their own languages and puts the text into actions, disappears whilst only 'interpretation', by which teachers read and decode the policy text to find merely what to do takes place (Ball et al., 2012).

Meanwhile, some individuals tended to reject the concept of 'self-appraisal' altogether, as they believed that appraisal should solely be performed by others rather than something they actively engage in or handle.

If it was given to me, I would do it, so why do they even give me such a task? You have to find it and give it to me. Why do I have to find out what to do? I feel a bit like that now.

(Sidney Stream, middle manager, Water Secondary)

This attitude resulted in some individuals perceiving self-appraisal as if it were no different from previous appraisal policies, in the sense that it should be enacted in a manner similar to how the former ones were conducted. When self-appraisal is regarded as being the same as the previous policies conducted by external inspectors, despite the different name, it may not have a significant or practical impact on the teaching and pastoral practices of teachers in schools because they feel no distinction from the earlier policies. Consequently, teachers may not actively engage in enacting the policy and may not experience the intended benefits of self-appraisal. They may eventually perceive that they are still being assessed in terms of performance, as they have experienced under previous appraisal policies. The only change they perceive is that they assess their own practices. This is evident in what Sidney Stream said below:

Teachers now say “I don't think I'll get a good score here on this one then. So, please delete this item (standard).” I shared the SSAS with my colleagues, then I was thinking they think the purpose of evaluation is anyway to see whether they are doing well or not.

(Sidney Stream, middle manager, Water Secondary)

### **Origins of the negative feelings**

I would like to highlight that these feelings of cynicism, criticism of workload, confusion, rejection, apprehension and doubt toward the new system are not simply baseless adverse reactions to the policy. Taking the quotes above so far at face value, such feelings seem to stem from the newness or strangeness of the new system plus other factors like an inflation of the workload and lack of thorough guidance and support. However, I argue that, at a deeper level, it can be said that these thoughts or reactions stem from a mentality that demanded people stick to familiarity and conformity to the old, which subjugated individual teachers and made them docile to external control. That is, they felt, from long experience with external pressure, more comfortable to be assessed by external criteria and governed by external forces, which is how the former appraisal system worked, rather than being self-governed with their own criteria, requiring their autonomy and agency. In other words, it means that discomfort and uncertainty of teachers discloses their subjection to power. As discussed, such passivity comes from subjection and is apparent in the practice of lack of engagement and creativity amongst schools represented by the tendency to copy and reproduce the previous appraisal criteria. As Greenwood from Blue primary said:

So, eventually we didn't come up with novel criteria but made ours based on the previous criteria.

(Birch Greenwood, experienced teacher, Forest primary)

Forest Primary was not the only school that would have liked to stick to the previous criteria of appraisal at the initial stage, which was mostly about how well they perform and how well they follow the guidelines and rules, rather than employing a sense of autonomy and agency, as is intended, to make a new set of evaluation criteria.

Teachers in Water Secondary also would like to continue using what the school had in previous years as they had no idea how to make novel criteria for self-appraisal.

If the fact that the former criteria in the old inspection system were highly performative is taken into account, the responses of the participant schools can be perceived as follows: they see the culture of prevalent performative accountability inscribed in the former appraisal system as not necessarily wrong and even as something that should remain or they have just got used to it and can't be shaken. No particular motivation to change it could be found from many of their initial perceptions of the new appraisal system, though a few talked about the positive side of the new appraisal in terms of extended autonomy and agency of teachers, as I will discuss in the later part of this section. This is a strong sign that they clung to previous knowledge and practices about how they have been appraised, inspected and controlled as their comfort zone. These include organizing themselves in response to targets, measurable outcomes and performance-based evaluation (Ball, 2003), being surveilled by data (Bradbury and Robert-Holmes, 2017) and being exposed to public scrutiny and accountability measures (Perryman, 2006).

Revisiting the policy context, as reiterated several times across the previous chapters, many current educational authorities, including the GOE and the central Ministry of education, use multiple means of performative measures for teacher evaluation and promotion, all aimed at a particular political end, as former policy-maker Sand says:

So, there are multiple means to evaluate teachers. Yes. The schools' self-appraisal system makes teachers look back at what they do in educational institutions, but at the same time, peer assessment is (still) taking place through 'Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development (TAPD)' and 'Performance-Based Incentive Scheme' (PBIS). I think, though there should be some reasons, this must be very much

a political decision.

(Clay Sands, former policy-developer, GOE)

This quote implies that the previous mechanism of control and its governing power is still strongly imposed on teachers via the pre-existing accountability policies. Indeed, as will be discussed in the following chapter, these former accountability mechanisms have resulted in several (creative) destructive consequences and impacts on teachers, including re-professionalisation (Bailey, 2015) or de-professionalisation of teachers (Zeichner, 2014), which moulded ‘a new teacher’ (Gewirtz et al., 2009) subject who is a being of compliance with such external control, similar to most of the experienced teachers and middle manager participants in this research.

Under the context of the accountability mechanism, as teachers put their attention on performance, the time teachers have available to connect with and care for the needs of individual students is arguably reduced and teachers’ sense of motivation, efficacy and job satisfaction has been diminished (Day, 2002).

Performance-based pay and teacher competence development assessment have literally to do with whether (I’m?) doing well or not. So, I don’t feel good (as being judged by performance) as I feels like I’m not appreciated as a teacher.

(Sierra Peak, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

This particular teacher is dissatisfied with the situation whereby she is judged by external standards and rules, which are all about generating outcomes and the feeling of dissatisfaction makes her feel she is not respected as a teacher.

More importantly, as teachers put their priorities in generating

performative outcomes, they experience the process of re- or de-professionalisation and become a new cohort of teachers, called ‘post-performative teachers’ (Wilkins, C., 2011), who subscribe to dual commitment, meaning that they remain committed to the ideals of professionalism, yet also recognize and accept the necessity of being accountable for their work. Such teachers are characterised by being resistant, uncomfortable with, or at least numb to changes regarding the degree of autonomy they are given and allowed to use in the self-appraisal system, as shown in the data of this research so far. In other words, the teachers under the influence of such modality of power that controls their body via disciplinary mechanisms, using external forces and criteria that define quality, progress, achievement, and success in teaching, and that affect eventually the soul and practice of teachers, lack autonomy as professional decision-makers on their own affairs in the profession. They would become, if not satisfied, accustomed and familiar with the old manner of control, which makes it difficult to cope with the new scheme.

Therefore, when attempting to introduce autonomy for the development of self-appraisal criteria and work standards within the Korean context, it contradicted their prior experiences and pushed them outside their comfort zones. As a result, it was believed that utilizing autonomy would require significant effort and be deemed unnecessary, as stated by Banks and Stream in their work on Red Secondary.

To be honest, it is hard work to make one (self-appraisal). A lot of energy goes into it, really.

(River Banks, middle manager, Water Secondary)

Last year, spaces for autonomous curriculum was introduced in Gyeonggi-do. This was created with the purpose of allowing teachers and schools autonomy to be expressed and utilised. We thought we should focus more on this and the



principal agreed. So, they gave us 20% of class hours entirely up to us making our own curriculum. It is up to the teachers whether they want to take advantage of it or not. However, the majority of us don't. Other schools also don't do this.

(Sidney Stream, middle manager, Water Secondary)

It is evidenced by the quotes above that South Korean teachers are not used to making their own decisions about their work, and they are often reluctant to do so. This is because they have been used to being told what to do by their superiors, and they are not sure that they have the skills or knowledge to make good decisions on their own. This is a significant sign of de- or re- professionalism of teachers. In addition, this implies that the SSAS is potentially a further shift regarding re-professionalisation, as will be discussed in later.

### **Positive responses – anticipation towards greater autonomy**

Here, though many showed confusion, concern, doubt, rejection & apprehension on the new accountability measure in their initial perception, some responded to it with positive reactions, particularly anticipating greater autonomy in their professional lives both at individual and collective level, believing in and showing enthusiasm towards the policy:

Firstly, this is a self-assessment of the project we lead. This is not about the Education office doing a certain project, but is about us working on it and it is necessary, so I found it a lot more chilling (being excited) and right. Because of course there must be some good policies from the Education Office, which doesn't work for us all the time though, but we had to get it done anyway (reluctant with no choice but compliance). But now we are the centre of it so we can plan (& roll) out what is needed for us, enact it and make an assessment from our viewpoint so we are the ones that lead our education and even the school. This definitely lets us feel this way.

(Brooke Stone, middle manager, Water Secondary)

Stone's excitement and anticipation can be better understood when considering his perspective as a teacher who recognizes the shortcomings of other accountability systems, specifically focusing on the pre-existing promotion scheme for teachers, called 'Teacher Human Resources System for Promotion' (hereafter THRSP), which is another performative as well as panoptic accountability system which was reformed in 2015 (Kim & Ahn, 2018). This scheme is primarily credit-based and assesses the educational and administrative performance and training results of teachers through evaluations conducted by peers and line-managers. These evaluations include various areas such as teaching experience, professional development, student achievement, degrees, and adherence to educational policies of the school and the GOE, all reviewed through both peer assessments and evaluations by school leaderships (Kim & Ahn, 2018).

He confesses that individuals, including himself, have been under the powerful influence of the promotion scheme that creates and reinforces the culture of productivity, excellence, efficiency and effectiveness-focused ways of working between teachers. He says too much attention on promotion has resulted in an attitude of teachers that sees doing-a-policy simply as a means of securing greater opportunity for promotion.

There are people in Paju (his previous town of work) who want to be promoted, like vice principal or principal, they work really hard to be recognized and become the head of school, and to enhance competence things like that. So everyone works a lot (to get good grade for THRSP). Yes, so most of the things (policies and the pre-existing appraisals) got done by some of the department heads, which I thought is right and I could show my abilities in this way (meaning the SSAS). So yes I considered that a virtue.

(Brooke Stone, middle manager, Water Secondary)

In line with that, Summit in Mountain Secondary draws on her current experience of another accountability measure of teachers, called the 'School-Driven Comprehensive Inspection' (SDCI, refer to chapter 3.4. for more details), which was also introduced around 2009 within the package of the policy of innovation school, along with the SSAS, to speak about her experience of both, how they work exclusively but also in concurrence and what made her hope for autonomy in the SSAS. With SDCI, schools actively self-inspect how well they have enacted policies given by the authorities and their own policies when needed. The SDCI is another form of self-appraisal which is not obviously connected with the SSAS at policy level, but interactions or mutual influence between the two is expected though it has not been studied.

Actually, the school-led comprehensive inspection is taking place at the moment. (omission) And this school-led comprehensive inspection, of course it has the purpose of improving this to that in this way and most of the instruction of that is the content of the previous audit related to admin works. (omission) Especially for the inspection, the one we had before and the comprehensive one we do it autonomously, it hasn't changed a lot.

I think that this (the SSAS) recognizes the autonomy of teachers, and each school has a different vision and each school has a different system. But I don't think it makes sense to apply the same appraisal standards to all schools uniformly by the state agency. I believe in the power of collective intelligence among teachers in this system.

(Cliff Summit, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

These quotes illustrate the situations faced by Summit's professional life due to the multiple accountability measures. Like her, many

teachers work diligently, juggling multiple policies, often with an administrative focus, aiming to perform efficiently and achieve the best results. She implies both anticipation and limitations about the SDCI, which is a sister appraisal of the SSAS, measuring and assessing mainly administrative and management works of a school in the policy package of innovation school.

Read through these situated accounts with Foucault's "micro-physics" of power in mind: power circulates capillarily through everyday pedagogic relations rather than descending only from a centre. Under the SSAS, autonomy functions as a relay of governmentality—the more decisions appear self-directed, the more thoroughly evaluative norms are internalised. Teachers pre-empt external judgement by aligning their self-conduct to anticipated standards, evidencing how capillary power works on bodies, routines and aspirations in the day-to-day.

However, in the second part of the quote from Summit, we observe a sense of keen anticipation regarding the self-appraisal system, which promises autonomy, freedom, and collective responsibility. These concepts differ significantly from her past experiences with policy enactment, making the new system potentially very promising to her.

When they said that I will be given autonomy, it was very good because I can now take the initiative in doing things outside of textbooks.

(Cliff Summit, middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

Breeze in Yellow primary particularly anticipated that diversity in lessons could be respected and assured with the new appraisal system.

[Interviewer]

So the autonomy of the school is guaranteed via the SSAS.

How did you feel about that?

[Participant]

Our school think it is really great.

[Interviewer]

Why did you think that?

[Participant]

In fact, most schools aren't like this (how we do in our school). And I know that that is the reality. So the teachers around this kind of school (meaning the school who enact the SSAS well) say it and even the senior teachers say that you will not find the school like this. So I felt that now for each person and teacher have different educational philosophies, but yes, the educational activities I want to do now are different, and I can do those things without restrictions, and in that I recognize a lot of autonomy in the discretion of the homeroom teacher, I have a lot to do with my children. I can try this with anticipation.

(Skyler Breeze, teacher, Sky Primary)

Pointing out that not all schools enact the SSAS with the maximum use of autonomy that is guaranteed, Breeze is happy with such guaranteed freedom which could be used in her lessons and pastoral duties for her homeroom children in the context of her teaching.

Here, Breeze's anticipation can be read as small-p parrhesia: a risky avowal of what she wants to do "outside of textbooks." At the same time, SSAS formats speech as confession—reflective logs, peer discussions, minutes—through which teachers avow desires, shortcomings, and progress. These confessional rites simultaneously empower and bind: they cultivate ethical self-work while rendering the subject knowable and governable within the school's regime of truth.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

Interestingly, I observed that both negative responses, such as rejection and doubt, and positive reactions, such as anticipation on autonomy, creativity and diversity in teaching, were linked to and stemmed from the negative past experiences of strict governmental control on performance and productivity through accountability policies. Read through pastoral power, early SSAS uptake braided care (guidance, collegial reassurance) with salvation (the demand to become good through continuous self-work). Read through governmentality, power appeared as productive and relational, coursing through artefacts and selves rather than being simply possessed. This suggests that teachers in innovation schools had to engage with the new appraisal system, which was intended to promote autonomy and creativity, while harbouring biases or distorted perceptions about it initially. This also implies that such perceptions and responses might influence how teachers enact the policy not only for initial period but also for the entire process.

Subsequently, the next chapter will explore whether these diverse positive perceptions or the prevalent negative perceptions of the SSAS were accurate predictions of what played out in practice. The analytic stakes are therefore epistemic as well as empirical: the chapter has traced how policy comes to exist through enactment, who teachers become through technologies of the self, and which goods are installed as *telois* in the *dispositif*. These will structure the inflections observed in subsequent chapters. More importantly, it will attempt to capture a deeper picture and understanding of the policy in terms of how teachers experienced the SSAS, with particular attention to the issues of control, focusing on autonomy, surveillance, and accountability in practice. Furthermore, it will delve into what changes the SSAS could bring about on teachers' identity and professionalism, based on data collected from the practical experiences of the teacher participants in the research.

# CHAPTER SIX. FREEDOM AND CONTROL IN THE SSAS

## **6.1. Introduction**

Chapter five investigated how the SSAS was initially perceived and how the participant teachers reacted to it. I discussed how teachers' experiences regarding the former inspection affected their perception and found that it is the very reason they have reacted with predominantly negative senses to the SSAS, though some anticipation for change in the use of autonomy was also identified.

This chapter will delve into the core and fundamental issue around the accountability policy as a political measure, which is the debate between freedom and control. That is, this chapter tries to answer the question of whether this latest accountability policy strengthens control over frontline teachers or, as stated in the policy, empowers them and grants them greater autonomy, particularly when considered alongside existing accountability measures.

I would like to answer these questions by examining the key components of modern or post-modern technologies of control: autonomy and surveillance. These two sub-themes will be further elaborated through a discussion of how teachers practice, experience, react to, and utilize the extended autonomy guaranteed by the introduction of the SSAS, in what mechanism they are being surveilled, and how accountability is achieved in support of operation of autonomy and surveillance.

This chapter will draw on the practical data related to controlling teachers in the process of policy enactment to discuss the two sub-topics. That is, this chapter will follow the steps of the policy enactment and discuss and unveil some underlying key political technologies and techniques that are inscribed and operated for the successful control of teachers within the SSAS, aligning them with

the policy aims and the goals of the governmental body, the GOE. Additionally, the sub-themes will be elucidated as governmental technology by identifying and discussing the characteristics and rationales of the accountability policies. To do so, I will draw upon conceptions of power, such as bio-power, pastoral power and governmentality, as examined by Foucault, providing a framework to understand the power dynamics at play. By examining the characteristics and rationales behind these accountability policies through a Foucauldian lens, insights into the mechanisms through which control is exerted over teachers within the SSAS are gained. Furthermore, such data analysis will lead to the concluding argument that the SSAS is a technology of neoliberal governmentality, which embraces the ideas of neo-liberalism and panoptic performativity whilst embracing a different approach and technologies on controlling subjects via autonomy, surveillance of both the self and the collective and accountability.

This reminds us that, as mentioned in the literature review and the chapter on policy context, ‘evolution of power does not take place in a linear, chronological and teleological manner, nor in terms of neat successions, simple replacement, or a unitary trajectory’ (Bailey, 2015, p. 77). Rather, power is ‘ones of multiple lines of descent, of overlap, transformation, transposition’, and ‘material and epistemological remnants and relics of previous regimes may remain, transform or find a new or more dominant function’, rather than disappearing in the shifts from one singularity to another (Bailey, 2015, p. 77). Such phenomena of co-existence and evolution of power, what Bailey (2015, p.77) called ‘acetate effect’, was apparent within the contemporary policy context of S. Korean education, and I argue that it, whether it is intended or not, aimed at, or at least meant to contribute to, a more autonomous and effective control of frontline teachers that minimized the risk of their resistance. This means, in other words and in a broader sense, that political power embedded in policy in any form has never disappeared and freed individuals both



from its imprisonment of their body and behaviour and from its restriction of their soul and thought, rather sometimes it hides its presence but still exercises its power via evolved strategies as demonstrated in the current accountability policies in South Korea.

## **6.2. Greater Autonomy**

In contemporary governments, the emphasis on individual freedom or guarantee of individual freedom is evident in social policies in diverse social sectors, such as healthcare and education. This includes the policy of innovation schools and the self-appraisal system in the case of South Korea and as described in the policy text of the self-appraisal. This means that the policy basically views individual actors of the policy, the frontline teachers, as neoliberal and entrepreneurial subjects, more specifically autonomous agents, and allows them to access maximum autonomy. Thus, individual freedom is presented in the language of autonomy in the policy text, and the technology of autonomy is underpinned in its techniques that will be introduced to become a defining feature of the SSAS.

The predominantly negative perceptions of and reactions to the SSAS found in the initial stage changed dramatically after enactment and several years' experience of the SSAS. Such change is clearly seen when participants think about and reflect on the degree and quality of autonomy they now exercise in practice. Teachers generally felt that they gained more freedom in their professional lives, found diverse positive benefits under the SSAS, and more broadly in innovation school policy. The majority of teachers said the fact that more autonomy is guaranteed within the SSAS is undisputable.

Now evaluation is more focused on education curriculum and how it is running. (Omission) Yes, in that sense there is more autonomy. There is even more in innovation schools.

(Cedar Arbour, teacher, Forest Primary)

Yes and because nothing is given to us, we need to discuss in order to do something. And this makes us get involved more and be more active. So instead of being told what to do, now we ended to discuss what we have to do.

(Maple Vale, middle leader, Forest Primary)

Both of these participant teachers from different schools seem to enjoy autonomy: Arbour feels happy with how evaluation focuses on the process of curriculum rather than result of curriculum and takes it as he is given more freedom, and Vale even finds less restriction in using such autonomy, transforming himself more active. Most of the teacher participants said that such an extended degree of autonomy that the SSAS guarantees for teachers at policy level is indeed used in their main practical jobs, such as in curriculum and lesson planning and pedagogical guidance for students. Areas for using autonomy also include creation and change of appraisal standards, creation of subject curriculum and lesson plans and practices.

[Interviewer]

So, the standards are not conclusive but can change.

[Participant]

Yes, most definitely. Based on our agreement, world café (a meeting for self-appraisal) continued. During the six months, the standards kept changing. And in that process we understood what our teachers pursue. But because we have to hand in (submit) the standards to the office of education (referring to the GOE), we eventually stopped to change them, but if there is no deadline, we would continue to change these standards.

(River Banks, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

This quote illustrates an example of how teachers exercise their autonomy in creating and updating self-made standards for the SSAS. As illustrated, they can keep changing the standards, but because they have to submit the standards to the GOE at some point, they have to draw the line and settle on something eventually, though they felt they wanted to change it further. It serves as a clear and compelling example of the positive changes that teacher autonomy can bring to in the process of teacher appraisal in frontline education. Before the introduction of the SSAS, such a situation was highly unlikely to occur, as teacher assessment based on standards was passively mandated by those in power as a means of quality assurance and accountability (Sachs, 2003), rather than actively pursued. For teachers, standards were thought to be imposed rather than earned, either by the central or local government of education. They were seen as a common means of control and a means of accountability to ensure better or minimum quality teaching, used to measure ‘consistency, reliability, safety, and, to some extent, its value for money’ (Sachs, 2003b, p. 177). This illustration is particularly significant, as it demonstrates that autonomy has been extended to a degree previously unattained by teachers in managing standards.

Moreover, it's worth noting that this quote reveals not only how teachers are involved in the teacher assessment process but also how their attitudes toward assessment have changed. Teachers are now more deeply engaged in the assessment process compared to the period before the SSAS when they were primarily meant to be evaluated, even though it is a form of self-evaluation.

Furthermore, autonomy also broadens the range of activities and decisions that teachers can undertake in delivering their lessons:

Being a small school made these decisions easier. We participate in decision-making and naturally teachers follow autonomy. For example, since we moved to google classroom, we didn't have many arguments; we just made our

classes and discussed and so on.

(River Banks, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

‘Being a small school’ is one of the initiatives created and enacted by the schoolteacher community at Water Secondary motivated and suggested by the Innovation School Policy. A small school refers to a close-knit group of teachers within the larger school community, such as a subject department or a year- group department. While such communities have existed in the past, they were not recognized as opportunities for teachers to exercise autonomy in the decision-making process for group or school-wide matters. However, in line with the decentralization of power outlined in the Innovation School Policy, decision-making rights in key areas of teaching and pedagogical guidance have been delegated to these small groups. These communities have started to flourish since the introduction of the SSAS, as it allows for an extended level of opportunities for teachers to cooperate and collaborate based upon autonomy they are given as seen in Bank’s quote above. The initiative of being a small school is a specific technique that promotes the use of autonomy which is the defining feature of the SSAS.

Many linked such autonomy with positive effects, such as the feeling of confidence, satisfaction and improvement, and, with such positive feelings, teachers started to make meaningful changes in their practical work.

The more teachers gain and use autonomy in their practices, the more they feel confident and satisfaction in control of their own practices as stated by Greenwood and Stream below:

Not because we did it as what the criteria said. It is to do with ‘let’s make the criteria, act on it and evaluate it’. If it does not go well, let’s change it a bit next time. By checking the autonomy couple of times, we would then gain some

confidence and have better understanding of what we are doing.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Now, the year group department actively makes an educational curriculum. And I think the satisfaction and growth from this is very big. There will definitely be people who take advantage of this autonomy.

(Sidney Stream, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

In the above quotes, Greenwood and Stream express increasing confidence and satisfaction with the current environment that allows them to manage and reorganize the school curriculum. In particular, as a leader of a year group overseeing more than ten homeroom teachers in Water Secondary, Stream holds the final decision-making authority regarding the curriculum setup for that year group. However, under the previous inspection system such as SI, which offered less autonomy, Stream and her colleagues were obliged to strictly adhere to the National Curriculum without much room for customisation or adaptation to the specific educational context of their school, such as socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils, despite the technical allowance for curriculum rearrangement. In this system, however, where the focus was primarily on teacher performance indicators like raising student achievement, teachers and middle leaders were reluctant to make changes as they knew their assessments and comparisons with other teachers and schools would be based on visible outcomes. As a result, they resorted to teaching to the test and adhered closely to what the textbooks prescribed. Curriculum adjustments or rearrangement based on such autonomy meant taking a risk of lowering their outputs, for example students' achievement rates for A-C in their subject teaching, compared to that of others, as such effort is likely to be not suitable for the performance indicators of other accountability measures, such as TAPD or THRSP.

However, the situation began to change with the introduction of guaranteed autonomy.

As I said earlier, I have learnt so much at this school and I feel I have developed. Just because I don't stick to textbooks doesn't mean I'm out of the achievement standards. Rather, I do not set the achievement standards and instead of teaching students with textbooks that I have not had experience in personally, teaching them with what I have planned is much more fun and I feel this is a development.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Yes, I would say so. Organizing and designing school curriculum and reflecting on it is now a basic skill teachers should have. In the past, good teachers were those who follow national curriculum well. But now I tend to think about what is best for my class, as everyone is different. I look for different ways to do this as well. By discussing more in this matter, I think my professionalism is developing.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

As observed, Stone at Water Secondary denies the positive correlation between the National curriculum, the source of the textbooks he uses, and his performance, which his old belief as a policy actor. He is now brave enough to be out of the achievement standards and confident enough that not only does he perform well, but he can also find enjoyment in teaching when he is free from textbook prescriptions. In a similar vein, Greenwood at Forest primary is also confident that anyone can handle the curriculum with different approaches from what is given from the authority. In these examples, teacher autonomy seems to enable them 'taking initiatives, acting independently and making critical inquiries' (Hargreaves et al, 2013, p.19) on what they are doing.

Interestingly, both teachers link their confidence in managing the

curriculum based upon autonomy with their sense of improvement in professional development, which is one of the topics discussed in the next part of the chapter in detail. To briefly discuss here, however, research has found that such confidence of teachers triggered by extended autonomy and observed in their practices is indeed linked to enhancement of autonomy, in particular, in Teacher Learning Communities (Earley & Porritt, 2010; Stoll et al, 2006), where autonomy plays a key role in successful Continuous Professional Development in the communities (hereafter CPD) (Wilkinson. R, 2011; Hargreaves et al, 2013). Hargreaves et al. (2013) point out that autonomy in relation to the CPD of teachers is linked to greater engagement and a sense of ownership in their progress towards self-improvement, ultimately resulting in a heightened sense of achievement and increased confidence. The quotes from both teachers more or less show that they are ‘feeling independent, taking initiatives with a critical disposition to structure’ (Ecclestone, 2002, p. 34), which is considered key components of teacher autonomy in relation to CPD (Ecclestone, 2002). They challenge the current and fixed National Curriculum and textbooks to some extent. Additionally, it should be noted that such extended autonomy is structurally and systematically supported by the Senior Leadership Teams (hereafter, SLT) in both schools and, in a broader sense, the local government at the district level, GOE, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the quotes. Both at the school and district levels, there is an atmosphere and structure that values and encourages their sense and use of autonomy in teaching and CPD. Teachers’ engagement in PLCs, as a means of developing autonomy, is highly supported in the school system and by the local educational government. SLTs are advised to act as organisers and supporters rather than supervisors and instructors. With these changes, autonomy has an impact on teachers' confidence and satisfaction, and the strengthened confidence and enhanced satisfaction in turn influences changes in their teaching practices.

Another interesting finding regarding autonomy of teachers under the SSAS is that such autonomy is mostly developed and exercised at collective level and with collective support, rather than always at individual level, thus arguably making the whole school have a common goal and consensus, as a learning organization, one of the goals of the Innovation school policy.

So, as I said before, methodological things can be varied, but even when making this evaluation criterion, we do not limit only to the name of autonomy, but what we want to achieve through that autonomy. I think it's really important that we create things that can be called for a common good or value about what we want to create.

Now, in a position where I want to lead something and lead something like this, when I see what I should do when I say that I have to play that role, a conflict of autonomy can naturally occur. Should I make a choice based on the criteria? I think there must be a clear standard, and the standard must be created by the community. I wonder if it is okay if the community chooses them. If the community does, then we shouldn't reorganise textbooks over there. If the community chooses that we just want to try it out with a focus on textbooks over there, then should we follow it again? It makes me think like this. The community chose it, the majority chose it. Also, I've come to the conclusion that it has to be worthwhile, not necessarily followed. That was a question I kept asking myself. What am I really doing this for?

(Sidney Stream, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

So I asked him why did you make me do this. And the principal said, "I will be responsible for it. Do what you can but if you make a mistake, I will be responsible for it. Don't worry. Principals are meant to be responsible." This is what I heard. So now you can guess what our school is like.

(River Banks, Middle leader, Water Secondary)



The significance of collective autonomy under the SSAS and the policy of innovation school is significantly different from other professions where individual autonomy holds a higher value in professional practices, such as law and medicine. Stream at Water Secondary points out that conflicts in decision-making may arise when using autonomy, and school communities should seek solutions when conflicts occur. This implies that the utilization of autonomy is subject to supervision and guidance by the whole school or small-group school communities, such as subject departments, and it is why such collective autonomy of teachers is directed to be exercised in school communities.

One positive aspect of extended autonomy and collective decision-making is that individual teachers can feel less responsible for final outcomes since they believe they are supported even when making mistakes. This is evident in the quote from Banks at Water Secondary.

Teacher's autonomy. Allowing teachers to make mistakes. So I was able to look after academic performance and be involved in relevant policies. I could grade someone incorrectly and if there is a problem, the committee will help me solve it. We discuss and negotiate the student's perspective and the teacher's perspective.

A good school is where autonomy is guaranteed and we can be responsible together. Most schools ask for responsibility. "Who is responsible for this?" This is the first thing they say. But I didn't hear this when I was in school.

(River Banks, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

He mentions that the head of the school explicitly assures teachers that their mistakes will not be issued, and no negative consequences will be imposed on them. Such trust in teachers from the leadership means that they can operate in an environment where only collective responsibility prevails, offering strong support for the sense of

responsibility of the SLT. This is significant because the feeling of support and safety encourages teachers to engage more passionately and energetically in enacting policies' directives.

Indeed, most teachers would not truly engage in a policy if they were held solely responsible for negative outcomes or results during the policy enactment process. However, under the SSAS, responsibilisation appears to be placed on the school community, or leaderships, as a whole rather than on individual teachers, creating a sense of safety and encouraging active exercise of autonomy. Such removal of individual responsibilisation and promotion of collective responsibilisation make teachers engage more in the policy and its enactment.

In addition and more importantly, with regards to extended collective autonomy, a culture emerges among teachers to interpret or resist policy mandates or initiatives that are simply handed down from the government or educational authorities, particularly when the values or beliefs underlying the policy are not aligned with those of the school or the teachers themselves.

So instead of just going for it just because the education office said so, if we didn't find it suitable for us we said "no", the manager respected us and took it and passed it on. So I find this culture quite new and good. This goes for not just policies but classes as well.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Stone's reaction, willing to say "no" when the school community think differently from that of the government, is something that was not commonly seen in the past when they were more or less compelled to enact policies regardless of their purpose or goals. Teachers often assumed a passive role as policy actors when policies were imposed without their consent but with high level of individual

responsibility. However, in a culture of collective responsibility, individual teachers are more likely to choose to become policy translators and entrepreneurs who actively engage with the intended goals of the policy, utilizing their autonomy in the safer policy environment.

However, despite the guaranteed autonomy, not every teacher is fully using that freedom in their work, which can be attributed to various personal and school-related factors as stated in the following quotes:

I guess this is a personal preference. But I haven't lived a life of autonomy like this, so even when I was in school, I did what the teacher or the school told me to do, and it's a bit difficult for me to just go around like this and just do it. Yes, I think moving within a set frame like this is also stable. That's because I'm more comfortable. However, there is something about my experience in college, and after living in high school like that, when I entered college right away. But I couldn't enjoy that freedom, so I think my identity was shaken even then.

(Cliff Summit, Middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

Summit's testimony indicates that personal factors, such as previous life experiences, can influence how teachers exercise their autonomy. Furthermore, school-related factors, including concerns about certainty, the degree of teacher engagement, and the validity or outcomes of autonomous professional practices, can also impact teachers' willingness to embrace and utilize their autonomy.

So far, I have examined diverse teachers' responses, effects and consequences regarding autonomy under the SSAS. One main conclusion found across all participants in all participating innovation schools is that greater autonomy is allowed and assured in several of the key tasks of teachers when compared to the past, both at individual and collective level. I strongly argue that this is a

noticeable change in the political technology of government from panoptic disciplinary mechanisms which emphasises change in the body and behaviour, to post-panoptic mechanisms of governmentality which emphasises change in the soul and mind as well as the body. Interestingly, this particular technology of autonomy doesn't eradicate observation, examination and judgement, all of which are the techniques of government in the disciplinary mechanism. As having been presented in earlier quotes, teachers are still observed, examined and judged by criteria and standards, but the difference from the past is that they are created by themselves. Thus, gaze, surveillance, accountability and control are still there but dressed in autonomy to make teachers feel they are diminished and even disappeared and feel much more comfortable. Indeed, thanks to such feeling, it has resulted in diverse positive effects, such as greater engagement in creating curriculums and lesson plans, changes in their teaching and pedagogical practice towards the right direction they aim for, and heightened confidence and lessened individual risk-taking, though there are variations in terms of extent and how they use it between schools and individuals, according to the individuals or context of schools' readiness and culture, as seen in the data. In terms of risk-taking, being less reliant on i.e. the National Curriculum materials could be a good example of risk taking. That is, feeling able to take risks could be a true outcome of extended autonomy. Autonomy is another technology of governmentality in this sense, the self-gaze, making the culture of accountability even more complicated and the surveillance become more invisible and maldistributed.

This is why it is crucial to further address the matter of whether teachers are genuinely freer as professionals under the policy of the SSAS, which guarantees greater autonomy without obvious external control, though many teachers express that they experience greater autonomy and perceive changes in their professional lives. However, answering this question is challenging as it is closely tied to the nature and function of autonomy within the context of the self-

appraisal system. That is, under the context of the SSAS and innovation schools more broadly, it is still arguable whether the autonomy provided is a political technology for shaping a political self, which is in line with the concept of the death of the subject (Foucault, 1970) that implies subjectivity is mere a product of political artefacts, or a means for moulding a political self or a capability for critical self-transformation for a professional (Allen, 2011). That is, Foucault argues that subjectivity—the sense of self and agency—is not an inherent quality of individuals but rather a product of external political and institutional forces. Autonomy, from this perspective, functions as a political technology, a mechanism used by those in power to shape individuals into politically compliant subjects. Though people may perceive themselves as autonomous, their thoughts, actions, and identities are deeply influenced by the governing systems around them. In educational settings, this means that autonomy is not truly liberating. Schools, under the guise of providing freedom, actually use autonomy as a tool for creating individuals who conform to specific social and political norms. As a result, teachers may believe they are exercising free will, but their choices are ultimately shaped by the power dynamics embedded within the system. Foucault's view suggests that autonomy is illusory, reinforcing the status quo rather than offering genuine freedom or self-determination. In contrast, Allen's interpretation of autonomy emphasises its potential as a vehicle for critical self-transformation. Rather than being a tool for political control, autonomy in this view allows individuals to engage in critical reflection and actively challenge the structures that shape them. Autonomy provides the space for individuals, particularly professionals like educators, to reflect on their practices and identities, and to enact meaningful change in their personal and professional lives. In the context of education, autonomy offers opportunities for teachers to transcend the constraints of institutional power by fostering self-awareness and critical thinking. Allen's perspective asserts that autonomy can be a

powerful force for personal growth and professional development, enabling individuals to not only reflect on the limitations imposed by their environment but also to actively reshape their identities in ways that challenge existing norms.

Thus, the central difference between Foucault's and Allen's views lies in their interpretation of autonomy's function. Foucault sees autonomy as a form of control, a subtle mechanism for reinforcing political and institutional power, leading individuals to conform to prescribed roles. Autonomy, in this sense, is deceptive, giving the appearance of freedom while maintaining the dominance of established power structures. On the other hand, Allen argues that autonomy can serve as a means of empowerment, encouraging individuals to critically examine their roles and transform themselves in meaningful ways. For Allen, autonomy is not merely a product of external forces but a capacity for self-reflection and change, offering professionals the ability to challenge and redefine the norms imposed on them.

The debate over autonomy as political technology versus a tool for critical self-transformation reflects deeper questions about the nature of subjectivity and freedom within educational and political systems. While Foucault's critique emphasises the pervasive influence of power in shaping individuals, Allen's more optimistic view highlights the potential for autonomy to foster critical engagement and personal growth. Understanding these perspectives helps to illuminate the ongoing tension between control and empowerment in the discourse surrounding autonomy in education.

Indeed, the issue is of great significance, particularly considering the SSAS as a new means of accountability measures that have the potential to govern the teaching population as a whole. Understanding the underlying motives and implications of such measures is crucial in assessing the extent of control and the ways of governmentality within the system.

This issue is very closely intertwined with the topic of surveillance and accountability, as these factors play a crucial role in the nature of political and governmental control. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the extent to which teachers' professional freedom is upheld and how it operates in relation to control, it is essential to delve deeper into the examination of the degree and methods of surveillance and accountability within the framework of the SSAS. By analysing these aspects based on the available data, we can shed light on the dynamics between professional autonomy and the mechanisms of control within the system.

### **6.3. Greater Surveillance**

#### **6.3.1. Shift towards autonomous self-surveillance**

Teachers have expressed that, due to the nature of the SSAS, they feel a sense of freedom from being constantly scrutinized, criticized, or held accountable for their actions. This perception may stem from the absence of a pervasive, visible external gaze that constantly monitors their every move. Instead, it requires teachers to be self-governed by self-made criteria and standards for self-assessment with strong support of policy context whereby teachers are encouraged to be autonomous. The shift towards self-governance via such self-appraisal and greater autonomy within the SSAS may create a sense of liberation from the fear of being singled out or accused of wrongdoing. However, it is important to examine whether this perceived freedom aligns with the evolved ways of surveillance and accountability present within the overall accountability system.

Indeed, within the context of accountability where the SSAS is used as a primary and chief method of appraisal, many of the traditional audit systems, such as external inspection from inspectors, turns into a kind of support, and both the external gaze from the educational authorities and internal gaze from the school leadership or even

colleagues appear non-threatening.

There is a system called 'homeroom-school supervision'. Homeroom school supervisors are inspectors from local office of education. And in general there is an inspector in charge in 25 regional offices of education. We share and guide things like how things are going etc with people in charge of school assessment. We don't use the term 'guideline' anymore and have training through a guidebook. And with those from the training, regional offices of education have training with schools too.

(Clay Sands, Former inspector)

Moreover, in the past it wasn't like consulting. Right now, there is good communication between school commissioner and the school. They visit the school regularly and consultation before evaluation is allowed. I think, it literally enforced the meaning of educational support. Compared to the past. Now I feel like I am actually receiving support from those that I felt like watchdogs. Those who are evaluating come to consult us beforehand as well, so there is a reduction in evaluation burden.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Such sudden and perceptible changes in the approach and the ways of surveillance and attitude of inspectors can be explained in policy terms by the fact that there is no longer compulsory regular inspection from the GOE, and inspectors have been rebranded as 'consultants', creating a perception of support rather than judgment among teachers, thus we identify another significant change in political and governmental technology, from judgement to support. As indicated in the quotes above, teachers are naturally prompted to reflect on past experiences of being subjected to strict disciplinary control and compare them to the current mode of surveillance, which involves receiving supportive consultations. This shift is seen as a blessing or,



at the very least, a significant improvement from previous practices.

However, as reiterated in the end of the previous section, does this necessarily mean the disappearance of gaze, surveillance and controlling power? I argue that under the SSAS, surveillance is diffuse and takes on different and indirect forms and approaches, maintaining the same or even greater level of scrutiny. In particular, the modes of surveillance have shifted towards a new and evolved approach or technology that places emphasis on ‘Autonomous Self-Surveillance’, encompassing all kinds of self-practices, such as self-reflection and self-inspection within the self-appraisal system which emphasises autonomous engagement of teachers and the pre-existing accountability measures. This is different from the internalisation of surveillance that is typical of more traditional disciplinary and governmental technologies in a sense that it is less likely to make subjects feel they are overlooked, disciplined thus end up being controlled. Rather, teachers initially feel free and comfortable in the new appraisal atmosphere, but they are exposed to the techniques of control that enables them to internalise the self-made standards, such as consultation seen in the quotes of Sands and Arbour, which is democratic but still another means of scrutiny, to make them believe that they must be more responsible and accountable for their education which is based upon their own autonomy in the freer system. This leads to natural reflection of themselves and their thought and behaviour for becoming more responsible and accountable.

When such actions aiming for self-surveillance combines with autonomy guaranteed and encouraged in the SSAS, this could be named as ‘Autonomous Self-Surveillance’, a new and key political technology of contemporary governmentality underpinned in the SSAS. Thus, various forms of autonomous self-surveillance have been introduced, adopted, and emphasized under the SSAS by school leadership and the GOE. These practices are practically enacted by teachers autonomously using diverse techniques to improve their

practices and self-assessment. These techniques primarily involve the technology of the self based on self-set appraisal standards, as well as activities such as professional learning communities, being named such as world cafés, lesson evaluation workshops, Great Debates held at the end of each term to facilitate discussion and self-appraisal, and teacher training, among others, some of which will be discussed in detail below. Under the policy the activity of autonomous self-surveillance became a norm amongst teachers.

[Interviewer]

So will you consider these self-appraisal standards for the next six months or so?

[Participant]

Yes, of course. I plan and conduct my projects based on these appraisal systems including the lower system as well. In this sense, it is like homework that we always need to work on and put it up on a post-it. We don't literally write it on a post-it but this system is always something we think we need to do.

(Sidney Stream, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Every time I start a project in my lesson, I conduct a survey before and after it, to see how students are satisfactory with it. I repeat surveys and self-evaluations and this is linked to the self-appraisal system.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Here, we clearly observe a system in which frontline teachers are involved in continuous self-directed assessment and evaluation. They are making efforts to systematise this self-evaluation activity, as indicated by the consistent use of reminders, such as post-it notes as in the case of Stream in Water Secondary and lesson surveys as in the case of Arbour in Forest Primary. This process can be viewed as a means of normalizing self-examination of their performance in their

daily tasks.

The former principal mentioned that they want each and every teacher to be the owner of the school and one by one, they will participate more. Even if not all 100 people participate, and only one person participates, they will be content. And by doing so, I understood how I can participate and how I am actually acting on it. I am not good at this or I could work more on this. Specifically, if I look at myself using the self-appraisal system, it is possible.

(River Banks, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

In a similar vein, Banks at Water Secondary is making a conscious effort to internalise the practice of self-appraisal in his daily school life. Notably, he feels compelled to actively engage in school activities and policies, and this commitment is further encouraged by the promotion of a sense of ownership, which can be cultivated through self-assessment.

Before moving into the key discussions and arguments on the autonomous self-surveillance, as a political technology in the SSAS, it is worth considering where such ideas came from in the broader social and political context. I see that the policy of schools' self-appraisal is placed within the context of contemporary liberal democracy in 'late modernity' (Beck, 1992). What is central to 'late modernity', though there could be multiple interpretations and key assumptions, such as a focus on various 'risks' that we face in contemporary world such as climate change, is the emphasis on 'reflexivity' of individuals and collectives, meaning the ability of people to reflect upon or examine what they have done in their lives, including professional ones, for making potential changes or amendment on what they think and do. The concept of reflexivity is particularly relevant in the context of the SSAS, as it strongly encourages teachers to reflect on their own teaching and pedagogical

practices and make necessary adjustments for further improvement. It also places emphasis on the importance of continuous learning and professional development, which is a key aspect of the self-appraisal process. With such a manner, 'training becomes self-improvement, judgement become advice, and teachers become a reflective practitioner' (Perryman et al, 2017, p. 753). This is obviously in line with what neo-liberalism has reiterated in terms of individual ability to look after themselves. In such a culture of neo-liberalism within late modernity, general population is featured by incomppliance of bureaucratic, hierarchical, and coercive social control thus inability to be effectively controlled by traditional or conventional approaches of power exertion, control, and intervention of traditional mode of power, such as sovereignty or authoritarian governmentality.

Rather, they are 'individuals who appeal to the rights and liberties of individuals, the self-determining individuals' (Dean, 2011, p. 192), 'who calculates the best means of providing security for themselves and seeks to optimize his or her independence from others and from the state' (Dean, 2011, p. 221). This is what Foucault called 'practices of the self'. Therefore, a new bespoke approach to government that tailors the characteristics of the free subjects and administers the practices of the self is required, and this is why the concept of reflexivity as a political means of control becomes central in a new mode of government. In this sense, Dean (2011) said that such 'government through processes is increasingly displaced by a 'government of government, a reflexive government' (p. 175), from which the technology of reflexivity or the self stems. To further illustrate this, Dean (2010) argues a new form of government is based on reflexivity and self-regulation, rather than external controls imposed by the state which was the feature of the traditional modes of government. This means that individuals and collectives are encouraged to reflect on their own behaviour, to identify potential risks or problems, and to take steps to address them. In this way, the power is able to govern indirectly, by encouraging citizens to regulate

themselves. With the understanding of the broader social and political context on governmentality in which the policy packages of innovation school, including the schools' self-appraisal, are placed, I argue that one of the central technologies of the contemporary governmentality is the autonomous self-surveillance rooted in reflexivity.

### **6.3.2. The Great Debate as a locus of autonomous self-surveillance**

To thoroughly discuss the issue of autonomous self-surveillance inscribed in the SSAS, I would like to draw on and investigate how the three key techniques being operated in the policy for effective control of the teachers are being conducted by teachers. They are the Great Debate, the standard setup, and the professional learning communities.

In most schools under the control of GOE, the school's self-appraisal begins with thorough self-examination and reflection on the previous academic year before a new academic year begins. Usually, at some point near the end of the previous academic year, which is usually January or February, all staff are invited to a whole school workshop, which is usually named the 'Great Debate', to review what has been done throughout the academic year in the school and to create the self-appraisal standards of the next academic year.

According to the guidance booklets for school's self-appraisal (GOE, 2019, 2020b), such workshops were introduced as the first step and a scaffolding to devise up-to-date standards of appraisal for the following year and as a grand meeting where the result of the previous year's self-appraisal is brought, shared, reviewed, and used for the constitution of the new standards. The Great Debate is an important annual event that occurs at the end of each academic year for individual and collective reflection of teaching, pedagogy,

curriculum management, administration and much more in schools under the GOE.

To make plans, schools refer to the self-assessment of the previous year, which they had to get done legally (meaning statutory). And then each education community has a discussion and assesses outcomes and suggests opinions on how it could be done better next time.

Once assessment is done, it is not over and not only recognising things that are good but then okay so what next? is also important. So once assessment is done, members have a discussion and consensus is not just reached by them, it goes through the Great Debate. In the Great Debate, we talk about things like our school had self-assessment, there were points like this, we want to focus on something this year and we can push it forward, something will be of help in this and can improve that this way.

(Terra Field, Current policy-maker and a former teacher & Inspector, GOE)

Here, the policy-maker reflects on the time he was a teacher and describes the Great Debate which he experienced. As he suggests, it is a meeting for improvement, the self-appraisal of the coming academic year, and what the school community regard as better education.

Some schools host the meetings once every academic term, thus multiple times in a year. It means they take place in the middle of an academic year to check where they are by looking back to the first half to see how well they have met their self-made standards.

Usually, we would do it (the Great Debate) by semester. Semester reflection meetings will happen each semester.

(Maple Vale, Manager of a year group, Forest Primary)

We did this (the Great Debate) in July over three days. We talked about the education curriculum and curriculum of each year group. We also discussed it in a Q&A format on any new suggestions or questions. Now in September, December and November, because it has been focused on teachers till now, we will also include other members of the school community like students and parents. And we will discuss and reflect the yearly plans and find a new direction together.

(Logan Leaf, Middle manager, Blue Primary)

Korean schools have two academic terms: the first term usually begins in March and ends in late July and the second term usually begins at the end of August and ends in the beginning of January. As stated in the quote of Vale, the Primary purpose of the debate is to reflect on their educational services and provision, and it means that the meeting functions as a monitoring and surveillance mechanism in the middle and the end of the academic year as it takes place at the end of each term. As shown in the later part of Leaf's quote, in the debate, all kinds of policy actors are present, such as teachers, administrators, and school leadership, making the practices and outcomes of a whole year at both the collective and individual level an object of public criticism or compliment. This meeting is also discursive as it aims to discuss other policies clustered together with self-appraisal, such as the school-driven comprehensive inspection, along with reviewing the policy of innovation school, and interconnected micro policies related to teacher practices, such as the policy of staff's code of conduct.

However, particularly in the first half of the debate, the majority of time is spent on self-inspection or 'self-regret'. The central focus of the debate is on making individuals and the collective as subjects or parties who are inherently incomplete, insufficient, and inadequate, thus requiring never-ending improvement.

Certainly, it seems important to extract tasks through reflection on previous matters in December. So, around February, through a workshop with the principals, after systematizing it, around the end of February, it seems that we need to provide more guidance on new teachers and the four teachers who have just arrived.

(Logan Leaf, Middle manager, Forest Primary)

Previous audit felt like someone coming over, doing some monitoring, making an assessment, making a suggestion, but this autonomous and self-led comprehensive audit (the SSAS) now, as those who do it know what our school is like and how it works in our school, dig up ourselves even deeper and improves so it is more suitable for development.

(Sierra Peak, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

In that case, I think as a result it is better to follow what the school requests or school's goals. But in order to act that way, I need to be busier and work harder... And in those situations sometimes I find myself not diligent enough to keep up.

(Reed Lake, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

In both quotes from Leaf in Forest Primary and Lake in Mountain Secondary, they recognise the importance of self-reflection and self-regret. Specifically, Lake in Water Secondary sees the SSAS as an opportunity to identify areas for further improvement, indicating that she engages in the activity of self-regret, which is a confessional scrutinization, for the need for personal development. Additionally, she feels the necessity to be a diligent worker, striving to meet the requirements set by the SSAS. These recognitions of oneself as inherently incomplete, insufficient, and sometimes inadequate suggest that the Great Debate and the SSAS guide teachers toward a self-critical mindset, ultimately leading to autonomous and constant self-surveillance via self-reflection and self-regret.

Then, in the later part of the debate, after such time of self-criticism,



the main attention and majority of time is placed on how well the school community as a collective have achieved the standard of the self-appraisal of the concurrent year and how the school community updates the standards for the following year. Here, peer-criticism and criticism from external members are employed as seen in the quote below.

And just this November, December, in the education evaluation meeting (the Great Debate), we need to be evaluated if we have been doing this well or not. In the past, it was the office of education evaluating us but now it is the entire school members evaluating us. So if I say we did this this year, some teachers may agree or some might say, “you didn't actually do it”. I think this is more scary. (Omission) we will also include other members of the school community like students and parents. And we will discuss and reflect the yearly plans and find a new direction together.

(Reed Lake, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

Here, Lake specifically describes how scary the peer-criticism goes in a sense that he could be displayed as a hypocrite to his colleagues. I argue that such peer-criticism is a very strong political technique to regulate oneself, leading to stronger self-surveillance, as it can create fear and sense of regret and guilt in front of the colleagues who know the person and how his works go. He also pointed out that other member of school community, such as parents can join the meeting. Though he didn't mention about pressure from them, it could be assumed that external pressure could work on the meeting for better education and performance, if it is considered that parents can play an important role in holding teachers to a high level of accountability.

Such peer-criticism and potential criticism from external members employed in the technique of the Great Debate eventually foster autonomous self-surveillance of a teacher. Through this process, teachers even examine their consciousness and experience feelings of

guilt. Lake further illustrates this:

That's right, it's much bigger. When it was an external evaluation, If I didn't do it and I didn't enact it. Yes, then, okay I will take the sanction. After receiving disciplinary action for that part, it's just the end. Yes, but now, these internal evaluations are conducted internally. Yes, disciplinary actions or disadvantages don't exist, but there's a conscience aspect, and...

Yes, there will likely be more burden on the conscience aspects. Yes, the shame is much more significant. When externally evaluated and it's said that I didn't do it, the shame felt in that situation, and the shame that comes when internally, we decided to do this, but I didn't do it due to laziness or various reasons, that shame is considerably greater. Especially since we have to continue living together as members of the same community.

(Reed Lake, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

Lake continues to express that he feels greater and more significant personal shame from the heart when he is identified as failing against the self-set standard in the Great Debate. I believe that such feelings come not only from criticisms they receive from others, including peers, but also from self-surveillance against the standards they set up on their own. These are examples of how several different forms of criticism operate within the political technique of the Great Debate.

I point out that this kind of public scrutiny and criticism in the democratic atmosphere of Great Debate, reminds us of the exercise of sovereign power in feudal monarchies to some extent. Though scrutiny is delivered in a polite manner and criticism is provided in a gentle way in the Great Debate, teachers are still in the centre of accusation on an open stage surrounded by colleagues and external member of the school community, just as described in the case of public execution of Robert-François Damiens in discipline and punish

by Foucault (1995). This implies that the way the Great Debate operates is fundamentally not strikingly different from the activity of convict and execution in a feudal era and thus we observe an unchanging rationale of political control between sovereign power of past time and the modern governmentality. It could be even argued that the Great Debate is an evolution of the 'spectacle' and 'spectacular' as a way of control using force and authority.

However, one defining characteristic or function of these workshops is that knowledge about various aspects of education is shaped and diffused by the discourses and ideas imposed by powerful groups, such as school leadership or the GOE, and particular behaviour and identity reformation as a consequence of the internalisation of the knowledge is highly encouraged and praised. In this sense, invisible power is observed in the form of the dominant educational discourse and policy, creating a 'certain economy of discourses of truth' (Foucault, 1980, p. 93). Stone's quotes below suggests that he has internalised such discourses and tries to change himself.

I work for the Gyeonggi Province Office of Education, and of course, there are so many policies there that I can't fully comprehend. However, in recent times, the emphasis on autonomy and self-governance is something I naturally consider to be right. From our school's perspective, I am naturally accepting and following along with it. Rather than just following, we consider whether what we are doing aligns with it.

There may be various aspects, but I believe that teachers need to engage in profound contemplation. Contemplating about students, reflecting on Gyeonggi Province Office of Education policies, pondering about the era, and contemplating about society – a teacher should continuously reflect on what is truly needed for the children living in this era.

(Brooke Stone, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

The above quotes explicitly demonstrate that Stone in Water Secondary has embraced the discourse of autonomy, self-governance, and self-reflection as something to keep in mind and pursue for better education, as defined by the GOE. Although these discourses could have been discussed and diffused in various political apparatuses, there is no doubt that the Great Debate was one of them, given the greater emphasis placed on it.

For further instance, the discourse of democracy is currently emphasized by the GOE in the management of schools, including approaches in offering care for children. For example, the notion of ‘good pastoral care’ is influenced by the discourse or idea of ‘democratic pastoral care’ or ‘restorative pastoral care’ for students. In the context of Korean innovation schools, democratic pastoral care typically refers to an educational approach emphasizing the involvement of students, teachers, and other stakeholders in the decision-making process related to pastoral care and student well-being, especially in cases of conflicts between students and teachers. This approach aims to create a school environment where students have a voice, actively participate in shaping policies and practices affecting their daily lives. Consequently, it includes students in discussions about school policies, fosters a sense of community, encourages open communication between students and educators, and provides opportunities for restoration when a student faces trouble due to violations of school rules or conflicts with friends or teachers. This concept is consistently promoted by the GOE as one of the four major goals of the central state government, with limited attention to the diverse institutional contexts of individual schools.

Because teachers are very autonomous and voluntary in this school, if certain parts scored low in the self-appraisal, teachers would have meetings to make up for it. In my memory, we had the lowest score in the student union

(implying that democratic pastoral care was unsatisfactory and unsuccessful towards the relevant standards). We would discuss what we can do, what we should focus on next year and so on.

(Sidney Stream, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

Yes yes yes. how much the school has democratic organizational structures? To see how much the human rights of students and teachers are guaranteed, how much restorative pastoral education is provided, how creatively these parts are in the curriculum, and finally, to give teachers professionalism, transfer majors how much is being activated.

So, now with that, we set up evaluation indicators. For example, in our school, we set the goal of this year's plan to really increase the teachers' competencies of restorative life education this year. If we have the capacity for life education, then we can say what we have. How many times of training will this capacity be improved, or how many times per month does the club on restorative pastoral care should take place? The goal (standard) has been created.

(Clay Sands, Former policy-maker & Inspector of GOE, as well as the current head of Water Secondary)

These two quotes, coming from the teachers in Water Secondary, indicate a concern about underperformance in running the student union in the school, as expressed in Stream's quote. This concern has led to increased attention on the competency of teachers in 'restorative life,' which is a core competency for 'democratic pastoral care.' This focus has resulted in the establishment of standards for a particular approach to caring for children in the end. While it is evident that democratic pastoral care is not the only or necessarily the best way to look after children's school life, and the approach to offering care may vary depending on the context of each school, the lack of a democratic approach in pastoral care is suggested and emphasized by the GOE. Consequently, it has become a dominant discourse, and schools are keen to adhere to it and teachers have been influenced by

it in their practices accompanying self-surveillance.

Another discourse that the tactics bring policy actors to is the discourse of ‘improvement’, both of individuals and the collective. Improvement is one of the key and common languages that is distinctly carved in the policy texts and therefore forms a particular discourse in the self-appraisal system, as Park clearly argues:

To improve, it can be done by others' help or you can improve on your own. So for the purpose of school assessment, school's improvement means improvement of school as well as school members. Our aim now is to develop together by supporting improvement. To improve together, the most important thing is to be done on your own. So when you learnt something yourself, let's say our school's problems, members know better than anyone else. It will be different from the viewpoint of outsiders. And then members are aware of, more than anything else, what our school is good at, its strengths and weaknesses, and being able to find them out is important.

(Clay Sands, Current policy-maker & Inspector, GOE)

‘Improvement’ in this context does not simply refer to upskilling individuals or collectives, nor is it exclusively related to their professional skill sets or specialities. Instead, it involves the development of specific ways of thinking, behaving, and practicing in the context of the policy. In the school's self-appraisal, individuals and schools are recognized as ‘improving’ only when they adhere to the four major policy goals, such as democratic leadership and pastoral care, and serve as a model for them by being innovative. In other words, innovation is measured by how well a school embodies and enacts these policy ideas.

Through improvement, as we improve, we have policy of innovation (school). So schools open autonomically share things with each other and a democratic operating system can

take place. And then the school curriculum could be innovative and led by school, supporting bodies like administration office could assist all this to make everything in school work smoothly. Everyone can support each other, make them happy which makes a good environment in school and school assessment is taking place.

(Clay Sands, Current policy-maker & Inspector, GOE)

As stated above in Sands' quote, such a discourse of improvement emphasised in school appraisal is systematically shared and circulated amongst schools, along with support from the GOE. Improvement in the particular way towards the goals of GOE is blueprinted by the authority and widely shared and accepted by their teachers. It urges schools and teachers to improve via mutual support and encouragement. Then, although it may appear superficial to some, 'it becomes difficult to think in any other terms' (Bottery, 2000, p.53). In this way of hierarchical and horizontal repetition and reproduction of discourses in the beginning of an academic year, via such mechanism using diverse techniques, such as the Great Debate, CPDs and appraisal standards, which are interwoven and work together, particular discourses that restrict and guide individuals and the collective towards specific knowledge are formed, developed, and become prevalent. Policy discourses permeate into the policy enactment and become knowledge. Such knowledge is internalised in the mindset of individuals and become the standards for autonomous self-surveillance and self-inspection to tell what is good or wrong.

Overall, the 'Great Debate' serves as a crucial locus where autonomous self-directed governing activities takes place. Also, it serves as a crucial annual event that contributes to the ongoing development and settlement of certain discourses that become standards, norms and knowledge within the individuals and school community. In the Great Debate, several key political strategies, such as criticisms from the self, peer and others, are operated to enact such

discourses and the appraisal standards of the year are established, reminded and checked. Thus, the Great Debate is a crucial moment when the political technology of autonomous self-surveillance embedded in the idea of Great Debate is put in place in the form of specific school policies. These political strategies interact with each other discursively to create an environment where technologies of government, both typically invented by school communities and given by the central power, can play their roles in effective control. However, this is not always straightforward but rather complicated and messy, as they are mixed and interwoven with other governmental technologies around accountability such as TAPD, PBIS, THRSP or SDCI.

### **6.3.3. The standards set-up**

From February to March, or in the beginning of April, schools try to set up the standards for self-appraisal and enact the policy amidst the dynamics of different forces. First, schools receive updated policy texts of the SSAS, such as the scheme of work or official guidance, which provide several ways of setting up the standards or referencing other appraisal or evaluation standards, such as those in the TAPD or the SDCI. The guidance also includes best examples of 'good schools' and several prescribed and mandated steps related to overall procedures of the scheme. Although it doesn't directly specify specific standards, the guidance is sufficient to indirectly steer or prompt what should be mainly self-inspected during the appraisal.

Prompted by such policy texts and mandates, schools should make up the committee for the school's self-appraisal and create an action plan with evaluation areas and standards being specified, usually in the form of quantitative and/or qualitative questions. At this point, we see different 'contextualized policy responses' (Lupton, 2004) of schools depending on the contextual dimensions that they have or face. That is, the committees employ different approaches for enactment of the



accountability policy depending on the different resource environment of schools.

It's interesting to see how contextual factors can impact the enactment of policy and the responses of schools to accountability measures. Schools with larger student populations may have a more difficult time incorporating input from all stakeholders in the self-appraisal process, whereas smaller schools may be more open to input from parents and other members of the school community. For example, in terms of material contexts, the Mountain Secondary school has a relatively large student intake - 1066 students enrolled in 2023 - and a large number of teachers - 76 teachers in 2023. It is also located in the urban city centre. In contrast, the Sky Primary school currently has only 45 students and 11 teachers in a rural area at the margin of Gyeonggi-do. This means that in the Mountain Secondary school it is more difficult to listen to what the different members or groups of the school say about the self-appraisal when planning and setting up the criteria, simply because there are too many people involved. On the other hand, if the committee is willing to, the Sky Primary school is more likely to pay attention to what different members or groups of the school say on how the school should be evaluated.

Moreover, school leadership plays a key role in employing approaches to the appraisal. Whether or not the leadership and its ethos are more in line with that of GOE, or whether they are willing to do the policy or pretending to do the policy, could affect the range, depth, and intensity in setting up appraisal standards and their application. For example, the current school head in Water Secondary, who was appointed in March 2020, was a former policymaker as well as an inspector at GOE. Thus, the school community is more likely to adhere to the policy in line with what GOE wants under her leadership, although not every single individual complies with the leadership. This means the school leadership team is more willing to adhere to what GOE introduced in the guidebook for self-appraisal while planning and creating the standards.

In contrast, Forest Primary has a relatively new school head who was appointed in March 2021, and a deputy head who was appointed in September 2021. The new leadership team had a problem binding teachers together as a unity in terms of ethos and aims, which may have affected the initial stages of self-appraisal in that year, which was the year of my data collection. There were additional different factors and circumstances that should be taken into account, so partly as a result of such independence, the school decided more or less to use the same standards given in the exemplars from the GOE, without much consultation with the school community in meetings and discussions.

Both the principal and vice principal are new this year. (Omission) we are not close as a group and we are like a decentralized independent group. We thought about letting those in charge just choose the standards instead of holding meetings about it.

(Logan Leaf, Middle manager, Forest Primary)

Then, on top of these dynamics, despite variations, the central control tower, the GOE, intervenes with various techniques that more or less guide to a particular direction, such as teacher training and school consulting, literally called ‘homeroom-school inspection’, as discussed in the earlier part of the chapter. One way they do this is by providing teacher training and consulting services to schools. These training sessions and consulting visits are designed to provide guidance and support to schools as they work to enact policies and improve their performance. The ‘homeroom-school inspections’ are essentially audits of schools' performance against the standards set by the GOE. These forms of loose inspections are told to identify areas where schools may need additional support or resources, but one of the Primary purposes of them is to monitor the effectiveness of its policies. Overall, the interventions of the central control tower can

have a significant impact on how schools approach self-appraisal.

Through such hierarchical guidance, consultation, and training from inspectors, particular policy actors are created, including what Ball *et al.* (2012, p.47) call ‘narrators’ and ‘translators’. Narrators initially interpret policy in relation to their specific contexts, recipients, and cultures. They are usually middle leaders or deputy heads, who are responsible for enacting self-appraisal policy in schools. Then, translators decode policy texts, create meanings that relate smaller institutional priorities and possibilities to political necessities, and develop strategies and tactics for successful policy enactment. Many of these actors are not familiar with the policy, for example, as Park testified in Red Secondary in chapter one: "When I first heard about it, I just had no clue of what to do. I felt like I needed to make something out of nothing." The central government's techniques of systematic and intentional guidance, consultation, support, coaching, observation, monitoring, and training interfere and encourage these actors to form a sense of ownership of the policy ideas within them.

In February, they started training for the vice-principal and the head of school evaluation. There are probably several ways to do your training and then come up with a formula that selects several evaluation indicators.

(Clay Sands, Former policy-maker & Inspector, GOE)

Ah, the sense of ownership, our former principal liked this word.

The former principal mentioned that they want each and every teacher to be the owner of the school and one by one, they will participate more. Even if not all 100 people participate, and only one person participates, they will be content. So in that perspective, it was an opportunity to see without any plan, what this school's culture is.

And by doing so, I understood how I can participate and how I am actually acting on it. I am not good at this or I could work

more on this. Specifically, if I look at myself using a self-appraisal system, it is possible. But to compare, if I look at the office of education's previous system, I cannot really see if I am acting on my plans. So my identity will be confusing. So I think this is definitely an advantage.

(River Banks, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Such a complex mixture of techniques and tactics in the stage of standards set-up aims for comfort, obedient compliance and productive engagement of the frontline actors having ownership in the policy, as stated in the quote of Banks above. This will eventually lead them to produce their own version of policy texts, training programmes, continuous professional development courses, changes in structures, roles, and relationships, as well as identifying and allocating posts of responsibility and resources (Ball *et al.*, 2012). These setups and programmes provide a solid foundation for the policy to thrive and become familiar and non-problematic for individuals.

#### **6.3.4. The Professional Learning Communities**

Once the standards for the year are set up, a wider range of technical ways or tactics are followed for effective and successful enactment of the SSAS, and for better control. One of the most commonly and widely used techniques of control, strongly suggested by the GOE, is the use of 'professional learning communities' or 'teacher learning communities' (Hord, 1997; Seo, 2009). With multiple different names in different LEAs in South Korea, the idea of PLCs aims for smaller school communities focused on collective learning and continuing professional development (CPD) within a school. This idea of regular small discussion groups of teachers in the context of the SSAS and innovation school plays a central role in making teachers more involved in the activity of autonomous self-surveillance in the self-

appraisal scheme and enhancing control over them, while letting teachers believe that they exercise their own autonomy and agency in the PLCs.

The PLCs are a relatively new concept of teacher community, based upon teachers' agency and autonomy, although similar ideas such as 'learning groups' and 'teacher communities for exploration' (Kwak, 2017) have been operationalized in communities of teachers in S. Korea. This means that the PLCs have stemmed from voluntary, autonomous, and independent endeavours of teachers to form a group where they can update, develop, and share their professional knowledge and experience on their own. In this sense, at the initial stage, the PLCs were basically bottom-up voluntary organizations that were not officially registered and supported by the authorities, thus with no-relation to control. However, they have since been institutionalized and incorporated into the CPD schemes of many local educational authorities in South Korea ever since the introduction to the SSAS and innovation school. The institutionalization of PLCs began with the reform of Namhansan Primary, which was registered with the GOE. The success of Namhansan Primary's PLCs was widely recognized as a desirable case, particularly in response to criticisms of neoliberal and market-based education policies pursued by the government since the 5.31 education reform (Seo, 2015; Lee and Kim, 2020). The statutory adoption of PLCs was in line with the innovation school policy of many local educational authorities, including the two largest ones, Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education and GOE.

The statutory PLCs are defined by the GOE as 'a community activity where teachers develop lessons, act together, and improve themselves through discussions and communications, based on companionship and friendship between them' (GOE, 2015b). The GOE and other LEAs in South Korea have drawn upon the work of American researchers such as Karen Seashore Louis and Shirley Hord, who have argued that PLCs are characterised by several key points:

supportive and shared leadership, collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions (including physical conditions), people capacities, and shared personal practice (Hord, 1997). Other researchers have suggested several central ideas that are also present in PLCs, including reflective dialogue, de-privatization of practice, and collective focus on student learning (Louis, Marks & Kruse, 1996), as well as shared values and vision, collective responsibility, reflective professional inquiry, collaboration, and both individual and group learning (Stoll, 2006).

However, what I find from the synthesis of key words and phrases are that the PLCs could become a key technology of government in which teachers as a collective are encouraged to learn and develop themselves via autonomous collective and self-surveillance of different types, but mainly using self-inspection. I believe that this is exactly what the GOE or any authorities with power desired to have for control, making their subjects feeling their autonomy is respected and responsibility is emphasized, thus, in effect, drawing attention and agreement of teachers and eventually activating their self-surveillance and practices. Therefore, the focus of analysis of this section would be looking at how such power uses the PLCs as a means of control, and what the implications of this are.

In relation to this enquiry, Green (2015) argues that PLCs can be seen as a technique of governance, as they are used by those in power to control, shaping the professional development of teachers. In addition, Fenwick and Edwards (2010) argue that teacher professional development is often framed as a tool for control and regulation by those in power, rather than as a means for supporting teacher autonomy and agency. Similarly, Stoll and colleagues (2006) suggest that the adoption of PLCs can be used as a way for educational authorities to maintain their control over teachers, rather than as a way to genuinely support teacher learning and development. Furthermore, Apple (2004) argues that educational policies are often used as a means of exerting power over teachers and shaping their

professional identities, rather than as a way to empower them. Applying what Perryman and Ball (2017) argue about reflective practice, which pays attention to 'pastoral power that gives subjects responsibility and space for self-reflection for their own production' (p. 746), PLCs can be regarded as an approved but naturally suggested locus of a mini 'learning organization' where 'a group of people who are pursuing common purposes with a collective commitment to regularly weigh the value of those purposes, modify them where they make sense, and continuously develop more effective and efficient ways of accomplishing those purposes' (Leithwood, Aitken, and Jantzi, 1995). Central to such organizations is an activity of self-reflection via both mundane and official observations, where often dominant discourses around 'obvious good practice' or 'good teacher' are conveyed, and CPDs around them take place in a bottom-up manner.

Among my participant schools, all four schools currently operate a system of PLCs, with multiple PLCs in each school registered and supported by the school leadership. However, there are variations in terms of the types, numbers, sizes, and effectiveness of the PLCs, as well as the degree of engagement and effort by teachers, as suggested by Lee and Kim (2020). Additionally, the different PLCs are structured differently and pursue specific, generally short-term goals, such as learning particular pedagogies for pastoral care or teaching techniques for specific subjects, such as project-based learning. Some PLCs also focus on curriculum-related training, such as the International Baccalaureate programme. Furthermore, PLCs are used as a platform for accessing and regularly discussing various educational themes, as reported by Greenwood from Forest Primary and Banks from Water Secondary.

Yes, that is true. Professional learning community itself doesn't have to discuss education curriculum. Professional learning community can discuss about the school cultural

groups or improvement of school culture, democratic education, or activation of school autonomy, and when we discuss this, this will be a gathering place. I think it is important that there is regularized system.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

First of all, if the professional learning community is not here, our school is non-existent (meaning that our education is meaningless and couldn't gain significance). So all the classes are moved so that we can finish early on Wednesday 5th class and that professional learning community can happen. I think of the professional learning community as a place of discussion and debate. Some things could be suggested, and anything can be discussed. This school's system could be modified (changed).

(River Banks, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

As Greenwood and Banks suggests, in innovation schools, PLCs are regularly held and play a central role in forming a democratic environment where anyone can raise an issue and discuss potential changes, including changes to the self-appraisal system. This pattern has also been established in other schools within the GOE, and over time, PLCs have become a taken-for-granted part of the system because they are seen as necessary. In addition, as highlighted in Banks' quote, it has openness regarding topics and themes to be discussed so it renders teachers experience sense of freedom and encourage them to be actively engaged in school issues with passion, autonomy and agency.

However, I argue that the main function of PLCs is to contribute to the effective management and control of teachers, rather than empowering their autonomy or agency. As a part of it, one of the key roles of the PLCs was to facilitate the development and continuous use of the self-appraisal standard in everyday school life, which eventually led to autonomous self-surveillance activities of teachers



on their teaching practices and change in professionalism. The following quotes demonstrate that PLCs are used to discuss the SSAS.

When we create our own standards for appraisal, as we have professional learning communities, through these, we discuss what we put priority on when we assess and what our curriculum aims for, then we make decisions on what we assess in our curriculum and act upon it. So it is more meaningful than before.

(Draft Orion, Middle manager, Sky Primary)

We have the professional learning communities on Wednesdays. In the professional learning communities, we review what we have done in lessons and educational activities and we keep reflecting what we do. Thus, at the end of a term, we have time of a comprehensive review what we have talked and reviewed over the term. Then, anyway we have such time of reflection, and we are given the time of focusing on what we do once every week.

(Draft Orion, Middle manager, Sky Primary)

Our professional learning communities are set by year groups. Other schools form them by subjects, but our school pursues 'small school' and the subject teachers are in their respective year group. This is done with the philosophy already shared, so there isn't that much discussion on setting-up appraisal systems. It is more to do with how to inspect this and how much we are enacting this. This is quite scary. Is it necessary to inspect from time to time? Do we really need to share what we concluded regularly? Because if it is done it is fine.

(River Banks, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

The three quotes from Orion in Sky Primary and Banks in Water

Secondary show PLCs are a place for creation as well as constant reflection of the schools' self-appraisal standards. As stated and implied in the above quotes, in the PLCs whose Primary purpose is to discuss the appraisal, and its standards, in order to make the most of this function during regular opportunities where the standards are reminded and inspected, teachers are encouraged to suggest ways to comply the policy or self-reflect and self-inspect their education against the standards. This means that, though the aim stated in the policy texts is to encourage teachers to identify areas for improvement and work collaboratively with colleagues to develop and share effective teaching strategies or professionalism, the PLCs can function as a mechanism for standardisation and control, ensuring that all teachers are working towards the same goals and adhering to the same standards. In other words, this means that there is little room for individual autonomy or creativity in practices of teachers in reality, both in teaching and exercising pedagogy, as the focus is on adhering to the prescribed standards and achieving pre-determined outcomes, though they are self-set.

In this sense, I argue that the Primary, central, and intended function of PLCs is to encourage inspection and internalisation of self-appraisal standards within communities, rather than empowering teachers and promoting professionalism or autonomy or agency of them. This function is institutionalised by the authority and is exercised through the internal inspection process in the PLCs. Teachers are constantly encouraged to reflect on various aspects of their education and to compare them against the standards at both individual and collective levels.

The function of inspection may contribute to teachers becoming more autonomous and developing an automatic tendency to self-inspect, by making them strongly believe in the self-appraisal standards as a sound set of knowledge that they pursue throughout the academic year.

I think you asked how the indicators that have been set already are used throughout the school and yes I think they have been in use as we have reflected what our schools lives are like so far. Not just me and not because we think like - new indicators will be used in the future which will be used to assess us, we think it is important which is why it has been introduced so we pay attention to it. Doesn't necessarily mean that the school assessment is the standard, but it is in my mind all the time. The reason we set those indicators is because we regarded that as important for work.

(Sierra Peak, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

Peak's response of "we pay attention to new indicators which will be used in future assessment" is a good example of the fact that teachers are in the gaze of power. She further illustrates that she keeps the standards in her mind all the time. This is both a significant sign of teachers internalising self-inspection and accepting the knowledge identified and suggested in the standards.

In addition, it also works for making patterns of self-inspection inside the teachers and change their practices according to the solid standards, as Ridge in Mountain Secondary experience it in her management of homeroom pupils.

It affects me a lot. It's an item that I didn't have before, and I neglected it. Yes, because there is such a thing. We missed this. For example, there were items that needed to be done in class autonomy, but class restrictions were created. I missed that. Yes, but there was an item like this last year, but I couldn't do it then. If you remember that now this year. When promoting this year's work, we didn't do these things properly last year, so let's take care of them this year.

(Aspen Ridge, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

Referring to the self-appraisal standards, she confessed that she has ignored the standards for school appraisal in the past but now she thinks that the standards for self-appraisal should not be missed to promote the work she is given. This is an obvious activity of self-inspection which generates the shift in perception regarding standards of appraisal and leads to practical changes in her lessons and classroom management.

Additionally, some argue that PLCs are often employed as a means of effectively managing or controlling school staff by the SLT in relation to policy enactment. Frequently, middle leaders are recruited and play a key role in the PLC process, acting as facilitators or bridges between staff and the SLT, assuming multiple roles as 'transactors, enthusiasts, and translators' (Ball et al, 2012, pp. 56-61). They become agents who lead and encourage PLCs, thereby reinforcing the functions of the PLCs. In particular, middle leaders are more likely to assume such roles as Stream in Water Secondary.

If I look at my work, my job is to make a good professional learning community, and then now, because of this corona situation, the basic academic ability is very difficult now, so I have a question about how to improve the basic academic ability. (omission) So now I'm in my year group as a manager, and now the teachers from this innovation research department are in the year group department. They and I have our own TF team. It works like a team. So, listen to the needs of the grade group level and give the teachers the direction the whole school should be heading now. So, let's prepare together. The big topic of what to do in the next professional learning community is now aligning with the big flow (of the self-appraisal), and then we will meet in advance to discuss the specific details ahead of the new year.

(Sidney Stream, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

Here, Stream, as a year group lead, which is a middle manager, forms

a task force team to facilitate the PLCs and liaise with the teachers within the year group on key topics or discourses of the school through the PLCs. She plays multiple roles in relation to the PLCs: planning, directing, and running PLCs within the year group. Many middle managers are encouraged to take on these roles in schools, thus encouraging teachers to align with and stick to the schools' direction of education.

On the other hand, there are also those who may not fully comply with the SSAS and PLCs and may have a marginal and muted relationship with them, known as the 'critics'. Additionally, there are the 'receivers', who are mainly focused on short-term survival and are described as 'copers' or 'defenders' (Ball et al, 2012, pp. 61-63). These individuals more or less resist the dominant discourse under the SSAS and within the PLCs and are at risk of being marginalized or excluded from the school community (Green, 2015). Firstly, Summit in Mountian Secondary talks about practical limits within the system that allow teachers not to be informed about the indicators of the SSAS.

To be honest, people who are in charge of this task, like me, know this indicator, but I think it will be difficult for those who are not in charge of this task to utilize this indicator. Yes, because you don't know the details. So, before I did this job, I didn't know what my school indicator was and how to use it in school.

(Cliff Summit, Middle manage, Mountain Secondary)

Summit's talk implies that there could be many teachers who don't (want to) get the details of the appraisal standards even though they are informed about it. This could be a significant problem for both teachers and the governing bodies, whether they are school or LEA, in different respects. Teachers may miss the opportunity to understand

what the governing body emphasises in the education provided at the school level, meaning that they also lose the opportunity to accept or resist the school's education. At some point, the governing bodies may observe teachers not complying with what they have emphasized through setting indicators, signifying that effective control has failed.

Additionally, some individuals may find themselves not theoretically aligning with the policies, disagreeing with the school's educational approach, though they are following it in practice, and even not wanting to be aware of the self-appraisal standards. This is reflected in the quotes from Lake in Water Secondary below.

(Whilst referring to the SSAS)

Hmm... I am not so sure. I think I became better at speaking, I got better at writing and expressing that it is working well but I am not sure if it is actually true. I think in some sense, I am a bit hypocritical and the ideal and my true instinct and reality don't always match up.

(Reed Lake, Middle manage, Water Secondary)

It is interesting to hear from Lake that he finds himself hypocritical when he realises that he doesn't fit into the workings of the SSAS. On top of that, some even maintain a counter discourse or ethos, as Stream testimonies the case of a former vice head of Water Secondary.

The vice-principal wasn't very innovative, so he continued to stick to what he had been doing and demanded the teachers to do the same. Friction arose from there, and the teachers' reflections in their evaluations stemmed from this. When they expressed difficulties or challenges, the educational office provided consulting support. In these sessions, they demanded improvements and held meetings with the vice-principal. So, although the vice-principal was frustrated and faced such

situations, when it is raised by the self-appraisal he had to change his attitude. It served the purpose of bringing about changes in management. I have seen many cases like this, especially in schools that are only considered as pretending innovative schools, as they always have to undergo such consultation every year.

(Sidney Stream, Middle manage, Water Secondary)

Here we learn that the former vice-head of the school resisted the ideas of the innovation school. Subsequently, teachers who aligned with the ideas of the innovation school reported conflicts between them and the vice-head to the GOE, leading to consultation from the GOE and the change of mind of the vice-head. This quote demonstrates and implies that there could be individuals who don't support the idea, manner, and the culture cultivated by the enactment of the SSAS within schools. It also shows how the governing body, the GOE, controls teachers using interventions like consultation.

However, on top of that, PLCs are used to encourage and even reform teachers who are not in line with the goals or direction of authority, such as the school leadership or the GOE. In other words, the use of autonomous self-surveillance within a PLC is used to check whether one conforms to the consensus and values of the school community, which are more or less the same as those of the GOE. Additionally, PLCs are used as a peer-check measure to see whether teachers are aligned with the schools' goals of education and to encourage teachers, particularly those who are self-excluded from the goals of the school or the GOE, to engage more with 'good practices' defined by discourses of authority.

Homeroom teachers of the same year are together, which I think helps. Even if someone thinks they think differently from others, don't think something's right but when they work on something that is not admin related, they dwell on it and talk about it with each other. So it is not that they are wrong in

terms of the philosophy or activities, it is just that we are not exactly on the same page. Since we could see how much they have tried and think about it we opened our minds. And I think that is partly due to the small school policy within the year groups. Actually one of the homeroom teachers in the second year had a hard time getting used to it. Including himself, others worked as well, supported him and cheered him up so even if he is not too proactive, like being a leader, he recognises our projects and works together with us.

So yes I think it is important and another important thing is professional learning community, as I said before. We plan out the project together, all projects in the year and the admin team supports us. And even if one or two find it too intimidating the standard could be lowered. So there are things that could be adjusted which managers will acknowledge. So I feel there are democratic mindset of the managers which has a synergy effect. Accordingly others could show interest and be willing to work together even if they do not agree 100%. Making them feel they are part of a team is the biggest culture, I believe.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Stone's quote suggests that PLCs function as a constant checking and encouraging mechanism to edify members who may be uncertain about the direction of the school. The crucial aspect is that these mechanisms are not coercive or authoritative but rather gentle and democratic. This approach ensures that individuals who are the subjects of edification feel supported. Such gentle ways of reformation, in addition to self-surveillance, are used to check whether or not one conforms to the consensus and values of the school community and the authority. This encourages teachers to adopt the practices of a 'good teacher'. However, attention needs to be paid to the fact that the concept of a 'good teacher' is a social construct, mainly carved out of the dominant discourses of the powerful in a specific educational context. Thus, what happens to critics in the PLCs and the self-appraisal system of innovation school



policy can be seen as a process of reforming individuals to the predominant conception of a particular teacher whose qualities are socially constructed and defined by the powerful.

So far, based on the research data, I have discussed how PLCs related to the SSAS function as a technique of governmental control, fostering the internalisation of self-appraisal standards and reformation of teachers who do not align with schools' goals of education. Such reinforcement standards in teachers' mindset and practices and care of the non-conformists through the practices of self-surveillance activities are evident in PLCs and this is a strong sign of the role of government from the invisible but ever-watching central tower of authority, which can be defined as highly strategic and post-panoptic, as will be discussed later on.

Before moving on to the next section, I should note here that the teachers in the participant schools mostly agree that the PLCs, particularly those related to lessons and classroom management, play a positive role in the development of their professionalism as subject professionals.

Of those teachers (in the professional learning group), one of them was really good with picture book class. Other teachers would go to that class and observe how it is done and that was how the school was ran. There weren't any teachers who would teach merely based on textbook. That was a bit of shock to me. Another example is our school manager who teaches history class. If their class were just based on textbook, they would finish the book quite soon but instead they do it by historical figures.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Development of professionalism. Like I said before, we discuss and think about it during the professional learning communities or the whole school employee meetings. That

definitely was very helpful and by evaluating it, I think about how much I did, how much the school did, and etc. Then I think, our school is not doing that bad or I could maybe improve on this part. It gives us the opportunity to look back at ourselves and reflect. This eventually helps with professionalism.

(Cliff Summit, Middle leader, Mountain Secondary)

The feeling of improvement in various aspects of education as a learning community, as described in policy texts about innovation schools, is not very surprising. This is because one of the main aims and discourses of the self-appraisal system is to promote the professionalism of teachers throughout the year.

Throughout the sections in this Chapter so far, I have discussed how autonomous self-surveillance works within three key techniques used in innovation schools related to the SSAS. Despite the positive function, the Great Debate, the standard set-up and the PLCs don't merely allow teachers to freely talk about their performance and improvement of professionalism. Rather, they pursue and are devised for the effective control of the cohort of the teaching staff to make them align the main goals of education of the school and the educational government, using practices of autonomous self-surveillance. The use of the technology-of-the-self enhances educational practices for teachers to meet the aims of authority. This involves making self-appraisal a part of teachers' everyday lives and cultivating innovative school cultures. In this sense, these techniques are serving to control teachers to greater extent, but it should be noted that they can also result in a sense of satisfaction and a feeling of improvement that sometimes allows them not to feel controlled.

## **6.4. Dynamics and Complementary** **between Autonomy and Self-Surveillance**

### **6.4.1. Instrumental Autonomy: The Paradox of Freedom and Control in Innovation Schools**

It should be emphasised that such governmentality seen in the SSAS, the government through extended freedom and autonomous self-surveillance, which is well-regulated, is a key locus of control where those being controlled both feel freer from external surveillance and feel responsible for self-surveillance.

As this characteristic of such governmentality doesn't explicitly appear in the policy texts on the SSAS. Thus, let me pin it further down into the technology of autonomy and autonomous self-surveillance and their dynamics within this governmentality, which allows us to re-explore and re-evaluate the topic of teacher autonomy that is significantly enhanced under the appraisal system.

Autonomy is closely intertwined with the technology of the self, involving an internalised and invisible gaze. In modern or post-modern neoliberal states and economies, there is an ongoing emphasis on individual freedom and free will, both of which are key components of the entrepreneurial autonomous self. Within these neo-liberalised contexts, individuals are not only encouraged to exercise their freedom and free will to make choices, but also to continuously monitor their own activities in light of those choices. In the process of self-monitoring, autonomy plays a crucial role in ensuring the trustfulness and effectiveness of self-surveillance. Autonomy, in this context, serves not only for making choices but also for evaluating and verifying them. This concept holds true in neo-liberalised education systems like South Korea, where this modality of power is ingrained. Teachers are encouraged to exercise greater autonomy and actively participate in various school committees and communities. These platforms serve as spaces where crucial decisions related to teaching, pedagogy, and management are made, as observed from the quotes presented so far. At the same time, however, teachers are expected to be more productive, reliable and effective in their roles.

In this context, teachers appear to have greater opportunities to utilize their professional autonomy to ensure that their activities and behaviours align with the policies' objectives and are effective in supporting those aims.

In this respect, I argue that such autonomy is, in fact, more of an 'instrumental autonomy' in which teachers are directed merely to comply with or pursue what has already been determined and suggested (Son, 2012) and, as a consequence, restrict the use of it from authority through autonomous self-surveillance within the broader accountability context. For instance, the self-created standards for self-appraisal through self-surveillance may ultimately subscribe to the guidance or policy texts provided by the GOE as the SSAS cannot be separated from the other appraisal measures. However, they are presented and recognized as products of teacher autonomy. In other words, teachers are the ones who appear to exercise autonomy and make decisions, but these decisions are made within the confines of the authority's objectives, as their source of decision-making in self-assessment and self-surveillance is predominantly linked to the aims and direction of other accountability measures provided by the authority in the broader picture.

This is especially important for schools that pretend to be innovative. They should be annually evaluated by not only parents and students but by teachers as well (via the pre-existing means of evaluation, such as PBIS and TAPD). And after a few years they might add a few more appraisal criteria (based on the evaluations of the stakeholders).

So, what I fundamentally talk about is teachers' autonomy and how the current school's self-appraisal is just a (different) tool. In the past, principals would just walk in in the middle of the class, they would appear and things like this would happen frequently. In the past I thought the right to teach is very important and related to the teachers' autonomy and is one of my rights. But after I came to an innovative school, I understood that lessons are public. And because this is public,

I cannot do whatever I want. I need to interact with the students as a public service worker and not as an individual.

(Sidney Stream, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

What is significant and surprising in what Stream said in the second part of the quote is that she ended up restricting the scope of her lessons by saying “I cannot do whatever I want. I need to interact with the students as a public service worker and not as an individual”, though she is allowed to use greater autonomy, compared to past. She says that she was truly autonomous in managing lessons though she was under observation and surveillance in the past, implying that she perceived that she was not bound by policy directives previously. That is, she could do whatever she thinks right in lessons as a professional, though such direct and unnoticed inspection was often carried out by the school leadership or external inspectors. However, contradictorily, and ironically, she was led to a change in her perception of lessons when a much higher level of autonomy is allowed to her in innovation schools, where the self-appraisal system is put in place and no obvious inspection is carried out. That is, she came to a realisation that lessons are a public good rather than a private service product, thus she cannot become fully autonomous, as suggested, and do whatever she wants. She doesn’t tell us exactly why she reached such a conclusion that lessons are a public good thus they should be restricted in particular terms of what are taught, and started to restrict her use of autonomy in lessons. What we could infer and conclude, though, is that autonomy under the SSAS is not always working for guaranteeing true professional autonomy to teachers, as presented in the policy text by the GOE, but for the self-check-mechanism of the individuals, which could be a strong sign of autonomy as a resource of greater control. In other words, it is argued that the autonomy guaranteed in the accountability system, in fact, rather restricted the scope of autonomy usage by triggering the perception that autonomy should be used for what is symbolised and

defined by 'public good', which is bound to the knowledge of a particular regime of truth which had been reproduced via preceding accountability policies.

The problem here is that individuals under the self-appraisal system are being systematically and structurally encouraged to believe that they have complete freedom, despite evidence that it is quite restricted. This encouragement often takes place from school leadership, via, usually, a top-down management mechanism, whether or not it is in friendly manner. Various strategies, policies at school level and techniques are employed to this end in the public educational organisations.

The former principal mentioned that they want each and every teacher to be the owner of the school and one by one, they will participate more. Even if not all 100 people participate, and only one person participates, they will be content. And by doing so, I understood how I can participate and how I am actually acting on it. I am not good at this or I could work more on this. Specifically, if I look at myself using a self-appraisal system, it is possible.

(River Banks, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

This is a good example of working on the self as we observe the policy works on Banks' self within the self-appraisal system and, as a result, he actively engages in and works for tasks that he is not good at. In the process he was told that he should employ ownership by the former principal, which is the systematic and institutional way that emphasises a sense of autonomy of actors. This is related to what Foucault pointed out: at the enactment level, governmentality works within 'apparatuses of security' (Foucault, 2009). More specifically, within apparatuses of security, individuals are systematically allowed to experience their own freedom, for example in economic activities, but at the same time there are tactics for restricting or

instrumentalising freedom under the structure of the apparatuses. In this sense, again, this is a structured freedom rather than self-directed or self-oriented freedom, and in the end, it led individuals to constantly reflect, compare and regulate themselves in discerning what to do or not to do within the boundary of aims and purposes as set by the government (Lim, 2016). This is where autonomy and autonomous self-surveillance work together. This, I suggest, is exactly what is happening in innovation schools, one of the examples of apparatuses of security which uses mass education as a technology of government, which adopted the self-appraisal system.

#### **6.4.2. Post-Panoptic Surveillance in Innovation Schools: The Dynamics of Self-Regulation and Collective Control**

Through the analysis so far in the preceding sections, it becomes evident that contemporary surveillance in innovation schools exhibits characteristics of post-panoptic governmentality of surveillance, which is an evolved mode and form of surveillance and control. This differs from the traditional panopticon model of surveillance proposed by Foucault, where a central power observes individuals from a dark central tower in a metaphorical sense. As discussed in section 3.5., post-panoptic surveillance, on the other hand, is characterized by a more dispersed and diffused gaze of power. In line with that, Page (2017) highlights ‘total visibility’ (p. 4) as one of the features of post-panoptic surveillance, which implies a pervasive gaze in everyday environments, including within oneself and among others. This indicates a more active participation of teachers themselves in surveillance, contrasting with the central external gaze of panoptic surveillance where teachers only become an object of surveillance. In the context of the SSAS, we can observe this ‘normalised visibility’ (p. 4) where teachers work within an environment of constant self-observation via digital technology, self-set standards and observation of others. This can be observed through three key aspects.

Firstly, power is subtle and pretty much invisible within the SSAS, thus no panoptic control tower is seen in the policy, rather power is employing digital surveillance or surveillance from a distance using digital technology, both of which are invisible. For example, and as mentioned before, it has been very common for the schools registered at the GOE that all key data, such as achievement of pupils, reports and quantified data on various appraisals, including the SSAS, and all official papers and documents produced in a school are digitalized, collected, assessed and saved by the National Education Information System, which enables the authority to monitor what happens in schools remotely. NEIS is a digital form of ‘data wall’ which profiles student performance, moulds teaching practices, and shapes subjectivities of teachers (Charteris, 2022, p. 334).

On top of that, through the diverse self-monitoring opportunities across the school calendar, like workshops, CPD opportunities, PLCs and lesson observations by peers, teachers constantly conduct self-examination and internalise a self-prescription out of the self-examination, then self-discipline and self-regulate their thoughts and behaviour to conform with the rules. Unceasing and relentless reflective practice and progress tracking take place through this cycle of self-technology, whilst teachers ‘assume responsibility for the constraints of power’ (Foucault, 1977, pp. 202-203) and discipline the self and create docile bodies of themselves (Page, 2017). This is what Page calls ‘intrapersonal surveillance’ (p. 995), which is a characteristic of contemporary surveillance in education.

Secondly, as referred to in chapter 4.5., the SSAS produces what Smith (2014) calls ‘surveillance workers’, who are encouraged to watch each other in an exercise of concerted control, the establishment and policing of group norms (Page, 2017) via ‘horizontal approach’ (p. 995), which can also be seen as a ‘post-panoptic’ (Charteris, 2022, p. 336) way of surveillance. This practice of surveillance of others is apparent in the opportunities like Great Debates, as seen in the quote below? of Fields, the current inspector,



where a collective reflection process is emphasized and even praised, regarded as moral, compulsory and necessary.

Once assessment is done, it is not over and not only recognising things that are good but then okay so what next? So once assessment is done, members have a discussion and consensus is not just reached by them, it goes through Great Debate. In Great Debate, we talk things like our school had self-assessment, there were points like this, we want to focus on something this year and we can push it forward, something will be of help in this and can improve that this way.

(Terra Fields, Current policy maker, GOE)

One underlying idea of such practice is that such horizontal peer-surveillance should be perfectly accepted and encouraged because teachers in a school are regarded as a collective party or one single body of population, 'a learning organisation' from the term of the GOE (GOE, 2019). This collective body aims for collective improvement to establish better education, thus a constant mutual check on each other's behaviour is welcome and becomes a natural ethic. This aims for and results in controlling collective thought and behaviour of the whole body of the teacher community. And there seems to be an element of bio-power and pastoral power - a community to be known and governed.

Additionally, I argue that the SSAS functions as a 'post-panoptic' surveillance mechanism, adopting the ways of control rooted in pastoral power as an underlying principle for control. In this context, all subjects under surveillance employ technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988; as cited in Page, 2017) while being simultaneously regulated through new technologies designed to address collective phenomena, producing both economic and political impacts (Foucault, 2003; as cited in Page, 2017). As previously mentioned, teachers are regarded as part of a learning community and group to be

known and governed. Therefore, technologies aimed at addressing collective consensus or consciousness are deployed to ensure the maximum security of the teaching staff. For instance, political technologies that emphasise teacher training, such as PLCs, are encouraged as continuous monitoring mechanisms to identify potential issues and to highlight specific risks or deviant behaviours among the teaching staff, all in the pursuit of ensuring greater control. This is carried out through gentle and benevolent methods, with the ultimate goal of maximizing control. I re-draw the quote from Stone in Water Secondary to demonstrate the point, interpreting it from a different angle.

And I think that is partly due to small school policy (refers to the professional learning groups in the context) within the year groups. Actually one of the homeroom teachers in the second year had a hard time getting used to it. Including himself, others worked as well, supported him and cheered him up so even if he is not too proactive, like being a leader, he recognises our projects and works together with us. So yes I think it is important and another important thing is professional learning community, as I said before. We plan out the project together, all projects in the year and the admin team supports us. And even if one or two find it too intimidating the standard could be lowered. So there are things that could be adjusted which managers will acknowledge.

(Brooke Stone, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

In the quote above, the surveillance is apparent here. That is, the surveillance and disciplinary gaze directed toward an individual who is seen as not proactive and lacking leadership is apparent. That is, a teacher who finds it challenging to adapt to changing policy context, the small school policy in the innovation school in this case, which is featured by frequent small group meetings of teachers that discuss and reflect their educational practices, becomes the object of control, and others attempt to reform him to align with the established culture.

Once such teachers who are the subject of control are identified, they start to believe themselves in need of change. Then, the professional learning community serves as a platform for this process of reformation, providing an ostensibly open, benevolent and friendly environment where teachers can share their experiences within the school. In this way, the cohort of teachers under the SSAS becomes a population through which the government can exercise secure and effective control, extending beyond mere surveillance. This is a typical way of governmentality that uses 'technology of the self, which is that lead to people influencing themselves and each other in more subtle ways' (Perryman et al, 2018, p. 148).

Considering these three characteristics, surveillance under the SSAS should be viewed as an 'assemblage' of post-panoptic surveillance where autonomous self-surveillance and collective surveillance of others being operated, fostering reforms within communities that ultimately enhance control of teachers. As demonstrated in the quotes included in this section, teachers have been actively establishing their own self-surveillance systems, utilizing various individual and school-driven initiatives, both individually and collectively, even in the absence of an overarching visible gaze. When some teachers who are struggling to align with the school's projects are identified, efforts to reform and discipline them are carried out through benevolent forms of power cloaked in community support. This represents a clear indication of increased control.

## **6.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have examined the question of whether the schools self-appraisal system is a highway to freedom for teachers where they can exercise their professionalism, or simply another means of control in a different form where multiple technologies of multiple modalities of power interact and work together. Based upon the discussions and

findings on autonomy and surveillance so far, I conclude the following: autonomy in key job areas of teachers, such as teaching or management of curriculum, along with increased of engagement into process of appraisal, is significantly extended; however, such extended level of autonomy doesn't necessarily mean that teachers gained more professional freedom in their practices because they are still under control by new conceptions of surveillance, which is termed as 'autonomous self-surveillance', from the self and others (peers), which is both panoptic and post-panoptic. In addition, a sense of accountability is generally enhanced with several outstanding features, along with a substantial emphasis on accountability to the GOE at policy level, amongst frontline teachers. These analyses around autonomy, surveillance and accountability found in the SSAS are understood by the technology of contemporary neoliberal governmentality and bio- and pastoral power addressed by Michel Foucault. Thus, I would argue that the SSAS should be taken as a way of strengthened control, aiming for fitting teachers into ideas of authority via different technologies, rather than a way of guaranteeing more professional freedom.

# **Chapter Seven: ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SSAS**

## **7.1. Introduction**

The analysis in Six highlights the works and dynamics of autonomy and surveillance for greater control within the SSAS. That is, while the system aims to promote autonomy among teachers, it simultaneously embeds a framework of surveillance. Then, the next question on the appraisal policy is whether those characteristics found in the policy leads that intensifies accountability pressures. This is highly relevant for discussing whether the SSAS leads to greater freedom and professionalism or tighter control of teachers, on top of the arguments regarding autonomy and surveillance in chapter Six. That is, if it is an evolved means of greater control, as argued in chapter Six, it relates to the question on how accountability is guaranteed in such system.

In many cases, accountability is linked to what is mandated by those in control, rather than what is desired by those under control, so it strongly cooperate with and assist surveillance and control. This themes will be further elaborated through a discussion of how accountability is achieved in support of operation of autonomy and surveillance in the SSAS, defining the characteristics of the particular accountability embedded in it. In addition, in the later part of the chapter, this chapter elaborates how the SSAS forms a dense net of such particular accountability in tandem of diverse pre-existing accountability measures that are currently operates under the control of the GOE.

Furthermore, the data analysis in this chapter will lead to the concluding argument that the SSAS is a technology of neoliberal governmentality, which embraces the ideas of neo-liberalism and

panoptic performativity whilst embracing a different approach and technologies on controlling subjects via autonomy, surveillance of both the self and the collective and accountability.

## **7.2. Greater Accountability Powered by Greater Autonomy and Greater Surveillance**

### **7.2.1. Enhanced control through self-directed accountability**

The policy text of SSAS clearly states that central to the SSAS is accountability, as is shown below:

The goals of Schools' Self-Appraisal System (GOE, 2022a)

- Improvement of overall quality school education and support for students' growth through improvement and diagnosis of schools' educational activities;
- Enhancement of accountability through involvement, communication and cooperation of school community; and
- Encouragement of diversity through school autonomy and self-government

However, it does not specifically state how accountability is introduced, encouraged and achieved within the SSAS and this issue has not been thoroughly scrutinised in previous studies, even though it is a significant shift in accountability of schools and teachers. Based upon the data of the research, I could conclude that teachers are put in a structure where their accountability is taken for granted and self-achieved, whilst feelings of pressure from external forces become dimmed at the same time, feelings of responsibility from inner self and collective sense are elevated, through the self-appraisal system.

Thus, I would like to uncover and illustrate how these processes are experienced in the perception and practice of the teachers, and how the SSAS is used as an effective means of sophisticated government, emphasizing this particular conception of accountability.

Displacement is one very interesting common response I got from participant teachers related to the sense of accountability. That is, they feel less pressure to be more accountable for their practices from external forces or the school leadership than before, and, on the other hand, feel more accountable for their practices of their own accord.

At first when I just got this I wasn't too sure about this. Before, what I had to do was just getting indicators from the Office of Education, connecting them to the relevant department and making them understand etc but from last year I was told that I could use autonomous indicator (of the SSAS) so I wasn't too sure about that. As opposed to be happy with the autonomy given, I felt more responsible and pressured.

(Sierra Peak, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

It is very odd to see that Peak feels more pressured as well as responsible in the situation where she is given more freedom and uses the self-made appraisal indicators as a standard. To understand the responses above, I should reiterate the way the SSAS works. The SSAS emphasizes 'technology of the self' such as self-surveillance, reflection and inspection, over techniques of overt assessment of teachers, such as observation and monitoring. The resulting consequences of positive or negative sanctions, such as incentives, are avoided and replaced by covert means of control that encourage agency and autonomy of participants. This is clearly shown in the language that the GOE uses in the guidance booklet of the appraisal system. They say the new system aims to promote 'agency' and 'autonomy' of teachers and schools as a learning organisation which

operates with such self-engagement, and they ‘consult’, implying they don’t ‘inspect’, ‘audit’ or ‘scrutinize’ as they did, the result of the self-appraisal for promotion as self-improvement (GOE, 2022b). This means, when appraisal happens, inspectors come to school usually when requested by schools after giving notice and allowing the school plenty of time to prepare, acting as a consultant dispensing guidance and being a support-provider, rather than an authority or a watchdog, which makes teachers feel it is much milder than what it was before.

In addition, they say that this new approach is coupled with the cultivation of a different leadership culture, so-called ‘democratic leadership’, where the school leadership no longer puts pressure on teachers through a top-down authoritarian aspect and manner, rather they encourage and support the teacher’s active involvement, agency, ownership and participation in curriculum development and enactment in the self-appraisal process.

I think it is a characteristic of the managers of the Water Secondary. They never say just get it done as this is what they want. So it’s not that a planning committee or manager decides everything, if something comes up in the committee, it goes back to the whole school year, has its own meetings and then the result comes up. There should be justification and managers never say that let’s do it just because others do it. So we can just leave some things rather in a bold way and we are not too pressured about what was asked from the Education Office as we have a choice.

(Brooke Stone, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

So, managing a school is closely related to bonus points for promotion. But ironically, managers conduct specialized projects specific for the education curriculum that they don’t necessarily have to do, in the case of our school. I was actually surprised watching this. They will have no problem with promotion, even without doing these extra works. They could just choose to do their job, but a lot of managers actually do



extras such as more education curriculum focus projects.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Blue Primary)

Talking about the external gaze, Stone in Water Secondary commented on how democratically teachers take or resist jobs they are given from the central authority, the GOE. With controversial policies, they have space and opportunity to discuss before enactment. On the other hand, Arbour is describing how his managers work for extra tasks that are not strictly linked to their basic duties and promotion, implying that they are not just following orders but actively finding what they would like to realise in their classrooms, perhaps after discussion and thought-sharing, which can be taken as a sign of democratic leadership into action. This atmosphere means teachers can experience a sense of less pressure and more freedom from constant and obvious evaluation and surveillance by the external gaze or that of the school leadership.

I didn't think much about it. But I guess this means I feel less restricted. If there were to be some sort of burden, I would be stressed about it but seeing that I am not, I think it allowed me to do what I want.

(Maple Vale, Manager of a year group, Forest Primary)

Here, Vale in Forest Primary also experiences and feels the same with what Stone and Arbour do. Summit in Mountain Secondary linked this feeling of less accountability with the fact that the SSAS has nothing to do with sanctions.

I thought about whether it's right to do that, but compared to when I first started, I don't have that much pressure, and this isn't about what the teachers will do based on the score, but let's take that into consideration and go in the direction of

improving it in the future. There are things like that because we don't do anything based on the results, but wouldn't it be nice to take it in the sense of just having time to look back on us.

(Cliff Summit, Middle leader, Mountain Secondary)

Summit sees the SSAS as an opportunity for self-reflection, as she doesn't have to take any actions based on the results of the self-appraisal. Reflecting on the era of school inspection, the former accountability measure, negative sanctions, such as additional compulsory CPDs for the bottom 10% of teachers who scored poorly in the appraisal, were imposed. This was accompanied by feelings of shame and sometimes public scrutiny about the reasons for low scores if the SLT was authoritative. This is why she perceives less pressure with the SSAS compared to the previous era. In general, most teachers are happy that they are not directly criticised by external organizations or even any other external stakeholders, such as parents, and assessed through sanctions, even though the result of the SSAS is released to the government and the public. Then, what makes Sierra Peak feel "pressured and responsible" in the above quote?

Ironically in some sense, it could be explained by the fact that the majority of the teacher participants in the research said they hold an enhanced personal sense of accountability with the SSAS and link such sense with various reasons. Here are some others who feels similar to:

Yes it is. As I said before, the previous evaluation was not from me but was given to me. So I had bits that I did not agree with. But in the case of this autonomous evaluation system (the SSAS), this is what I discussed in the TF (Task-Force) team and decided. So I think I felt responsible to make progress. In some way this was a burden.

I am a passive person. But by making things for school

evaluations, I become less passive. I wouldn't be really active but I don't avoid it as before and I do think that I should be doing more.

(Reed Lake, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

If someone asked me to set an indicator myself and went for it, I would say I am not comfortable, but we have agreed to this and are proceeding with what we have acknowledged so we take good care of it.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Here, Lake and Stone at Water Secondary express a heightened sense of accountability because they are actively involved in the evaluation process, including the creation of standards. The result is that Lake believes he is primarily responsible for the progress of the school. In the past, teachers might have considered themselves not primarily responsible for progress as long as they met the requirements of policies that were simply imposed upon them. However, within the SSAS, they become more engaged in the entire self-appraisal process as active agents or examiners who self-assess or assess others, rather than being passive subjects of inspection. This transformation leads them to feel a greater sense of accountability for meeting the standards they have played a role in creating. Teachers evolve into individuals who willingly embrace such accountability, which in turn influences their attitude towards their tasks and performance, making them more proactive, as exemplified in Lake's quote.

Not really a major change but when doing my jobs, I feel that this school gives teachers more autonomy. And because I was given this autonomy, I should take care when making decisions. So I became more careful when doing my job and I guess I have more responsibility. Before, the evaluation was just given and I was not involved in making this evaluation, making me feel less responsible. But this year, after making

the school evaluation list, I keep thinking, oh we need to do this this year, we should really perform more on this, we should see more achievement from this... So I guess I have more of a sense of responsibility.

(Reed Lake, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

In addition, though this topic and the quote of Lake below has been discussed before, some say that they feel more accountable because the party evaluating their conduct is not an external gaze but an internal gaze, which is the eyes of the self, peers and colleagues, which can be more professional and sharper, and some of their conduct could be viewed as hypocrisy.

And just this November, December, in the pastoral education evaluation meeting, we need to be evaluated if we have been doing this well or not. In the past, it was the office of education evaluating us but now it is the entire school members evaluating us. So if I say we did this year, some teachers may agree or some might say, they didn't actually do it. I think this is more scary.

Yes, I think there is more burden in terms of consciousness. The embarrassment acts bigger. Being pointed out externally and not doing something after we promised amongst ourselves we will do it. I think the amount of embarrassment is different. Especially because we need to work with our colleagues afterwards as well.

(Reed Lake, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Lake states that he experiences feelings of fear and shame when his conduct is evaluated by his colleagues. Interestingly, these emotions are even more intense than when he is evaluated by external examiners. He finds being critiqued by colleagues within the same school to be burdensome, as he should anyway collaborate with them in working for the school, and having them assess his performance

adds an extra layer of weight to the situation.

So far, I have discussed various sources of a heightened sense of accountability evident in the data, which support the argument that teachers are indeed positioned to be more accountable and that they, in fact, feel more accountable and pressured under the SSAS. Bringing together this evidence, I conclude that the approach to control within the SSAS does not alleviate the burden of accountability for individual teachers. In other words, greater autonomy in the policy text does not guarantee professional freedom which is free from surveillance and accountability. On the contrary, it amplifies this burden of accountability by making them feel more responsible for the standards they have a hand in shaping. Additionally, it diversifies the means of surveillance, expanding beyond self-assessment to encompass colleagues with whom they regularly communicate and collaborate in their daily professional lives.

### **7.2.2. Characteristics of accountability defined under the SSAS**

Now, I would like to pay attention to the characteristics of the accountability particularly defined under the new accountability appraisal policy with four key points in the rest of this section.

One interesting finding in terms of the characteristics of such accountability is that such accountability is suggested and taken as natural and desirable by teachers. That is, when they feel pressure of being accountable, they interpret it as reasonable accountability that they should naturally and necessarily take, rather than linking it to a sense of fear or guilt in case they are criticised. I should draw the quote of Lake in Water Secondary which appeared above to address the point as it captures this point well:

Yes, that is true. Like the inspection you mentioned, that is more to do with negative responsibility, which I wanted to avoid. But this is a more positive responsibility, making me more active.

(Reed Lake, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

It is fair to say that the positive accountability that Lake is describing is not obviously forced or pushed by external power. Rather it seems that the feeling of stronger accountability stems from the sense of responsibility of teachers responding to the use of extended autonomy under SSAS in innovation schools, and teachers define it as positive, as Lake in Water Secondary does. With such sense of accountability, teachers are more likely to try to abide by the self-made standards of appraisal than they did by externally-made standards in the past. In addition, as argued in previous sections, they tend to internalise practices of self-surveillance, on what and how they teach and their other jobs, along with observation of others, which may enable them to think that this enhanced sense of accountability is not necessarily burdensome or harmful or anti-professional. This shows an obvious and important trend found amongst teacher participants that accountability is generally well accepted and even thought of as something good and taken-for-granted under the SSAS.

Another is that such accountability is still performative in that teachers are being forced into competition both between colleagues of the school they belong to and other schools. To be specific, under the self-appraisal system, teachers are systemically and institutionally under pressure of being extraordinary or innovative in doing their jobs, which is regarded the best performance in the system.

Responsibility and sense of accountability... Well because I didn't experience much about how it was before, I am not sure. Although it is hard to connect responsibility or accountability with evaluation, because I am working under

the title 'innovative school', I feel obliged to do other activities or different activities to that of non-innovative schools.

(Maple Vale, Middle leader, Forest Primary)

This response from Vale can be more easily understood when it is considered that there is tier system between innovation schools in the GOE. In addition, innovation schools can be continuously funded and maintain that school status only if they meet the standards for innovation schools, which fosters competition. In general, funding for innovation schools is greater than normal schools in the GOE. With the understanding of how the SSAS is meant to work outside a school and between schools, we see that the technology of categorisation underpins the SSAS and systemically makes teachers compete for a higher tier and better results. Then, such pressure for competition drives teachers to be caught in the assumption that they should be more accountable. However, the principle of competition for greater performance exists between teachers in a school via various normalised workshops, meetings and peer lesson-observations, where criticism can take place, thus teachers try to be more accountable for their own outcome.

There are two reasons found from the data for such internal competition between teachers. First, they feel more accountable because they should be more innovative, creative and performative against the standards in the context of the SSAS, because they themselves created them. Second, but still in line with the first, teachers feel more accountable because it is anyway a performance-based appraisal that is eventually being quantified and reported to GOE, and students and parents also assess and comment on teachers' results, which could turn into a kind of external gaze, though it is not meant to be so. I redraw a part of the quote from Summit in Mountain Secondary to address the point.

Let me tell you a little bit about the evaluation method. In fact, the evaluation method is so different from the old one. A bit of a pity. In other words, teachers evaluate all of these things as the main subject of education. Teachers read everything and do it all. However, it is a bit disappointing to go to the parents and students when evaluating this. They don't participate much. They have to give their opinion on the evaluation, but half of the opinions don't seem to work at all. We want to do it voluntarily, so it would be nice if parents could give us some opinions, but that's a bit disappointing.

(Cliff Summit, Middle manager, Mountian Secondary)

It is interesting to note from Summit's response above that she harbours an uncomfortable feeling towards accountability requested by parents and students, which represents a potential external gaze. I believe that the presence of external groups that may exert power on her education and that of the teachers could induce stress and push them into competition to some extent.

The next characteristic of such accountability is that it is self-directed in the whole process in that it is set by and achieved by the teachers themselves. In other words, this mode of accountability reaches to the inner and intrinsic motivation of the actors. This means, borrowing the terms of Bovens (2007), the forum, the account holder or those who judge the account to be provided, becomes the actors, the accounter or those who render account, themselves. That is the one who asks for accountability is also who is accountable. As discussed in the previous sections, from the Great Debate to PLCs, entire process of them is on the hand of the teachers themselves and they are asked to use diverse technologies and techniques to achieve the goals and standards they self-set. This is therefore a truly self-process of assignment, engagement, and enactment of accountability.

The other characteristics of the accountability of the SSAS is that it reaches teachers as a collective, rather than as independent



individuals. That is, as briefly discussed when talking about extended autonomy above, teachers tend to feel they are more ‘collectively accountable’, at the same time when they become an agent who can be more autonomous. This means that many of them think they can do whatever they want to in their lessons and curriculum, for example, but feel they don’t have to be responsible only on their own, which perhaps enables teacher to assume that accountability is not necessarily too burdensome.

Of course, there will be responsibility and burden. It will be there and quite burdensome as well. Even more so than responsibility. I need to make it for not only myself, but it could also be for a year group or even a school. Then there is much more to consider.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Such conception of accountability, which would be described as collective accountability, implied in the above quote is obviously different in many ways from the pre-existing accountabilities, such as performative or competition and output-based accountability, that the authorities have sought from individuals via performative accountability policies and measures. This mode of accountability is based upon the priority of cooperation and ‘togetherness’ (Sahlberg, 2010a, p. 55) between members in a community. It means that, particularly in terms of mechanisms in which accountability is achieved and delivered, this mode aims for decentralized, interactive, mutual and cooperative system of accountability (Kim et al., 2014). Under this mode of accountability, learning and improvement is regarded as a matter of mutual cooperation between the board, leadership, teachers, administrators, student, parent and even the local community, literally all the stakeholders of education. Upon the emphasis of such togetherness, meetings, discussions, critics, risk-taking, creativity and innovation is valued as lighthouses of education

changes (Sahlberg, 2010a).

However, care needs to be taken not to romanticize this type of accountability, in particular in relation to the third and fourth features of it, in two senses. Firstly, it should be noted that this encouragement of self-directed and collective accountability is not the same as the use of professionalism of teachers and also doesn't necessarily guarantee it. This means, based upon my perception and analysis, teachers still respond to the request of various forums based upon 'productive autonomy' (Gleeson and Gunter, 2001), rather than professional autonomy, because they are still under surveillance and control and steered by policies in using autonomy and being held to account, fulfilling and assimilating the ambitions of authority as I will discuss in the following chapter of data analysis. Secondly, the self-directed and collective accountability can be more effective for control than a performative one (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Sahlberg, 2010; Kim et al., 2014) because it stems from and appeal to the sense that education is a public good thus making teachers feel more responsible and willingly accountable, as Kim, the former inspector says:

Well, actually, from the point of view of the education office, then no matter how much I respect autonomy, education is a public good, thus being public must be guaranteed. Then there must be a concept of accountability based on being public. I think such accountability is not controlled by administrative actions, rather it should be created inside institution. To do so, the school's self-evaluation is the best tool. Because the process of looking back at the end of the school year or at the end of the semester, I think that is the process of taking responsibility. For that to happen, the school district should look at the evaluation standards, not just the plans.

(Clay Sands, Former inspector, GOE)

In these senses, the emergence and formation of self-directed and collective accountability helps teachers to be more likely to be engaged in what the authority presents and aims for, restricting the range of ideas, perspectives, judgement, and practice of professional teachers whilst detaching any feelings of burden on them from direct inspection and evaluation measures, as shown below:

So, there is a reduction in evaluation burden.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Forest Primary)

No pressure I feel from the evaluation.

(Peyton Pine, Middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

I try to do a lot of activities and make sure students learn from them. And I think there are some responsibilities in that. But I am not sure about responsibility and sense of responsibilities in terms of self-evaluation.

(Maple Vale, Manager of a year group, Forest Primary)

However, though such positive responses, teachers might not fully consider the fact that they are politically and systemically situated in an atmosphere in which such autonomy and accountability are both simultaneously encouraged via the policy. Thus, it can be said that such accountability formed under the SSAS is intentionally promoted and designed to be perceived as good and moral in the self-appraisal scheme and teachers uncritically subscribe to this, whilst they may not perceive it. Such commitment of individual teachers to autonomous self-directed accountability is not only seen in their perception but also in the practices of teachers.

I think it did change a lot. I am in my 16th year of teaching

career. When I first started my job, the main priority as a teacher was to teach students well and it was important to learn different teaching methods to make students listen to me. And I was expected to give out information when having parent meeting. This is what I used to think. I think the reason why my perceptions changed is after I moved to innovation school. (omission) I learnt that the education curriculum could change in different ways and achievement standards can also change. And this was much more fun. I got to learn what the parents think as well.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

As I was doing it, I enjoyed creating my own educational curriculum. There were of course people who did not like it, but I personally think it worked well for me. I had the control and to be honest, it is easy to fall into mannerism in our occupation. Everything is in the textbook. And although some people still manage to keep up the good quality of teaching, that was a bit hard for me. This would lead to students less interested, and as a result demotivate me as well. But by creating the curriculum with factors students would like, students participate more, and I am content with that.

(Maple Vale, Manager of a year group, Forest Primary)

I note that the responses of both Greenwood and Vale came from a question about overall changes in their practices regarding the SSAS. It means that, though they are talking about curriculum, their responses are related to their professional life under the SSAS. In the above quotes, both teachers seem to undergo a shift in their perception of what teaching and lessons entail, influenced by the SSAS and the innovation school policy. This transformation prompts them to initiate changes in their practices. Situated in innovation schools where such changes and the accountability for them are actively encouraged and recommended, their evolving practices will continually undergo assessment and review, fostering their growth as responsible and accountable educators.

### **7.3. The SSAS as a dense net of neo-liberal governmentality with pre-existing accountability measures**

As argued and evidenced in chapter Six, frontline teachers under the SSAS may feel little or even no surveillance or control when they only link it to the appraisal system and the broader policy of innovation schools as teachers' autonomy is emphasised. As mentioned in chapter Five where I investigated the origins of initial negative feelings of teachers towards the SSAS, their feeling of greater autonomy and less surveillance may at least partly stem from comparing it to the feeling of greater surveillance and less autonomy linked to the other past or current accountability policies that they have experienced within the complicated accountability context in South Korea.

I would like to turn our attention again to the other accountability regimes that currently operate, like the TAPD and PBIS, which are typical policies of panoptic performative accountability rooted in what Foucault conceptualised as 'disciplinary power.' In this mode, power employs judgment, comparison, hierarchy, exclusion, examination, normalisation and reward/sanction within or in support of the framework of 'datafication' (Robert-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016, p. 601). Thus, central to this approach includes the measurement of performance using various sorts of data, such as rankings, numbers, figures, rates, changes and patterns of attendance, results of students and various assessments on tasks, use of budget, degree of involvement, etc., aiming for 'data-surveillance' (Robert-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016, p. 601), particularly in modern neoliberal states.

The use of school funds in schools under the GOE provides a good example of these regimes. The current structure of the state-funding system for state schools registered in the GOE operates as follows:

specific funds, known as ‘purpose-driven funds’ (hereafter PDF), are allocated to schools for designated purposes, in accordance with particular policy standards, most of which are devised by policymakers in the GOE and the Ministry of Education. These funds account for approximately sixty percent of a school’s total annual income within the GOE. As a result, schools and teachers have limited autonomy over the funds they can utilize for their desired educational objectives. Consequently, teachers tend to constantly monitor their spending against external standards, particularly concerning the use of PDF, which is digitally recorded, tracked, and overseen by educational authorities via regular checking mechanisms. Naturally, this places them under disciplinary control regarding the allocation of funds, and they are subject to public scrutiny as well. Their expenditures are highly restricted and subject to regular monitoring and regulation. This enables authorities to directly guide the behaviour of teachers and schools in enacting policies. Consequently, individual teachers may find themselves adhering solely to these standards and educating students in a prescribed manner, in order to align with higher bands or achieve favourable grades or points within the accountability systems. In such circumstances, teachers may perceive that they are constantly being observed, restricted, and controlled.

However, when they use funds within the SSAS, to compare, things are relatively much freer and easier because they are allowed to allocate money based upon the curriculum and educational activities they set up on their own, referring to their own-made appraisal standards. Therefore, they may conclude that they are not being intensely monitored and subject to surveillance. It is because the SSAS uses different approaches and technologies to govern teachers.

The particular governmentality in relation to the SSAS addresses the inside of minds, mentalities, and souls of subjects and it eventually controls bodies, behaviour, conduct of them. It also structures the field of action, via mainly invisible but internalised gaze of the self

and the others, such as the peers, which is defined as ‘conscious and total visibility’ (Perryman et al, 2017), whereas disciplinary power primarily targets the bodies of individuals via ‘permanent visibility’, as termed by Courtney (2016, p. 627). That is, this approach places primary attention on controlling the inner-self, informs the use of ‘technologies of the self’, which has been highlighted as key technology of autonomous self-surveillance in preceding sections, by controlling the way in which humans constitute themselves through a constant engagement in self-understanding and self-reinvention (Perryman et al., 2017). Such practices of the self, or what Dean calls processes of ‘governmental self-formation’, can take different forms and be directed towards different ends, for example, in the form of Christian pastoralism, subjects self-reflect as a spiritual subject in the eyes of God (Foucault, 1982a); in the form of the neoliberal enterprising self, subjects are encouraged to self-control and manage to be an agent who is autonomous, entrepreneurial, competitive and accountable (Son, 2012), similar to already-existing accountability policy discourses. Moreover, Foucault describes governmentality as the contact point between (other) technologies of power and technologies of the self, the place where they meet and interact for productive result. This means governmentality emerged as a new modality of power, embracing former modalities such as what Foucault calls ‘sovereign’ and ‘disciplinary’, at the same time embracing pre-existing technologies of power mentioned above and the technologies targeting the self. This also means the modalities of power interweave, overlap and compound one another within processes of policy and educational reform (Perryman et al., 2017, p. 746). In this sense, I argue that the overall accountability, including the SSAS, TAPD, PBIS, etc., can be framed by Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’ (2008) in a sense that all of them form an assemblage, or a dense net, of surveillance and government.

The manifestations of this particular governmentality is well being exercised within innovation schools in Korea, as described in the

following quote of Stream from Water Secondary:

This is especially important for schools that pretend to be innovative. They should be annually evaluated by not only parents and students but by teachers as well (via the pre-existing means of evaluation, such as PBIS and TAPD). And after a few years they might add a few more appraisal criteria (based on the evaluations of the stakeholders).

So, what I fundamentally talk about is teachers' autonomy and how the current school's self-appraisal is just a (different) tool. In the past, principals would just walk in in the middle of the class, they would appear and things like this would happen frequently. In the past I thought the right to teach is very important and related to the teachers' autonomy and is one of my rights. But after I came to an innovative school, I understood that lessons are public. And because this is public, I cannot do whatever I want. I need to interact with the students as a public service worker and not as an individual.

(Sidney Stream, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

This particular teacher at Water Secondary demonstrates a clear understanding of how current accountability policies, including both performative ones like PBIS and TAPD, as well as self-appraisal, work together to establish a more gentle, comprehensive and even enhanced way of control. She recognizes how performative policies, such as walk-in lesson observations, contribute to the self-appraisal process. In the first section of the quote, she points out that self-assessment can ultimately be influenced by pre-existing performative assessment measures, highlighting the impact of the latter on the former. In other words, the improvement requirements identified through performative appraisals ultimately form the key standards for self-appraisal. Consequently, the criteria used in self-appraisal, which is intended to be conducted using teacher autonomy, may end up being 'just a different tool', borrowing her phrase, which is quite similar to those used in performative assessments, raising concerns



about the genuine autonomy of teachers in setting these criteria.

This concern is supported by an examination and comparison of certain standards from TAPD, which is centrally determined and enacted by the Ministry of Education at the national level, with those of SSAS. Both TAPD and SSAS focus on teaching quality and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), as illustrated in Table 1.

Accountability Measure	TAPD	SSAS			
School (Year)	All in GOE (2021)	Green Secondary (2021)	Blue Primary (2021)	Red Secondary (2021)	Yellow Primary (2020)
Area of appraisal	Teaching and assessment	Curriculum	Curriculum	Curriculum	Curriculum
Example Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How well a teacher informs the lesson and evaluation plans?</li> <li>- How well a teacher teaches the subject contents?</li> <li>- How well a teacher uses diverse ways of teaching?</li> <li>- How well a teacher assesses pupils?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How well the school uses diverse ways or methods of teaching?</li> <li>- How often the school provides lesson observations?</li> <li>- How well the teacher assesses pupil's achievement?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The extent that school provides diverse curriculums with diverse ways of teaching</li> <li>- The extent the school provides curriculums, lessons, assessments, and records with consistency</li> <li>- The extent the school try to raise pupil's standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the school provide diverse and unique curriculums that are learners-suited and student-driven?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does the school provide diverse and unique curriculums that are student-driven?</li> <li>- Does the school try to tackle low achievement of pupils?</li> </ul>

[Table 4. Standards comparison between the TAPD and the SSAS, focused on teaching quality (see appendix (number) for more details of the standards)]

As seen in the table 2, for better quality of teaching and assessment, teachers are asked to be accountable for the diverse ways of teaching and assessment of pupils under the TAPD. This particular significance of teaching and assessment is more or less found in all self-appraisal standards of the participant schools in similar languages. That is, teachers were free to design their own criteria under the SSAS but came up with something remarkably similar to those of the TAPD. The two accountability systems intersect where performative accountability policies and the self-appraisal meet and this implies there might have been some influence, perhaps from the pre-existing accountability policies to the newly added one in forming its standards. Within the context, autonomy is restricted and feed the SSAS to become more like to TAPD. This is a completely different explanation from what the current GOE policy-maker says as below.

Speaking in terms of policy, we should not think that TAPD was introduced by government actually to give out bonus on assessment. It really was introduced to train teachers and develop their competency, which should not be connected with the performance-based incentive pay. And as for performance-based incentive pay, school members make some indicators through consultation and if someone meets the criteria, it will be scored and performance-based pay will be given at a rate of 30% or something like that depending on the score. Different schools have different ideas on criterion and rate. So TAPD and performance-based pay have different purposes. As for this schools' self-assessment, the outcome of it has no influence on TAPD and performance-based incentive pay. And no school uses the outcome of school assessment as an indicator for performance-based incentive pay. This is totally different.

(Terra Field, Current policymaker & Inspector, GOE)

At this point, to assist the arguments so far, it is interesting to pay attention to how autonomy of teachers found in the SSAS feed and

serve competition under the SSAS from a couple of quotes of a former policy-maker and a teacher. This is important because if it serves the neoliberal idea under SSAS, it means that it ended up serving the idea of the central tower of GOE that still impose such idea onto teachers by surveillance, observation and control through pre-existing performative accountability regimes and the SSAS.

Clay Sands, the former policy-maker, said in the interview, and the specific policy context of the GOE again, to see how a particular knowledge is internalised within a teacher via the self-appraisal system, assisted by the other appraisal systems.

School inspection has been performed for a long time and the school's self-appraisal system has recently started to promote competition between schools. But there are gaps in quality between them. In the beginning, the self-appraisal system is differentiated from the former inspection, but now there is a trend to merge them into one.

(Clay Sands, Former policymaker & Inspector, GOE)

Here, Sand is talking about two different accountability policies affecting teachers, specifically, the School-Driven Comprehension Inspection system (hereafter, SDCI), which is a succession of the former GOE-driven inspection scheme, the SI, and the schools' self-appraisal system. She says that they are different in terms of quality, though not explicitly worded, meaning that the SDCI is more about whether or not meeting targets and performance criteria in the sector of school administration thus more quantitative and result-oriented, while the SSAS is more about how schools meet targets and self-made standards in the sector of educational activities of teachers thus more qualitative and process-oriented. However, she says they tend to be merged, aiming for fostering greater competitiveness. This doesn't mean the two systems become a single policy, rather it means that the SSAS become similar to the SDCI in a sense that it is changing to just

whether or not meeting the standards rather than how to meet them. This is further supported by interviews from teacher participants.

Yes, so I modified some of the existing evaluation items (of the SSAS from the context), and then I wanted to show what we are good at, not only in our school experience, but also in my former schools, because the evaluation results should be good. So, I put a lot of excellent ones, and it would be advantageous to take those things that we have realistically executed as evaluation items.

(Aspen Ridge, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

In the quote, we observe gaming to show themselves as better than they are in Mountain Secondary. Ridge confessed that the reason why she modified evaluation criteria in the SSAS was to shed light on both what the former and the current school do well. This is the way their virtue and performance against standards can be more spotlighted by the GOE and the public. Thus, she inserted or replaced standards indicators with the ones which are advantageous to the education of Mountain Secondary and their educational performance, to make them look greater. It could be reasonably inferred that she knew the innovation schools compete each other with evaluation results and performance in the accountability system.

The virtue of competition is one of the key ideas in neoliberal education and it has been achieved in the South Korean context by various performative technologies and techniques of power, such as lesson observation, data-comparison between teachers and schools and publication of data via transparency policies and league tables, many of which are the means of external discipline exercised on bodies. The former policy-maker as well as inspector is implying that such neoliberal value has not been eradicated but is being achieved and supplemented by different technologies embedded within the SSAS. The value of competition, perhaps specifically the

‘competition for quality education’, is internalised in the minds of teachers under the self-appraisal system, turning that knowledge into something they personally choose, which I interpret as deeper subjectifying effects, recruiting and enmeshing teachers more securely in the web of power. This happens because they are moulded as an ‘actively responsible individual because of the development of new apparatuses’, e.g. appraisal meetings, ‘that integrate subjects into a moral nexus of identifications and allegiances in the very process in which they appear to act out their most personal choices’ (Miller & Rose, 2008, p. 214, cited in Perryman et al., 2017, p. 751). In this process, under the mirage of autonomy, individuals become more self-responsible and accountable, rather than more truly autonomous, for their own decisions. This is the process of how particular knowledge, which once was receptive and forced to teachers, is presented and internalised with the sense of ownership. In this sense, governmentality is a very effective and productive way of control for infusing knowledge as well as controlling conducts.

Then, could it still be said that the different modes and manifestations of power in the sense that they use different approaches, political realisations, and technologies, are inscribed in the current accountability context by chance or with no specific end? It should not be so. Rather, the self-appraisal system can be interpreted as one of the specific technologies of governmentality aligning with and allowing disciplines inscribed in performative accountability policies to work in the overall accountability scheme. It can be therefore described as an amalgam of multiple modalities of power in one, and such a compound or mixture of different modalities of power that approach and constitute teachers with different ways and means, and encourages them to feel they are more autonomous, even under evolved surveillance with the SSAS. However, they are in fact under effective control.

## **7.4. Conclusion**

The exploration of accountability within the SSAS reveals a complex interplay between autonomy and control. This system shifts traditional accountability measures, emphasizing self-directed processes where teachers actively set and adhere to their evaluation standards. Teachers report a heightened sense of responsibility, stemming from their involvement in shaping the criteria against which they are assessed. This transformation from external to internalized accountability creates a unique dynamic: while teachers feel more autonomous, they simultaneously experience increased pressure due to the collective and self-surveillance mechanisms embedded in the system.

The SSAS fosters accountability through mechanisms such as peer collaboration, self-reflection, and democratic leadership, moving away from overt punitive measures to a framework that prioritises professional agency. However, this accountability is not free from challenges. It often aligns teacher practices with institutional goals, subtly reinforcing systemic control. Furthermore, the performative nature of accountability under the SSAS drives competition both within and between schools, placing additional demands on teachers to innovate and excel continuously. Along with that, the SSAS is weaved with other pre-existing accountability policy techniques, resulting in the close net that further controls frontline teachers by neoliberal ideas.

Thus, it is fair to argue that, despite its emphasis on autonomy, the SSAS ultimately demonstrates how neoliberal principles of government can intertwine self-direction with heightened accountability, making teachers the architects of their professional obligations while perpetuating a system of subtle oversight. This duality underscores the necessity of critically examining such frameworks to balance genuine teacher empowerment with sustainable professional expectations.



## **Chapter Eight: PROFESSIONALISM AND SUBJECTIVITY THROUGH THE SSAS**

### **8.1. Introduction**

In this section, I will address the topic of the reshaping of professionalism and changes in teachers' subjectivity, in light of the discussions and findings presented in chapter Five to Seven, to suggest it as a prominent consequence as well as evidence of the works of the SSAS as a governmental technology. Specifically, I will examine the impact of the schools' self-appraisal system on this aspect and how the ideas and technologies for control embedded in the system work for transformation of professionalism and creation of new subjectivity who align with the policy.

Based on the data that will be discussed in later parts of this chapter, it can be argued that the SSAS, in conjunction with its parent policy of innovation school, strongly influences the reshaping of teacher professionalism. The question then arises: how is teachers' professionalism being reshaped and what qualities define the shift in teacher professionalism? In the previous chapters of data analysis, I have discussed the extended autonomy that teachers are afforded within the SSAS, which has allowed them to take greater surveillance over their own education and pedagogy. However, I have also noted that this freedom is experienced in tandem with a culture of greater surveillance and accountability, thus their practice can still be guided by policies and technologies underpinned by those policies, all of which can restrict their professional freedom and shape their professional decision-making. In this sense, I argue that the use of this type of freedom may also lead to a particular type of professionalism, where professional decisions are strongly influenced and guided by policies and the authority that enforces them. These dynamics take

place within the context of the SSAS and innovation school policy. Some may argue that teachers have been controlled by authority over the past decades, so it is not surprising that their decision-making is shaped by such authority. However, the reformation of teacher professionalism that I am going to discuss is significant and novel in that teachers are guided and controlled at the same time as perceiving their professionalism as enhanced and respected, rather than eroded and interfered as in the past. In addition, this whole process transforms teacher professionalism into that which aligns with the aims/goals/intentions of those who exercise power.

Furthermore, I argue that the introduction of the self-appraisal system and the policy of innovation school are not only reshaping teacher professionalism, but also moulding a new kind of teacher subjectivity. They are becoming more autonomous and self-directed individuals, who feel less pressured or controlled. As a result, they are generally more satisfied with their professional identity, when reflecting on how they have felt previously, before experiencing the innovation school environment and its associated policy technologies. Some of the marked qualities of this new subjectivity include constant self-reflection, ownership of their practices, freewill in their work, regret of past practices, openness and flexibility, and autonomy. This means that both their personal and professional autonomy are enhanced. However, it is important to note that these changes are linked to a deeper level of subjectivity, in terms of how teachers see themselves and who they aspire to be. At the same time, they are also obedient and proactive agents of what is considered a 'good teacher' by the GOE. The new subjectivity is thus moulded with significant influence from the ideas, values, and discourse of the authority, which define the expectations of a good teacher and control frontline teachers accordingly.

## **8.2. Transformation of Professionalism of Teachers**

### **8.2.1. The ways teacher professionalism is reshaped**

When talking about professionalism, many of my teacher participants became more interested and engaged in the interview. This implies that the issue of teacher professionalism and improvement of it is perhaps one of the most desirable areas that most teachers have longed for. I believe that many of them, when talking about professionalism, are reminded of the moments of 'post-golden age of teacher professionalism' wherein they were put in stricter sovereign and disciplinary control and accountability culture measured against high standards on performance both in teaching and pedagogy and even administrative jobs, which have shaped their thought and behaviour over time.

Concerning teacher performance appraisals such as the SI, TAPD and PBIS, teachers in South Korea find themselves in a situation where they are encouraged to engage in continuing professional development to acquire essential knowledge and skills emphasised by the central and local educational authorities through 'job training for professional development' and 'qualification training' (Kim et al., 2009) programmes, both within the in-service education of teachers in South Korea. Both programmes are often enacted as part of or in a close link to teacher appraisal systems that assess performance of teachers and the promotion system in which involvement of such programmes is counted and valued. Typically, the programmes involve various training opportunities, workshops, seminars, and courses aimed at developing teachers' pedagogical knowledge, instructional strategies, curriculum design, assessment techniques, and other relevant skills. The training content may strongly align with educational policies, curriculum frameworks, and priorities set by the educational authorities. Thus, teachers may participate in training sessions organized by their schools, educational institutions, or educational authorities at the regional or national level. These training programmes are mostly top-down and compulsory, meaning missing

them could result in serious sanction or disadvantage on individuals or schools.

During such CPD programmes, teachers are expected to actively engage in learning, reflecting on their teaching practices, and acquiring new knowledge and techniques. The programme often incorporates assessments or evaluations to measure the effectiveness of the training and the impact on teachers' professional growth. However, teachers' efforts to pursue a broader range of professional knowledge and skills that they value have not been acknowledged and systematically supported to the same extent as the job training or qualification training programmes. To be more specific, it would be individually choosing to do a masters or higher degrees but statutory CPD is generally not an individual thing but is offered by the regional offices of education or the central ministry of education. Other CPD is pretty much on the choices of individuals as there are lots of external providers for teacher education. For an example of statutory CPD, the content and methods used in the 'level 1 teacher certificate', which is the highest level of teaching qualification that a teacher achieves, are often criticized for being theory-oriented and not reflecting the reality of schooling and opportunities for professional life of teachers on the frontline, especially general training are insufficient to meet the demand from teachers in South Korea (Kim et al., 2009). Thus, the problems observed in in-service teacher education for teachers' continuous professional development are believed to be a result of the lack of genuine interest in teacher professionalism that teachers aspire. These issues have significantly hindered teachers' efforts towards their own professional development.

In contrast, under the SSAS, teachers experience a greater sense of freedom and greater support in their professionalism and professional development. They can get more opportunities for personal or collective CPD as they are offered more funding and extended autonomy. This heightened sense of autonomy and support is not wasted but rather utilized by teachers for productive outcomes,

leading to a feeling of enhanced professional improvement and satisfaction. Specifically, the data reveals that a majority of the participating teachers reported significant improvements in their professionalism, in terms of how they feel about their own professional identity, both at an individual and collective level, as a result of the SSAS enactment, whilst encouraging reflective techniques, albeit within certain restrictions and guidance. I should note here that the data doesn't reveal specific increased opportunities for CPDs or funding, rather it shows perceptions regarding their professional improvement and professional identity.

What Cloud in Sky Secondary says shows that how extended freedom and the culture cultivated by the SSAS has led her school community to a climate where they openly discuss their own curriculum and lessons, which is followed by decision-making on them, which can be a scaffolding of professional development.

[Interviewer]

Have your lessons changed a lot?

[Participant]

It's different every year so I need to think, what did I do last year. And the year after I would think, oh it changed a lot. This makes me think I did change. I think this makes Yellow Primary a good school.

[Interviewer]

What is the reason?

[Participant]

(Omission) And then, and then, and now, this atmosphere. You can do this or you can talk about what you want to do with this or you can do this with the kids. Now that the mind has become a basic premise about this, when I accept some new things, try them, and then meet with the children and tell them to do something, whether it's a parent or a co-teacher, it doesn't come as an obstacle anymore.

We witness Cloud's lessons change every year, meaning that she can try different pedagogical experiments and initiatives in lessons, and, through this effort and the atmosphere that allows such effort and change is perceived as good and moral, she feels that she is a member of a good school. This could be interpreted as she might feel she is improving in lessons, growing into a good teacher. In this case, we observe that freedom results in a culture of risk-taking and decision-making for change are praised and the change results in empowerment of individuals who wish to change and improve. This is possible when the discourse of constant change and its benefits is absorbed by the school community. This becomes a good atmosphere for teachers to develop their professional abilities. This is not strikingly surprising because there have been arguments that innovation schools provide teachers with greater autonomy and empowerment in their teaching practices (Lee & Choi, 2016; Byun & Lee, 2017; Ryu and Lee, 2020). They encourage teachers to take ownership of their professional growth and decision-making processes that eventually lead to further changes and development. This autonomy allows teachers to experiment with innovative teaching methods and approaches.

The emphasis on creativity, innovation and contextualization of the curriculum by the GOE is encouraged, and these aspects are also reflected in the self-appraisal standards of the participating schools.

Organizing and designing school curriculum and reflecting on it is now a basic skill teachers should have. In the past, good teachers were those who follow national curriculum well. But now I tend to think about what is best for my class, as everyone is different. I look for different ways to do this as well. By discussing more in this matter, I think my professionalism is developing.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Here, Greenwood explores different ways of teaching, and she feels she is improving whilst accepting that ability to change, reorganise and redesign school curriculum is the competence that links to the concept of improvement and professionalism that is desired to.

Stone in Water Secondary also senses improvement while handling his own curriculum and contents to teach, although he cannot be completely free from the achievement standards set by the National Curriculum.

As I said earlier, I have learnt so much at this school and I feel I have developed. Just because I don't stick to textbooks doesn't mean I'm out of the achievement standards. Rather, I do not set the achievement standards and, instead of teaching students with textbooks that I have not had experience in personally, I teach them with what I have planned is much more fun and I feel this is a development.

(Brooke Stone, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

As Stone says, teachers freely try whatever they want to do in lessons because they are given extended autonomy and they feel enjoyment as well as feel less pressure from standards, though there could be some level of unseen pressure from accountability from, for example, tests for upper schools in the Secondary school setting. In such processes, as intended, teachers try to innovate their curriculums and lessons, aiming to be an autonomous practitioner or 'autonomous professionals' (Lee and Choi, 2016), via both personal endeavour and professional effort. Such a feeling of becoming an autonomous professional encompasses the feeling of improvement as a professional, as professionalism is primarily based on control and regulation.

Summit in Mountain Secondary experiences the same feeling of improvement as a professional in discussions in PLCs.

Development of professionalism. Like I said before, we discuss and think about it during the professional learning communities or the whole school staff meetings. That definitely was very helpful and by evaluating it, I think about how much I did, how much the school did, and etc. Then I think, our school is not doing that bad or I could maybe improve on this part. It gives us the opportunity to look back at ourselves and reflect. This eventually helps with professionalism.

(Cliff Summit, Middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

One interesting observation from Summit's perspective is that PLCs serve as both a facilitator and a platform for fostering greater professionalism and development, which is enhanced by freedom. Here we observe that PLCs provide continuous learning opportunities for teachers, contributing to their knowledge expansion, skill development, and overall professional growth (Ryu & Lee, 2020).

All the testimonies from the participant teachers suggest that a greater sense of professionalism is developing under the context of the SSAS, particularly through the enhancement of freedom and autonomy with the dynamics of the complex mechanisms supported by works of dominant discourses, such as creativity and innovation, and techniques, such as the PLCs. In considering that encouragement of freedom and autonomy is the main feature and technology of governmentality, it could be argued that professionalism is allowed with a particular end for greater government, and it aims for a particular destination where teachers are defined as good depending on to the extent they align with the goals of those who frame the system of the accountability.

Another interesting observation from the interviews, in particular with



Greenwood and Summit, is the role of the technology of the self in fostering a culture of self-reflection and contributing to a sense of professional improvement. It is evident when Summit says “It gives us the opportunity to look back at ourselves and reflect.” and “This eventually helps with professionalism.” In addition, as noted by Greenwood saying “Organizing and designing school curriculum and reflecting on it is now a basic skill teachers should have”, it is noticeable that the practice of self-reflection has become a norm or prerequisite for curriculum and lesson redesign, which is closely tied to a sense of professional growth. This suggests that technology focused on the self, such as self-reflection, self-examination, self-surveillance, self-inspection, and even self-regret, is highly associated with professional development, as it assists for individuals to identify areas for improvement. Without engaging in such self-practice, individuals may not recognise what aspects need improvement or how to enhance themselves professionally. Thus, I witness that the key technology of government in the SSAS is also technically used for promotion of greater professionalism, which may imply that professionalism of teachers with enactment of the SSAS in innovation schools aims at a particular end, the political control of teachers, although obviously the teachers may not understand the complex web of power within which they are enmeshed. In other words, a more professionalised and autonomous teaching profession is, at the same time, a more controlled profession.

Brooke Stone in Water Secondary suggests that reflecting on the needs of the era and the community eventually leads teachers to more research and exploration, through which their professionalism can improve.

The self-appraisal is positive for both professionalism and subjectivity. (Omission) But now there is just a big concept, and we can make the details. Like I said earlier we don't just make standards. We reflect on what this era needs, what our

town needs etc so we need to study and consider about this and, if that doesn't help, sometimes have to refer to the books which helps. It affects our classes as well and not just referring to the textbooks I think about how it can be reflected etc. So I can tell I have changed.

(Brooke Stone, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

On top of such culture of self-reflection, the culture of collective effort, collective decision-making and collective responsibility are also promoted to empower teachers (Lee and Choi, 2016; Byun & Lee, 2017) and to create the particular context where such behaviour is defined as a sign of professional development.

I am not sure as a whole but I cannot do these without other teachers. By discussing with them, I think we all learn something. There is something that everyone is good at and we help each other and our professionalism grow as well.

(Maple Vale, Teacher, Forest Primary)

(Talking about school violence and a restorative club activities as a solution) Teachers like it that things that could be my sole responsibility is not just mine, everyone in the community work on it and try to figure it out. So, they are very comfortable and content about it and there are many positive aspects about the clubs too.

(Brooke Stone, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

Both quotes suggests that the discourses of collectivity and working together is widely accepted amongst teachers and they are perceived as a praised route for professional development. As described by Vale and Stone, engaging in team efforts to address pedagogical and pastoral issues in students creates a supportive environment where teachers feel comfortable and safe. The sense of comfort and support within the team enables them to develop potential solutions, leading

to increased confidence and a feeling of improvement. Lee and Choi (2016) argue that when teachers are empowered as professionals in the supportive environment, they are more motivated, innovative, and committed to professional development.

### **8.2.2. The qualities of teacher professionalism under the context of the SSAS**

In this new culture, some teachers mentioned that they can improve themselves through competition and by comparing themselves with others. They highlighted the continuous learning of skills and techniques from fellow teachers through competition and comparison supports one another towards common goals outlined in the self-appraisal standards, though it contradicts the collective efforts for professional development described in chapter 6.4.2.

First of all, all the things I compete with the teachers are a great stimulus to me, giving me a chance to think, giving me experience, and becoming an opportunity to grow. So, I think that just being in that environment itself means that I have a dream, and that I am keeping the door open for me to grow as a teacher.

(Aurora Cloud, Teacher, Sky Primary)

Aurora in Yellow Primary embraces the discourse of competitiveness as something positive, necessary, and beneficial for her personal growth and improvement. However, it is important to note that not everyone shares the same perspective regarding the culture of peer competition. Some individuals may have different experiences and feelings towards this competitive environment, but they cannot deny that it is a part of their professionalism.

These competitions amongst individuals will benefit the school's general educational goal and philosophy. Last year we needed to start online classes due to coronavirus. So, each teacher was good at delivering their classes (individually online) but as a group we didn't know much. And because everyone is talented, we each competed. When we were discussing our school curriculum presentation, we promised to deliver it in certain ways. But in the actual presentation it was very elaborate. Everyone is talented but I do feel some competition.

(Logan Leaf, Middle leader, Forest Primary)

Leaf, as a chief manager in Forest Primary, experienced competition in delivering online lessons in the pandemic period caused by Covid-19. She was surrounded by young and enthusiastic teachers who challenge or innovate conventional teaching methods. This competition to achieve greater excellence and diversity in online teaching is a new experience for her since previous accountability measures focused mainly on teacher performance and adherence to prescribed teaching approaches. However, with the enactment of the SSAS, a different environment has emerged where individual and collective efforts in competition towards professionalism are celebrated. Thus this is a perceived demand to stand out, to make an impact (i.e. on results) and to be innovative in the end. Those who don't or can't settle in such atmosphere, where competition is celebrated as a quality of teacher professionalism, might feel being left behind.

In addition, it's important to note that competition is not only observed between individuals but also between schools.

Yes, since last year's work is like this now, yes, the manager in charge mainly did it, but I also helped at the side. Yes, so I modified some of the existing evaluation items, and then I want to show what we are good at, not only in our school experience, but also in other schools, because the evaluation

results should be good. So, there are a lot of excellent ones, and it would be advantageous to take those things that we have realistically executed as evaluation items.

(Aspen Ridge, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

One important point to remind is that such competition between schools does not naturally emerge but is intentionally promoted within the context of the tier/band system in innovation schools (Choi, 2017; GOE, 2020c), where the qualities of innovation and competition are encouraged perfectly work together. This system categorizes schools based on their level of innovation and enactment of innovative practices. There are three tiers in the system: the pre-innovative or innovation sympathy, the innovative and the model-innovative (Choi, 2017; GOE, 2020c) in Gyeonggi-do. The Primary purpose of this system is to recognize and differentiate schools that have made significant progress in innovation and provide varying levels of support and resources accordingly, which intentionally encourages competition and spread best practices. For instance, if a school is placed in the model-innovative, it signifies that the school has achieved the highest level of innovation with exemplary practices and outstanding results. As a result, schools strive to be included in the top tier in order to gain better recognition, access to resources, and financial support. The pre-innovative schools model and learn the practices of model-innovative schools via visits and training programmes offered by the model-innovative schools. Then, pre-innovative schools get approval to be the innovative or model-innovative status if they are successful in inspection. This status is maintained until the next inspection. Therefore, the culture of competition observed between schools for innovative professional development is not surprising but rather deliberately and systemically intended by the GOE.

Overall, the aforementioned quotes regarding the creation of a specific culture for professional development collectively demonstrate

that the use of freedom, self-governing techniques and the presence of a competitive culture are widely accepted and highly valued within the framework of the SSAS under innovative schools. It is intriguing to observe that these aspects align with the principles of neoliberalism, which emphasise the promotion of competitive individuals and entrepreneurs who are accountable for their own growth, outcomes and even failures. That is, the emphasis on freedom, self-governing, competition, and individual accountability within the context of the SSAS and innovation schools align with neoliberal ideology.

Additionally, it is worth noting this dynamic in light of the fact that many teachers have expressed dissatisfaction with the government's perceived lack of support and the inadequate quality of CPD programmes within Korean teacher communities. It means that there remains a significant number of teachers who have felt disengaged or held back due to the external factors. This highlights the complex interplay between individual agency, institutional support, and systemic challenges within the landscape of professional development in the teaching profession. In this respect, the cultivation of these particular ways of professional improvement and the qualities for teacher professionalism through the SSAS is addressing the consequences of these complex dynamics, including the significant number of teachers who are lagging behind in terms of professional development and the authority's definition of professionalism.

I understand that the changes in teachers' professionalism are viewed positively in many ways, as they are voluntary and lead to a sense of improvement compared to the past policy context. However, it is important to note that these changes are still influenced and directed by policies and policymakers, rather than being primarily driven by teachers themselves and their own aspirations for improvement. This raises the question of whether teachers are truly able to freely enhance their professionalism according to their own judgment and practices, or if their development is largely shaped by external forces.

I argue that within the context of innovation schools and the enactment of the SSAS, professionalism is predominantly directed, guided, and controlled by authorities and power through a complex interplay of various controlling mechanisms such as technologies, techniques, and discourses. As I have discussed, the concept of freedom and reflective practices, as a combination of political technologies, serves as the foundation within the culture of professional development. Techniques like PLCs and other training programmes create an environment that generates specific discourses surrounding innovation, competitiveness, collectivism, and excellence. These discourses aim to shape the conduct, mindset and values of teachers, aligning them with the intentions of the governing authority as outlined in the policy. The authority constantly monitors and inspects this mindset and conduct through mechanisms like the SSAS and regular consultations and inspections, fostering a competitive environment for the pursuit of a certain kind high-quality professionalism that can be defined with the discursive language of the policy text among individuals and innovation schools. Thus, what teachers gain from such guidance on their professionalism is not merely improvement of knowledge and skills in lessons, curriculum and pastoral excellence, but certain attitudes and mindset that is linked to the ideal teacher that is suggested by the policy text. The ideal type of teacher in innovation schools, as suggested by the policy text (GOE, 2019), is one who embodies qualities of innovation, creativity, and excellence in teaching. The policy emphasizes ‘the importance of teachers who are able to adapt to change, think critically, and enact innovative teaching practices’ (GOE, 2020a). These teachers are expected to be ‘proactive in seeking professional development opportunities, engaging in continuous learning, and actively participating in professional learning communities’ (GOE, 2020a). They are encouraged to demonstrate leadership skills, collaborate with colleagues, and contribute to the overall improvement of teaching and learning within the school (GOE,

2020a).

Finally, it can be noted that the professionalism found under the SSAS cannot be easily explained with reference to a single concept or theory. Through my analysis, it appears to align with multiple conceptions of teacher professionalism that have been discussed and conceptualized by researchers across the modern and post-modern eras. It encompasses various characteristics of different types of teacher professionalism, making it challenging to define but a composition of multiple types.

First and foremost, when considering teacher professionalism alone, I argue that the professionalism fostered by working with the SSAS in innovation schools does not seem to align with what Hargreaves termed 'post-modern professionalism,' characterized by the de-professionalisation of teaching and a return to a pre-professional era where teachers are seen as mere knowledge transmitters (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 167-171). This is predominantly because teachers in innovative schools are neither reverting to the era when neoliberal ideas and new public management undermined the 'golden age of teacher professionalism' in the mid-1970s so that focused on standards and visible performance, nor are they going back to the early days of the teaching profession, or 'the pre-professional age', when professional expectations were not well-established (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 153-158).

Instead, it appears to align with what Hargreaves (2000) referred to as 'autonomous teacher professionalism,' where teachers have greater control over the curriculum and working conditions, reminiscent of the golden age of teacher professionalism as discussed in the data (Hargreaves, 2000; pp. 158-162). It also incorporates elements of 'post-modern professionalism,' drawing from both autonomous professionalism and collegial professionalism, which emphasizes collaborative work among teachers to meet the complex demands of teaching (Hargreaves, 2000, pp. 167-175). Additionally, it seems to



contain elements of 'democratic professionalism,' which involves traditionally excluded stakeholders such as students, parents, and the wider community in school decision-making (Witty & Wisby, 2006, pp.34-35), in a sense that teachers in innovation schools are improving themselves within an appraisal and curriculum framework that has been developed through collaborative efforts involving multiple stakeholders, including the voices of students and parents.

### **8.3. Transformation of Subjectivity of Teachers**

#### **8.3.1. Subjectivity in the past**

Before addressing the issue of the formation of new subjectivity under the enactment of the SSAS, I would like to share a few reflections from teacher participants to demonstrate the types of behaviours that were praised and the aspects of teacher subjectivity that were encouraged by the GOE. I will then proceed to discuss the qualities of subjectivity that are found in the current accountability context with the SSAS.

One interesting observation is that when teachers were subject to the old mechanisms of accountability and performance, their aspirations were largely centred around becoming outstanding models in terms of delivering lessons or transmitting knowledges and skills that the national curriculum specifies, as defined by external standards and the scrutiny of powerful entities, such as inspectors and the GOE. In simpler terms, their goal was to be noticed by others, particularly in terms of their teaching skills.

I think it did change a lot. I am in my 16th year of teaching career. When I first started my job, the main priority as a teacher were to teach students well and it was important to learn different teaching methods to make students listen to me. And I was expected to give out information when having

parent meeting. This is what I used to think. I think the reason why my perceptions changed is after I moved to innovation school.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

At that time, when I first came, I had to become a teacher who was very good at teaching. After 10 years or so, when my career is at that level, I really have to become a person who is confident in my lessons. It's difficult.

(Aurora Cloud, Teacher, Sky Primary)

(referring to an external inspector) This person was a competent teacher who was a manager and a competent teacher at the office of education I mentioned earlier. I think I was more engrossed in that kind of thing because I was caught up in the gaze of being judged as that type of teacher. There are also research competitions to write reports. Teachers who lead groups such as the gifted class or scouting are given bonus points for promotion and some kind of commendation, right? Those things are just piling up, and the bottom side is that this is my visible result, so this is me as my teacher.

(Draft Orion, Middle Manager, Sky Primary)

Though the exact meaning of "teaching students well" and being "good at teaching" by Greenwood in Forest Primary and Cloud in Sky Primary is not explicitly stated, the underlying intention behind their statements is to become individual teachers who excel in imparting knowledge and skills to students, as evaluated and praised by the teaching standards set by the authority. Those teachers who have such excellence were annually selected as outstanding model teachers and nationally recognized, serving as benchmarks for other teachers to emulate through policy techniques such as the "best teacher competition in Maths." Orion from Sky Primary emphasizes the influence of how he is assessed and represented by external standards and gazes within the system. In simpler terms, he was placed where

visible performance is systematically valued. Such emphasis on excellence and performance was not only bounded to teaching but also extended to administrative skills. This can be better understood within the specific context of Korean education, where teachers often face excessive workloads, as highlighted by Orion's testimony.

In school before, I was a bit interested in administrative work, and now you will know Korean culture. Now, it is usually expressed as a 'baby inspector'. The (inspectors of) Office of Education has a support group (of teachers who are called 'baby inspectors') that supports work under the supervisor, and by doing those things, I (as a baby inspector) now get a good source and information of something, and it seems that those things are going well now. So rather than being at that school whole day, I used to go on a business trip to the Office of Education in the afternoons, and I was proud that I work for the office and was busy with such external work. But now that I'm here at this school, these things don't mean anything. I don't do anything (as a baby inspector).

(Draft Orion, Middle Manager, Sky Primary)

The above quote is interesting in that Orion is describing himself as a baby inspector working for a real inspector registered by the GOE. It means that he had to spend large amounts of his time supporting the jobs of the inspector who he supports, though he doesn't get any financial rewards from it. Through such efforts, he might be recognised as a competent teacher both in the school he belonged to and the GOE. The potential benefits he could gain from it were to get latest sources and information of changes in GOE's education, wider human networks and good reputation, all of which might play a significant role in his future career path.

Before the SSAS, as exemplified by the quotes from Greenwood, Cloud and Orion, teachers' priority was on excellence and performativity both in teaching and administration and it was a key

part of their subjectivity. Such emphasis on excellence and performativity by policy packages, using external standards and based on external assessment, prioritizes the specific types of teachers: the teachers with excellence and performance in both teaching and administration. Thus, these policies have created a climate where the ideal subject who pursues excellence and demonstrates visible performance is mandated and encouraged as Ridge describes below.

Before that, since I was younger and inexperienced, as instructed above, some of my own subjective things fell off a little, and it almost felt like I was doing what I was told to do.

(Aspen Ridge, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

### **8.3.2. Reformation of Subjectivity: Autonomous and Proactive Subjects**

There are many notable changes identified within the new subjectivities of teachers under the SSAS. Teacher participants who have claimed to have transformed into a new subjectivity provided specific but diverse keywords that explain the nature of their change. Some of the key words mentioned include innovation, change, agency, sense of ownership, freewill, regret of the past, openness, flexibility, self-reflection, being a true teacher rather than an administrator, and autonomous individual improvement. These keywords capture the varied experiences and perspectives of teachers that have an impact on forming a new subjectivity.

An immediate change that teachers experience once autonomy and freedom is guaranteed at the policy level is a shift in their attitude towards their jobs. Instead of simply following or pretending to follow what is given to them, they begin to explore new possibilities that they had previously silenced and distance themselves from their old ways.

I found an open mind here but I realized that I was very stubborn in the past. Now I know that I need to put an effort in being open minded and acknowledge others. I now know that I need to accept the changes. (Omission) In the past, I was very proud and confident. But now by meeting different people with different opinions, I know what I need to learn more. Especially after I came to this school, the other teachers' flexible mindset was very impressive, and I wanted to learn that as well. A lot of teachers have worked for less than 15 years. The principal's mindset was also very innovative as well.

(Logan Leaf, Middle leader, Forest Primary)

Yes, so if the teachers have a little more freedom in tasks, they can improve their professionalism a little more, such as pastoral or learning guidance, and there are also more motivations to try new things. In that sense, I think there were some positive changes to me, thinking retrospectively.

(Omission) In the past, I was a bit busy with work. In fact, I was sometimes annoyed when students spoke to me. There was that aspect. So, I thought to myself. What am I doing? Did I come here to work or teach students? I had some doubts and scepticism about my identity. But now with the new evaluation system for teachers, it is more about me showing them what I do. I am more relaxed when treating students and I can introduce them to what I want to do such as projects. There are about 4-5 projects (that multiple teachers are engaged in within the year group) within my lesson plan per semester which is not a few. But it wasn't straining with regards to running and planning the project.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Leaf & Arbour in Forest Primary commonly demonstrate that they are more open to changes and innovations. They seem to be freer and have good level of flexibility in accepting and learning new ideas from others. This acceptance of the new while rejecting the old represents a positive change in their identity and subjectivity in many

senses. It is evidenced by Arbour when he says “I had some doubts and scepticism about my identity. But now with the new evaluation system for teachers, it is more about me showing them what I do.” He looks more relaxed and confident in his professional job duties. It is evident that both teachers in the quotes have become more open-minded towards the changes happening around them, which has prompted them to explore new approaches in their teaching and student guidance. As a result, they have experienced a heightened sense of accomplishment and fulfilment in their roles as educators.

I have never thought about it (the SSAS) but when I feel accomplishment I did think I should try this next with the students.

(Logan Leaf, Middle leader, Forest Primary)

Such confidence is found in the words of Leaf with a feeling of empowerment to try new things, without fear of sanction.

With these positive changes that may prompt teachers to behave as a free individual, they become an ‘autonomous practitioner’ who feels freer to what they aim to do in their practices.

Now, in relation to subjectivity, that is the part where I develop education activities with a sense of ownership. Yes, I think that was the biggest change. However, in the past, the evaluation didn’t affect the class. In fact, even now, I don’t know if this is because of that, but the previous evaluation was not about better quality education but... yeah it was more like trying to pick on what we were not doing right. Right now, it is more like do what your school does best.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Yes. Before I first came here, I also had doubts that the

autonomy of the school would be given to the self-governing community, and that teachers would become more negligent and indolent. Rather than externally directing me to do these things, I have that kind of room to do what I want to do, and when I do, I work harder and take responsibility, and that creates a culture that is more developmental for myself as a teacher or for the school community.

(Draft Orion, Middle Manager, Sky Primary)

As described by Arbour & Orion, through the experience of self-appraisal, teachers now possess a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility not only in their individual tasks but also in the collective work carried out by the school community. They have embraced a greater sense of accountability and take ownership of the outcomes and progress of their students, demonstrating a deep commitment to their profession. It means that now they feel that policy is working with them, compared to how teacher appraisal was in the past.

Well generally I felt like I needed to do better for the students and approach the parents objectively. When I look at my daily schedule I do get to work early and leave work late but I am not swamped with workload but this school just feels like my school. And my students also feel part of school. (Omission) Even though I am busier and working hours are longer now. Yes I am looking at the whole thing. And as a community member I feel like I am in a leading position. So although it is burdensome I am more active.

(Logan Leaf, Middle leader, Forest Primary)

These changes, as highlighted in the quotes from Leaf in Forest Primary and the above one from Arbour and Orion, signify a significant transformation in teachers' subjectivity. Not only have they shifted their attitudes and mindsets towards their jobs, but they have also evolved into a new version of themselves that is characterized by

increased responsibility and accountability. It is a different kind of accountability which is more regulated by the profession itself than by external agencies and their standards, as it commonly accompanies the sense of freedom, agency, responsibility and ownership. It may be argued that they resemble neoliberal subjects within the education sector, these teachers have become autonomous individuals who make decisions freely and take ownership and responsibility of the consequences. For example, Leaf seems to be accepting the discourse of ‘working really hard but it’s so worth it’, which sounds like a neoliberal work ethic, when she says “Even though I am busier and working hours are longer now,” and “although it is burdensome I am more active”. Crucially, these changes have alleviated feelings of being overworked or exploited, even though their workload has not diminished.

Thus, these mechanisms of appraisal, characterized by greater autonomy and the technology of the self, have effectively shaped a particular type of subjectivity, the ‘autonomous subjects or practitioner’. These practitioners autonomously seek what aligns the goals of the school or the GOE, assuming full responsibility for their actions. The freedom provided by these mechanisms has proven to be effective in fostering such a subjectivity.

Within such subjectivity in the context of innovation schools, ‘agency’ is indeed a prominent concept (Jeong, 2019; Kim, T., 2019). Within the policy texts and discourses surrounding innovation schools, agency is a representing and central technology of governmental power in the era of governmentality. The policy creates ‘proactive subjects’ with the use of agency. These subjects referred to in the context of innovation schools are individuals who possess the capacity to act autonomously aligning with what the policy aimed at and make decisions that have an impact on their own professional practice, as well as the decision-making processes, culture, and educational environment of their schools, as exemplified by the testimonies of Kim in Red Secondary below.



There must be some good policies from the Education Office, which didn't work for us all the time though, but we have to get it done anyway. But now we are the centre of it so we can plan out what is needed for us, enact it and make an assessment from our viewpoint so we are the ones that lead certain education and even the school. This definitely lets us feel this way.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

Based on the data discussed so far, autonomous subjects or practitioners found in the context of innovation schools can be viewed as teachers who have undergone a transformation in their professional identities and subjectivities and embody a proactive and self-directed approach to teaching, characterized by autonomy, positive mindset, and a strong sense of responsibility and ownership and accountability.

### **8.3.3. Reformation of Subjectivity: Innovative Subjects**

Another crucial piece of evidence relating to the shaping of subjectivities within the SSAS as a result of governmentality is the increasing number of teachers who are undergoing a transformation into 'innovative' teachers and perceiving themselves as such:

If I'm not regressing, I think I'm growing in reverse. I don't think it's very easy to evaluate myself. As many teachers, I was like that. When I was going to an innovative school, there were people who said why you should innovate and you are a teacher who does not fit in with innovation. Yes, but after I came and now, the situation has changed a bit. It's been 2-3 years, and I now feel that I have changed a bit and I hear people around me say that I am changed (in a positive way, meaning that she becomes innovative).

(Draft Orion, Middle Manager, Sky Primary)

This shift, as demonstrated in Orion's testimony regarding her identity and perception, is indicative of the impact of the policy's emphasis on fostering an innovative mindset and promoting innovative practices. The concept of innovative mindset embraces the ideas of creativity and risk-taking in teaching. That is, within the mindset, teachers actively seek new approaches and practices. In addition to Orion in Sky Primary, other teachers have also showcased their increasing innovativeness through various teaching practices, such as enacting student-led projects and designing lessons that cater to the specific needs of their students. These examples provide further evidence that the policy's focus on innovation in practices is influencing teachers' subjectivity in terms of being innovative.

I think self-assessment has a positive impact on both professional development and independence. Maybe there is no point in talking about the past but actually it was not very good in the past. Whenever there was an assessment, I had tons of materials ready, but I always thought that I would be told off eventually. Still, is it really something that they should criticize? It is just the difference in the way I do it isn't it. But now there is just a big concept, and we can make the details. Like I said earlier we don't just make standards. We consider what this era needs, what our town needs etc so we need to study about this and sometimes have to refer to the books which helps. It affects our classes as well and not just referring to the textbooks I think about how it can be reflected etc. So I can tell I have changed and questions I have in mind too.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

The above quote provides evidence that the key ideas of the SSAS in innovation schools, such as autonomy and freedom, are successfully influencing teachers' professional identities and motivating them to adopt innovative approaches in their work, including the development of self-made standards and teaching methods.

Furthermore, the importance of self-reflection as a key competence for teachers to foster innovation is once again implied in the quote, echoing the emphasis placed on it in previous chapters. The policy, indeed, offers opportunities for teachers to engage in reflective practices, which they perceive as valuable chances to identify areas that require fundamental changes in their approaches and have an impact on their subjectivities. Consequently, teachers are progressively embracing the role of reflective practitioners, actively seeking ways to enhance their teaching and adapt to the new demands and expectations set forth by the policy. Sometimes, teachers are compelled to become the type of teacher who reflects on various aspects of their jobs, as exemplified by Stone in Water Secondary.

There must be many things but really I think teachers should never stop thinking. Teachers should keep thinking about students, policies by Gyeonggi Provincial Office of Education (the GOE), this era, this community, what kids really need to live in this era, etc.

(Brooke Stone, Middle leader, Water Secondary)

From what Stone said above, it is interesting to observe that constant reflective practices and innovative efforts of teachers are connected to the policies enacted by the GOE. This suggests that the policy texts, languages, and discourses on the ideals of teachers proposed by the GOE can serve as standards for their reflective practices. Indeed, for some teachers, this new sense of self is characterized by a heightened acceptance and adherence to new policies as they endeavour to embody the ideal model of a teacher shaped by those in positions of power, implying that such effort is not really autonomous but shaped and controlled.

It is not about that I want to be a famous or popular teacher, is

about I want to get my job done properly. So once there is new policy I try to understand it better and even if it doesn't directly affect my lessons or pedagogical guidance for students, I think of many ways to use it. So once I think that way I believe in the way I do things.

(Sierra Peak, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

[Interviewer]

And lastly, do you think your ideal image of teacher matches that of the Gyeonggi education ministry or the school's?

[Participant]

Not 100% but I think mostly it does.

[Interviewer]

And you want to follow that, right?

[Participant]

Yes, in terms of school education.

(Skyler Breeze, Teacher, Sky Primary)

I think the minds of teachers in other departments have changed a lot. And I haven't even been working for 20 years yet, but it's been only a few years since I've thought that it's really surprising that policy is scary, but the school culture has changed so much due to it.

For example, even when I was a teacher in my early days, there was a culture of hitting students for discipline. But even then, I thought of this as if it were natural, and if this wasn't there, how would we teach them? I was just forced to talk about it, but it naturally became an atmosphere of respect for children, and teachers voluntarily did so, so I thought that the policy was scary in this sense.

(Cliff Summit, Middle manager, Mountain Secondary)

Peak in Mountain Secondary and Breeze in Sky Primary are teachers who firmly believe in the policies of the GOE, specifically the policy

packages of innovation schools. They conform to the requirements set by these policies and aspire to embody the teacher subjectivity that is praised within them. On the other hand, Summit in Mountain Secondary takes a more cautious approach and observes the changes brought about by the policy. Summit feels a sense of unease due to the powerful impact of the policies and the transformative effects they have on the culture and individuals affected by them. However, I would like to argue that both true and loyal agents, like Peak and Breeze, who actively align with what policy requires and reluctant agents, like Summit, who realises the fear of policy but admits its influence, are all compelling evidence supporting the effectiveness of the control mechanisms within the SSAS in innovation schools, as significant transformation in subjectivity with the qualities that the policy suggests by the policy and impact of its power are clearly seen.

I found that those who positively respond to the discourse of 'innovation' or the expectation to be innovative teachers are more likely to feel they are improving in professionalism on the right way they aim to. It means, however, that such positive change and development aiming for innovation of the teachers can be dangerous, if the subjectivity based on being a more innovative teacher is a product of operation of power and its technologies. In this sense, the 'innovative teacher' and the expectation to 'be innovative' is an approved conduct/capability - an example of the productivity of power. However, such change in subjectivity and improvement in professionalism could be a myth because the discourse of innovation combines and interweaves with the discourse of competition for a transformation of teacher professionalism, which eventually supports the aims of the neoliberal governmentality.

Interestingly, the extent of innovation of individuals is constantly showcased and becomes the basis for comparison and competition aiming for becoming a good teacher in various open atmosphere in open-lessons or PLCs. This means that the quality of innovativeness or distinctiveness could be a quality of good professional teacher in

the context of the SSAS. Such quality is enhanced by both a climate of competition among colleagues within schools and between schools. It is found that this is glimpsed when re-examine what Vale thinks:

Because I am working under the title “innovative school”, I feel obliged to do other activities or different activities to that of non-innovative schools. I try to do a lot of activities and make sure students learn from them. And I think there are some responsibilities in that.

(Maple Vale, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Here, Vale compares his current conduct as a teacher in an innovative school with his past conduct as a normal teacher in a conventional state school. As he thinks that he should be more innovative, he feels responsibility/obligation to be innovative so tries to employ many different activities and initiatives in lessons that end up cause some feeling of burden in terms of such responsibility. I observe that he feels pressured - or in his terms, ‘obliged’ - to be innovative in his current school. It is interesting to see that such pressure is more about a perceived demand to stand out to make an impact and to be innovative, rather than explicitly encouraged by the policy documents.

## **8.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I argued that the SSAS significantly shapes new professional identities and subjectivities, as supporting evidence for the argument that the SSAS is an evolved manifestation of contemporary governmental power. Thus, it becomes evident that such shift of teachers both in professionalism and subjectivities emerge as a result of the ways of governmental power embedded in

the SSAS and that it utilizes the accountability policy of the SSAS as a primary method of control.

Teachers experience a heightened sense of agency, ownership, and innovation, perceiving themselves as proactive agents driving their professional growth. Yet, this self-direction is intrinsically linked to the policy's underlying objectives, subtly steering teachers towards compliance with institutional goals.

The chapter also highlights the evolution of teachers' subjectivities, revealing a transformation from externally evaluated performers to reflective practitioners and autonomous professionals. These individuals embrace a culture of continuous self-improvement, collective responsibility, and innovation, aligning with the policy's ideals of a 'good teacher.' However, this alignment often integrates the discourse of competition, embedding a performative element even within collaborative efforts.

Through technologies of self-surveillance and reflection, teachers internalize the values promoted by the SSAS, reshaping their practices and self-perceptions. While this fosters a sense of professional satisfaction and progress, it simultaneously entrenches a framework of systemic control, where freedom and innovation are instrumentalized to align educators with broader policy aims.

Ultimately, the SSAS exemplifies the intricate interplay of empowerment and regulation, where the cultivation of teacher professionalism and subjectivity is both an emancipatory and a governing process. It invites reflection on the balance between fostering genuine teacher agency and navigating the subtle impositions of neoliberal governance within education.

## **Chapter Nine. DISCUSSION:**

### **FOUCAUDINAN INTERPRETATION ON THE SSAS**

#### **9.1. Introduction**

Across the four preceding chapters, supported by the empirical data, I have argued that the SSAS serves as a political technology of neo-liberal governmentality, particularly in terms of how it governs teachers. It employs various tactics and techniques, mainly underpinned by the technology of the self, geared by autonomy, encouraging frontline teachers to exercise greater self-surveillance and control and accountability in alignment with the governmental goals of the GOE. Then, it results in transformation both in the professionalism and subjectivity of the teachers who experience it, as ‘ideal teachers’, presented and intended by the governing body.

This echoes Foucault's short definition of government as the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Foucault, 1982a, pp. 220-221; Lemke, 2001, p.2; Dean, 2010, p. 17). Borrowing Dean’s (2010) further elaboration of the concept, I argue that the SSAS can be perceived as a ‘more or less calculated and rational activity, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge, that seeks to shape conduct by working through the desires, aspirations, interests, and beliefs of various actors, for definite but shifting ends’ (p.18). The accountability policy represents a deliberate political control effort, crafted by policymakers who are committed to the educational goals of the GOE. These efforts reflect a consideration of how to govern the contemporary individual teachers and collective of teachers and utilize diverse political and controlling techniques, such as the Great Debate and the PLCs. The knowledge of what constitutes a good teacher and a good school is predominantly shaped by dominant governmental discourses, defined by the



standards and expectations of the governmental body and their political ideology. Within the self-appraisal system, teachers become subjects who engage in autonomous self-surveillance and self-directed accountability, situated in an educational environment that appears to offer more freedom and autonomy yet remains regulated by the prevailing knowledge and techniques.

With such a conceptual understanding of the SSAS as a political mechanism for controlling teachers, this section aims to further elucidate the SSAS as an evolved method of control that exhibits features of Foucault's conceptualizations of pastoral power and biopower. Moreover, I argue that the SSAS is effectively suited to the era of neo-liberal and reflexive governance, where modern and post-modern policy actors across diverse fields reside. This is to assert that the SSAS stands as a clear and significant policy example that aligns with contemporary governmental control.

## **9.2. The SSAS as a Technology of Governmentality subscribing Pastoral Power and Bio-power**

### **9.2.1. Pastoral Power and the SSAS**

As thoroughly mentioned in the chapter for literature review, pastoral power is a form of power that originates from the Christian idea of a shepherd guiding his flock. That is, it is pastoral practice and care between God as a 'shepherd' (or a human pastor) and a 'flock' of human beings in Christian theology, which guides a multitude of Christian believers towards individual and collective salvation, that is, wellbeing, fulfilment and so forth (Siisiäinen, 2015). Foucault argues that this pastoral governing in Christian churches is a rational and planned activity, oriented by its 'salvific' aim (Siisiäinen, 2015, p. 235), maintaining Christian believers on the 'right path' of transition,

and to steer their change and development on the appropriate direction (Foucault, 2009). In line with this, in practice of the case of the SSAS, the mode of government found in the self-appraisal scheme aims for governing teachers through holding out the promise of ‘good teacher’ and ‘good school’ and allowing exercise of their agency and autonomy, whilst encouraging constant self-examination (Foucault, 2009, p. 183) and self-confession, much as Christian churches promise ‘redemption on earth’ through economic prosperity, longevity and quality of life, though they also promise ‘salvation in the afterworld’ through spiritual distinction and physical revival, so asks autonomous commitment from its believers. Thus, it is all about caring for each individual within a community, knowing them, guiding them, and ensuring their salvation. This idea now extends to the secular political pastorate that encompasses all manner of people, such as teachers, therapists, consultants of various kinds, self-help gurus etc.. Within the context of the SSAS, the educational authority, such as the GOE, becomes the secular pastor and the teachers who belong to the institution and its control via contract or law become the pastorate. When transposing this idea into the realm of governmentality, as explored by Foucault (2008; 2009), Dean (2010) and Rose (1990) and Bailey and Ball (2016), pastoral power becomes a technique of governance that focuses on the well-being, health, and prosperity of the population, which is regarded as a kind of proto-governmentality for Foucault.

One of the hallmark features of pastoral power as a mode of governmentality is its focus on the welfare of the population. Dean (2010) highlights how this form of power is exercised through mechanisms that aim to ensure the social, economic, and physical well-being of people. It involves creating conditions that allow individuals to live their lives in a manner that aligns with the state's objectives, but in a way that is often perceived as caring and beneficial rather than coercive. Within the works of the SSAS, I have observed the process of creation of such conditions in which teachers

find themselves becoming aligned with the goals of authority or power with the support of benevolence, particularly when they are exposed to the discourse of ‘good teacher’ and ‘good school’ by the shepherd of the GOE. I call this process ‘assimilation’.

Interestingly, from the data, I found that assimilation takes place within individual teachers who are mostly grouped as ‘critics’ or ‘receivers’, who are not aligning with ideas of the SSAS, in the process of the policy enactment. All of them are asked to meet the goals of the GOE, which include enhancing the quality of education, accountability, and overall competency of a school (GOE, 2020c). I argue that assimilation is a sign of effective pastoral government, as it creates compliant teachers, regardless of how genuine their transformation is, who comply with the goals of education inscribed in the mother policy of the innovation school and even replace their own individual goals and morals of education with those of the GOE, just the same as individuals repent and gain new meaning of life in Christian church.

[Interviewer]

and is this change (on the professional self) something that you wanted or is it what the school or ministry of education wanted? Or even both?

[Participant]

I think it is both. There are personal factors but in order for them to be expressed, there needs to be the right environment. Those institutions (referring to the GOE and the Blue Primary) played a role in providing that environment and allowing teachers to change according to their ideal image. Thinking back, I think there was an interaction between the two.

(Maple Vale, Manager of a year group, Forest Primary)

The extent would vary because obviously it would be related to teacher’s capacity and would also differ amongst schools.

The school I am working at, is at least very influenced by the school's vision or educational goal or even bigger, Gyeonggi-do office of education or innovation school's four major tasks.

(Cedar Arbour, Teacher, Forest Primary)

Here, we witness that the institution of the Forest Primary created an environment where teachers are guided to change their ideal images of the professional self and to be aligned with the goals and visions of the GOE. A common and interesting part is that teachers, regardless of their age, past career, or current roles, find the visions, goals or tasks of the GOE more or less identical to their goals or morals of education, as shown in above quotes. Another interesting finding is that individuals' morals and goals of education are something that can easily be influenced by the ways in which important policies, such as inspections or appraisals, are presented, rather than the policies themselves. That is, within an open and gentle approach for application of the policy, teachers become more likely to be aligning with what the school wants them to do, modifying their morals and priorities, just as Banks in Water Secondary experienced.

Because it gives the opportunity to think and as an academic performance manager, the first thing I told the principal was, this is too much. I have never been involved in grading and I don't know the relevant policies. So I asked him why did you make me do this. And the principal said, "I will be responsible for it. Do what you can but if you make a mistake, I will be responsible for it. Don't worry. Principals are meant to be responsible." This is what I heard. So now you can guess what our school is like.

(River Banks, Middle manager, Water Secondary)

The above quote, which was referred to in 6.2.1. to address collective autonomy, also describes a moment when the new role of academic

performance manager was given to Banks by the school leadership and his experience regarding it. When a new and strange task was given to him, he initially felt overwhelmed. However, the head of the school didn't become authoritative or use rules or disciplines to change his attitude. Rather, he employed a benevolent way and makes him feel comfortable by saying he will be responsible for results, which also made a change in Kim's perception of the school's atmosphere. This could imply that individuals' morals and goals of education are something that can easily be influenced by the ways in which important policies, such as inspections or appraisals, are presented, rather than the policies themselves. This gentle technique of assimilation is one of the key aspects that demonstrates how pastoral power works.

Another characteristic of pastoral power is that it targets and utilizes the innermost thoughts and feelings (Foucault, 1997b, p. 332-6) of the subjects for effective control. This is a complicated strategy of government that ultimately asks sincere and complete compliance of the pastorates to the pastor. That is, it is a form of power that encourages self-governing and voluntary adherence to societal norms and expectations from the bottom of the heart of the subjects. In the work of pastoral power via the SSAS, autonomy and self-surveillance plays an important role to draw on such compliance from the teachers. Under the self-appraisal, an individual teacher is allowed to experience his or her own freedom, for example in developing curriculum, lessons and exams, as they are now in a situation where they can abandon the given standards (of government) to be accountable for their performance, and instead follow the standards developed through self-governing to be accountable to their own criteria, all of which makes them feel more comfortable and secure. Within the feeling of comfort and freedom, they are more likely to listen to the languages and discourses of the authority, perceiving them as knowledge from experts, and engage in self-governing activities, such as self-surveillance, reflection, examination,

regulation and peer-feedback, and promote constant self-governing that leads to alignment with the goals and values of the educational authority. This subtle influence on individual behaviour reflects the workings of pastoral power in shaping the conduct of the flock (Foucault, 2009). This strategy that promotes autonomy and self-governing ultimately leads to greater compliance with government policies and goals and make teachers feel the alignment sincerely and voluntarily, rather than coerced.

One important point is that, as Rose (1990) points out, on the surface, people don't doubt they are free to make their own choices and voluntarily commit themselves to the words of pastors, but, in reality, these choices are subtly shaped by the mechanisms of pastoral power. It is like being nudged constantly towards paths deemed right by societal standards, making us participants in our own governance. In other words, under the context of the SSAS, while teachers may have more choices in how to design, conduct and improve their lessons, these choices are influenced and guided by the larger force relations at play. In line with that, Buchanan (2015) argues, in his research that explores the impact of self-managing schools on teacher professionalism and autonomy in New Zealand, that while self-managing schools can offer teachers greater autonomy, their options for decision-making are still shaped by larger force relations, such as policies and authority. In addition, Ahearn (2011) argues, in her research that discusses the tensions between teacher autonomy and accountability in the context of education policy in Canada, that while policy discourse emphasizes the importance of teacher autonomy, accountability measures often restrict teachers' decision-making power and shape their practices. Similarly, the self-appraisal system allows for more individual freedom and self-governing, but ultimately an individual's practices are not based upon individual moral judgment but upon meeting externally applied edicts and commands (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2010).

Well, there are few factors, the four major tasks such as creative education curriculum or ethical living community, that innovation schools need to fulfil. I think we were too used to that and thought that that is the way schools should head. I was thinking that as well and because of this even if we change each and every criterion, we would still be within the fixed frame. And I think the school we want doesn't necessarily have to be different from what office of education wants. (omission). So, I do agree with that. I got to know these methods through innovation school, but they are in line with what I want. And maybe that's why I wasn't reluctant to it.

(Birch Greenwood, Teacher, Forest Primary)

In this testimony from Greenwood at Forest Primary, it is clear that she found herself in an environment where the freedom to alter appraisal criteria was assured. Despite this, her school chose not to significantly change the criteria, reasoning that there was no need to diverge from the standards set by the GOE. She then remarked, "we would still be within the fixed frame." This part of the testimony is crucial as it illustrates that decision-making within the school community is not only structured by the guidelines of the GOE but also influenced by them, and this conformity is not viewed negatively. That is, while the GOE does not overtly restrict or regulate such decisions and the decision-making process, the teacher community, despite having greater freedom, opts to align with the framework of the office. This alignment is seen as the desired outcome of control by the authority. This is a complicated strategy of the authority not necessarily aiming to curtail autonomy of teachers and make them simply follow their guidance but restrict and guide autonomy to be used for generation of compliance.

This framework of the controlling mechanism, which encompasses dominant discourses on what is considered 'good' in their education, along with the use of diverse controlling techniques, effectively shapes the decisions of the teacher community and individual teachers

within the community. This characteristic of the SSAS suits well the further elucidation of Rose about pastoral power: This pastoral power is at work in how governments pay attention to the fine details of our lives. It's not about bossing people around but guiding them towards certain behaviours and lifestyles. This guidance is rooted in what's considered 'good' for us in terms of health, productivity, and social behaviour (Rose, 1990).

### **9.2.1. Biopower and the SSAS**

The political techniques of government found in the SSAS are not able to be fully explained without reference to bio-politics and biopower, which is an expansion of pastoral power at a larger scale.

As discussed in chapter 2.5.2, biopower is 'more a perspective than a concept' (Rose, 2007, p. 54), and refers very broadly to a power which 'seizes life as the object of its exercise' (Lazzarato, 2006, p. 9; cited from Bailey, 2015, p. 215). Thus, it uses, in the first place and from the perspective of Foucault, the politics that addresses a wide range of problems that human beings face as biological beings, 'the body politics' (Lemke, 2011, p. 9). However, it doesn't stop there; 'biopolitics does not only include the physical being, but also its moral and political existence' (Lemke, 2011, p. 9). That is, it further addresses the social, economic, and cultural conditions under which their biological lives stretch out to, for example, public health issues and issues around education. In that sense, bio-politics is 'a bio-sociological process' (Dean, 2010, p. 119) that deals with and administrates 'phenomena of different groups of populations and requires complex organs of political coordination and centralization' (Foucault 1997, pp. 222-223).

I would like to regard the policy context of Korean education, for example, under the governance of the GOE, as a social biosphere where the specific population of contemporary teachers dwell. In this



social biosphere, teachers may experience a diverse range of problems that are linked to their survival as professionals or a whole population. The authorities try to address such problems for effective control of the cohort. One of the problems teachers experience is the feeling of being controlled, pressure, and stress, and challenges regarding identity and subjectivity as professionals, as a result of it. As I have pointed out at various points across chapter five in data analysis, before the introduction of the SSAS, teachers had struggled with negative memories, feelings, and stresses from being controlled by powers who used multiple heterogeneous accountability policy mechanisms like the 'School Inspection' and the 'Teacher Appraisal for Professional Development,' which predominantly ask teachers to produce measurable performance in both students' academic achievements and their involvement in school administration. The important aspect is that they are based on the principles and instruments of the mixture of sovereignty and discipline, borrowing Foucault's concepts, particularly in terms of the way it works. As seen in section 5.2.1. in chapter five the participating teachers' testimonies revealed that such a method of control accompanies a strong negative perception of accountability, referring to direct external surveillance and pressure they experienced, which is underlined in strict supervision and responsabilisation using disciplinary mechanisms of control. I believe that such an accountability context caused a socio-biological problem as it links to side effects that raised controlling issues like feeling of unhappiness or disrespect as I redraw what Peak expresses:

Performance-based pay and teacher competence development assessment (referring to TAPD) have literally to do with whether doing good or not so it doesn't feel good as it feels like I'm not appreciated as a teacher. Indicators for teacher competence development assessment, questions look simply related to class or less management. However, (as students are one of those who evaluates teachers in TAPD), though I am

not disrespecting students, they are more inclined to their emotions. In terms of performance-based pay, every teacher works hard but it says some department is having a hard time and some isn't. It would work better if teachers communicated internally, learnt things which will make others learn. We always say communication and cooperation, but this system, indicators, scores etc don't really make them work. So I guess they are quite different. School assessment has literally suggestion of development, direction which is always unpleasant.

(Sierra Peak, Teacher, Mountain Secondary)

On top of that, triggered by such a crack in the control of the teacher population, an environment where an evolved way of controlling, called governmentality that embraces bio-politics, is required to emerge. That is, the power of the time had to find 'models that do not ultimately return to the rules of sovereignty and discipline' (Dean, 2010, p.127). Dean (2010) describes this shift in control, referring to Foucault's account:

It principally refers to the process whereby the art of government is separated from the theory and practice of sovereignty and whereby that theory and practice must be reconciled with this burgeoning and proliferating art of government. (p. 122)

This means that the shift and evolution of control are contrasted with traditional concepts of sovereignty, which mainly concern the territory and the right and power to rule over it. The bio-politics, which is an aspect of modern government, emerged from the context of problems and changes in control. According to Foucault's account from his lectures on governmentality, such an art of bio-political government can be characterised by several distinctive characteristics,

compared to sovereignty and discipline: a focus on population, techniques of government, and rationality of governance.

A focus on population means that while sovereignty is centred around the territory and the authority to make laws, government emphasizes the management of the population living within that territory. This includes concerns over health, education, economy, and social welfare, aiming to optimize and secure the well-being of the population. The SSAS similarly addresses the mental health, education, and social welfare issues, such as pressure and unhappiness, that have been raised from the traditional ways of asking accountability based on sovereignty and discipline amongst the teacher population. Unfortunately, these concerns cannot clearly be read from official policy documents/proposals/texts, but they have been raised in several discourses that counteract the discourses that support neo-liberalisation of education before the introduction to the SSAS (please refer to chapter 4.4. for more details), as evidenced by the discourse around teacher 'well-being' and 'work-life balance' (Lee & Kim, 2010; Kim & Cho, 2014). Evidence from my data on initial perceptions toward the policy and satisfaction from the allowance of greater autonomy and freedom by participant teachers suggests that the SSAS effectively addresses such mental health problems, significantly reducing stress and pressure following its introduction, at least in cases for the teachers that participated in the research.

Additionally, the SSAS is accompanied by government techniques that address mental issues, such as too much pressure from surveillance, and social welfare, such as lack of autonomy in professional life of teachers, through policy strategies like the 'homeroom-school consultancy' and the PLCs. Under the scheme of homeroom-school consultancy, as discussed, inspectors adopt the role of supportive consultants who listen to teachers and offer counseling on the problems experienced within school culture, environment, and education and administration systems. They behave like good friends

who provide practical solutions and help, though they still exercise authoritative power over specific violations of rules and standards. The policy works well in generating a feeling of strong support and comfort and being settled when teachers face difficulties beyond their capacity, for example, in relationships with their authoritative line managers or aggressive parents. PLCs usually offer a comforting environment where teachers' voices are heard and valued, and discussions work within the schools' education system. In PLCs, everyday problems in key job duties of teachers, such as teaching and management of students, are collectively discussed and addressed so that teachers may align more closely with the schools' educational goals or the education authority of the GOE. From the perspective of power, the population of contemporary teachers is not just a collection of obedient and docile working subjects; it is rather 'a particular objective reality about which one can have knowledge and apply effective controlling techniques' (Dean, 2010, p.127).

Moreover, the neoliberal governmental rationality is another distinctiveness found in bio-political government in relation to the SSAS. This rationality concerns the efficient and effective management of populations and resources through calculated means, because it addresses the life and social problems of a population, which is a complex organism. The teacher cohort is such a complex organism in that it is unlikely to be directly governed solely by authority and laws that administer the political aspects of life. Teachers place more importance on diverse non-political areas of life, such as economic, social, psychological and biological aspects of life, which require more autonomy and guidance rather than explicit control and law. Thus, modern government is tasked with managing such various aspects of life of such an autonomous population. This is where neo-liberalism, as a new political rationality, began to govern the social and biological needs of the population. This rationality takes a more nuanced and sophisticated approach that respects the autonomy of society. That is, this approach which makes it sound

reasonable and underplays the constructive work of rationalities acknowledges that society is a complex, self-regulating system, and effective governance means working with that system, not against it. For effective government, neo-liberalism includes a wide range of practices and mechanisms aimed at guiding the behaviour of populations and individuals and creates conditions that encourage people to govern themselves in ways that align with neo-liberal principles. For example, frugal government, as an art of government, is related to such neo-liberal governmentality. Frugal government, as understood from the Foucauldian perspective, can be seen as an approach to government that emphasises minimal intervention by the state and efficient management of resources (Foucault, 1997) and aims to limit the scope and reach of state intervention in order to maximise individual freedom and promote economic efficiency. In the context of frugal government, Foucault's notion of governmentality suggests that the state seeks to govern in a way that minimises its own involvement while still achieving its objectives (Dean, 2010). This involves strategies such as decentralization, deregulation, and reliance on market mechanism that encourage individual responsibility and self-governance, as well as strategies that promote competition and marketization. From a Foucauldian perspective, frugal government can be understood as a form of biopolitics, which involves the management and regulation of populations (Foucault, 2008) with a reduced role for the state in, for example, welfare, making wellbeing more a matter of self-care and responsabilisation. In this sense, freedom cherished in neo-liberal societies is intertwined with sophisticated forms of government that shape individual's choices, behaviours and identities in profound ways (Dean 2010, 2013; Foucault, 2009). In this sense, Dean (2010) makes the point that what is considered 'normal' is constructed in relation to what is 'illiberal' or abnormal. He argues the liberal form of life is actively instituted. In light of this point, the SSAS and the political rationality of neo-liberalism in South Korea intentionally allow the teacher population

to experience greater autonomy and freedom in their professional lives, aiming for effective governance. This is strongly evidenced by the fact that teachers are granted autonomy in various aspects of their job duties, including organizing and managing curriculums, setting up appraisal standards, and even conducting pedagogy. They are supposed to be guided, rather than controlled, by the governmental body in terms of appraisal under the SSAS and the innovation school system. Such enactments of neo-liberalism as a political rationality within the Korean education system shape the choices of teachers as liberal individuals, ensuring they align with the desirable behaviours of governmental ends. This is made practically possible through the shaping of dominant discourses and the production of knowledge and norms that define what is considered rational or desirable behaviour. To illustrate, as discussed in section 6.2.2, in chapter six of data analysis which examines the Great Debate as a locus of autonomous self-surveillance, under the influence of the SSAS and innovation school policy, teachers are introduced to the discourse of democracy and improvement, for example. They are engaged by key meetings organized under the scheme of the Great Debate. Such discourses are then perceived as the knowledge and norms of the particular education context by teachers, who subsequently follow them through constant and diverse autonomous practices to achieve these qualities. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to be autonomous, self-regulating individuals who are always reflexive and strive to change themselves through constant comparison with self-set standards and the activities of their colleagues. In this setting, self- and peer-surveillance activities are encouraged and praised as long as they provide teachers with opportunities for self-reflection, regret, and self-accountability. PLCs also become venues where such activities of self- and peer-feedback are freely exchanged and encouraged.

### **9.3. Conclusion**

This chapter have examined the South Korean education system within the accountability framework established by the SSAS and the pre-existing accountability measures and they form a dense net of governmental mechanisms. In addition, I discussed that the SSAS is rooted in Foucault's concepts of governmentality, particularly bio-politics and pastoral power. Both discussions unveil a complex interplay of governmentality embedded in the SSAS in the particular current accountability context in South Korea.

The introduction of the SSAS marks a departure from traditional modes of control, characterised by sovereignty and discipline, towards a more complicated with the blend of such modes and nuanced approach grounded in bio-politics and pastoral control. Bio-politics and pastoral power, as conceptualized by Foucault and his followers, extend beyond the mere administration of life to address the socio-economic and cultural conditions impacting teachers' professional lives. The SSAS responds to these challenges by offering greater autonomy and support to teachers, notably reducing stress and pressure through policy strategies like the homeroom-school consultancy and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These mechanisms foster collaboration and align teachers' actions with broader educational goals, highlighting the government's focus on population management and well-being.

Furthermore, the SSAS embodies the principles of neo-liberalism as a political rationality within the South Korean education system. Neo-liberalism emphasizes individual autonomy and freedom while guiding behaviours towards desired outcomes through dominant discourses and norms. Teachers are encouraged to be autonomous, reflexive individuals who strive for continuous improvement, aligning their practices with the values and objectives of the government. The SSAS facilitates this process by providing opportunities for self-reflection and peer-feedback within PLCs, fostering a culture of self-governance and accountability.

In addition, the exploration of pastoral power within the context of the SSAS also reveals a nuanced form of governance that operates through care, guidance, and subtle influence rather than overt coercion. One of the defining characteristics of pastoral power is its focus on the welfare and well-being of the population. Through mechanisms embedded within the SSAS, teachers find themselves assimilating with the goals and visions set forth by the educational authorities. This assimilation, facilitated by a nurturing environment that encourages compliance and aligns individual goals with institutional objectives, reflects the effectiveness of pastoral governance in shaping collective behaviours.

Moreover, pastoral power operates through the subtle manipulation of freedom, nudging individuals towards paths deemed appropriate by societal standards. While teachers may perceive themselves as exercising autonomy and making independent choices within the SSAS framework, their decisions are subtly influenced by larger force relations and dominant discourses. This dynamic illustrates how pastoral power operates within a framework of individual freedom while guiding individuals towards desired behaviours and outcomes.

In conclusion, the SSAS represents a sophisticated system of governmentality that integrates principles of bio-politics and pastoral power to address the challenges faced by teachers within the South Korean education system. By offering greater autonomy and support while subtly guiding behaviours and perceptions, the SSAS seeks to optimize the well-being and performance of teachers while ensuring compliance with broader educational objectives. Such works of the nuanced controlling system is evidenced by the fact that the SSAS and innovation school policies in South Korea have successfully influenced the professionalism and subjectivities of teachers, fostering a culture of autonomy, agency, innovation, and reflective practice. These changes regarding their professionalism and subjectivity aligning with the policy text, language and discourse is a strong sign that tells political technologies carved in the SSAS function for



greater and effective control of the frontline teachers.

## Chapter Ten. CONCLUSION

This research project began with a critical question about a policy shift within the accountability context in South Korean schools in Gyeonggi-do: whether the introduction of the Schools' Self-Appraisal System was a true means of teacher empowerment with enhanced autonomy or an evolved way of control through different and complex approaches to power exertion under the neo-liberal governmentality. After thoroughly examining data from sixteen teachers in innovation schools in Gyeonggi-do and two former policymakers as well as an inspector from the GOE, I conclude that the SSAS is an extension of political control, more specifically the technology of neo-liberal governmentality, that is more intricate and effective in addressing the modern and post-modern neo-liberal teacher population in Korean educational settings, making the overall accountability more complex and discursive. This core thesis is supported by empirical data and discussions on how the SSAS operates with diverse political technologies, tactics, strategies and techniques regarding teacher autonomy, surveillance and accountability, as well as the consequences or changes in terms of teacher professionalism and subjectivity. Theoretical discussions about the accountability shift and consequences from it, which echo Foucault's concept of bio-power, pastoral power and governmentality, also gauge its characteristics.

Indeed, the SSAS, as a measure for political control, requires teachers to commit in continuous and autonomous self-surveillance related activities, such as self-reflection, regret, examination or improvement on their performance and aligning it with self-set standards. This process is not merely about compliance but involves embracing and internalizing the norms and values promoted by educational authorities within a mechanism that blends freedom with benevolent surveillance and enhanced accountability. Moreover, this process

forms a new professionalism and subjectivity with certain qualities encouraged by central governmental authorities. In particular, by fostering a culture of such self-governing activities, the SSAS exemplifies Foucault's notion of governmentality and how it control subjects, by referring to bio-politics and pastoral power, where power operates not through direct coercion but through shaping individuals' subjectivities.

## **10.1. Summary of Key Findings**

### **10.1.1. The Interplay between Greater Autonomy and Surveillance that Feeds Greater Accountability**

One of the central themes in the analysis of SSAS is the tension between autonomy and surveillance within the accountability framework and how they feed and enhance accountability. The SSAS ostensibly promotes teacher autonomy by allowing teachers to set their own goals and assess their progress. However, I found that this autonomy is bounded by the overarching framework of accountability which employs autonomous self-surveillance as its prime technique for control and dictates the parameters within which teachers operate. That is, the introduction of SSAS indeed has led to a meaningful shift in teacher autonomy, where teachers are given the freedom to act in their professional duties. However, this freedom is conditioned by both the need of authority and power, making it eventually meet specific accountability criteria, for example the four major goals of innovation schools set by the GOE, that are sources of certain discourses and techniques for control, and the activities of autonomous self-surveillance that reveals the area for improvement which autonomy is supposed to aim. Thus, I argue that such autonomy found in the SSAS must be considered as a complicated technology of governmental control which is presented in the

language of respect for professionalism. Autonomy is a different method of control than power, recognizing abilities of subjects and utilizing them according to specific purposes. In other words, governmentality found in the SSAS is not about external coercion of the actors, but about guiding them to follow the direction of power through their own free will (Prince, Kearns, & Craig, 2006).

The concept of 'autonomous self-surveillance' is central to understanding the dual nature of autonomy under SSAS. Teachers are encouraged to self-assess and critically reflect on their practices, a process that inherently involves self-monitoring and peer surveillance. This form of surveillance is both panoptic, in the sense of constant visibility, and post-panoptic, involving total visibility via digital tracking and data analytics. Teachers' self-surveillance is further reinforced by peer reviews and feedback mechanisms embedded in the SSAS. This collaborative appraisal system fosters a culture as well as a norm of mutual monitoring, where teachers' performances are continually evaluated by their colleagues. Such practices align with Foucault's notion of governmentality as an assemblage of control technologies where power is exercised through decentralized, diffused, self-regulating mechanisms rather than direct, hierarchical control. For example, the appraisal processes at Forest Primary involved regular peer reviews and collective discussions on teaching practices, promoting a heightened sense of accountability among teachers. While this enhances collaborative improvement, it also perpetuates a system of constant oversight, subtly limiting the scope of true professional autonomy.

As a result of the active interplay between greater autonomy and greater surveillance, overall accountability is more enhanced within the SSAS. In this circumstance, teachers navigate the fine line between exercising professional judgment and meeting the self-set standards, which predominantly align with the goals of the central authority, highlighting the complexities inherent in enacting accountability measures that aim to empower teachers while ensuring

adherence to institutional goals. Empirical evidence from the analysis underscores this tension. Some teachers welcome the autonomy afforded by SSAS, viewing it as an opportunity for professional growth and development. They appreciate the emphasis on reflective practice and the ability to tailor their teaching strategies to meet students' needs. However, others feel constrained by accountability demands, experiencing pressure to conform to standardized criteria that may not align with their pedagogical beliefs and practices. The data reveals that this tension is particularly pronounced among teachers who perceive a misalignment between their professional identities and the expectations imposed by SSAS. This misalignment can lead to feelings of conflict and alienation as teachers struggle to reconcile their traditional professional identities with the demands of SSAS.

### **10.1.2. The Impact on Teacher Professionalism and Formation of Teacher Subjectivity**

The enactment of the SSAS has profound implications for teacher autonomy and professionalism.

On one hand, it fosters a new paradigm of professionalism characterized by self-governing and reflective practice for continuous improvement. That is, teachers' professionalism is shaped by being encouraged to critically evaluate their practices and align them with educational goals, signaling a shift towards amalgam of post-performative, collective and democratic professionalism. Teachers in South Korea find themselves navigating between their professional judgment and the self-set criteria set by the SSAS. This tension is illustrated by the concept of 'assimilation' discussed in the study, where teachers gradually conform to the expectations of the GOE, often at the expense of their own educational philosophies and methods. The data reveals that teachers, categorized as either 'critics' or 'receivers,' have been gradually transformed into followers of the

goals of the GOE, which significantly demonstrates that the SSAS is an effective political tool.

In terms of subjectivity, many teachers grapple with reconciling their traditional professional identities with the demands of SSAS, leading to distinctive qualities compared to traditional professionalism. Such qualities are featured by the fact that they transform into autonomous subjects or practitioners with greater sense of autonomy, innovativeness, responsibility, ownership, agency, and accountability. In particular, teachers gain the quality of innovative and proactive practitioners, which is all about aiming for activeness and creativeness in all the duties they engage in via reflective practices. This is what the GOE exactly aimed at as it promotes a more standardised approach to education. As a result, the SSAS inadvertently contributes to the erosion of teacher subjectivity, as educators increasingly prioritise adherence to such values and goals of the GOE over their own professional judgment. Thus, while the SSAS may enhance certain aspects of teacher professionalism, it simultaneously diminishes the diversity of educational perspectives and practices, ultimately shaping a homogenized teaching workforce.

I believe that no teacher wants to be seen merely as a transmitter of knowledge or a servant of authority. However, teachers situated within the context of contemporary neoliberal governments and states often find their professionalism and subjectivity shaken by the ever-changing churn of policies that employ diverse and complicated technologies of government. Sadly, many teachers become policy workers rather than independent professionals. They do not freely choose the values, ideals, and legacies they teach; instead, they are shaped by policy. However, I firmly believe that teachers shape policy and even education and thus need more genuine freedom and true autonomy in their frontline practices. Teachers need policies that do not control but empower them.

## **10.2. Contributions and Limitations**

### **10.2.1. Contributions**

Research on educational accountability and performativity has shown how evaluation regimes reshape teacher work, culture, and professional identity. Much of this literature maps policy design or documents headline effects; in the South Korean context, scholarship has tended to describe accountability architectures at the level of national policy or organisational reform. What has been missing is an empirically specified analysis of a concrete self-appraisal system that follows how power works in the grain of everyday school life. This thesis provides that account. By reading the SSAS through a Foucauldian lens and grounding the analysis in teachers' and policymakers' materials, I show how the SSAS is enacted in practice and how it governs through the capillaries of routine—meetings, rubrics, evidence files, peer talk, and self-review. The contribution here is empirical and explicit: the thesis offers a systematic, evidence-based analysis of teacher self-appraisal and accountability in South Korea using Foucauldian tools, something not previously available for this policy instrument.

The empirical analysis yields two further advances. First, it specifies the SSAS as a pastoral technology in Foucault's sense: care is not simply benevolent support but is tethered to a salvational telos—the promise and demand to become the “good” teacher and to realise the “good” school. That coupling of care and salvation is shown to be operative in the mundane sequences of appraisal (confession, examination, direction), not only in policy language. Second, the analysis demonstrates that autonomy and surveillance are co-implicated in SSAS enactment. Where teachers experience increased discretion, they also take on intensified self-monitoring and evidencing; autonomy is produced with, not against, surveillance. These claims move beyond broad diagnoses of “neoliberal performativity” by specifying the mechanisms at work in a particular

policy device.

Conceptually, the thesis advances governmentality scholarship by operationalising several Foucauldian ideas in the specific ecology of school appraisal. It shows how pastoral power actually works in schooling when it couples guidance with a salvational horizon: teachers' aspirations and ethical self-relations are aligned to institutional ends through apparently supportive routines. It also demonstrates that power is relational and capillary in the SSAS: influence circulates through artefacts, schedules, peer moderation, and the self, rather than being a possession that some actors hold over others. Finally, it refines the account of subjectivation in this setting, tracing how confession disclosing lacks, examination measuring oneself against norms, and direction setting next steps become routinised practices that produce the "good" subject recognised by the system. Together these conceptual specifications translate abstract vocabularies—governmentality, pastoral power, subjectivation—into an analytic grammar for studying accountability in schools.

Methodologically, the thesis develops a discursive-analytic case strategy suited to poststructural inquiry. Instead of treating multiple sources as triangulation aimed at convergence on a single truth, the study treats interviews, documents, and observations as a constellation that maps heterogeneous discourses and their effects. The warrant for the canslaims is reflexive rather than neutralist: I make positionality, memoing, and the use of discrepant cases explicit so that readers can see how interpretations were built and tested against alternative readings. In addition, the thesis provides a practical template for studying policy as enactment in schools: it identifies translation sites such as PLCs, appraisal meetings, evidence artefacts, follows how policy categories sediment into routines, and explains cross-school variation as constitutive of what the policy becomes in practice. These methodological moves supply concrete procedures other researchers can adopt when examining accountability assemblages in situ.



Because the SSAS sits within wider East Asian debates on evaluation, the thesis also contributes comparative and regional knowledge. It offers a documented account of how a self-appraisal regime is enacted in Korean schools, which can serve as a reference point for comparative analyses across jurisdictions where “autonomy” is advanced alongside intensified evidencing. By specifying mechanisms rather than only listing instruments, the study makes available a portable analytic that can travel across contexts while remaining sensitive to local arrangements.

These scholarly contributions entail practice-facing implications. If care is bound to a salvational telos and autonomy is produced with surveillance, then interventions that seek simply “more autonomy” or “less surveillance” misrecognise the dynamics at play. The leverage point is the configuration of routines, artefacts, and self-work—the everyday arrangements through which policy is enacted and through which teachers become particular kinds of subjects. By naming those arrangements and showing how they govern, the thesis equips practitioners and policymakers with an analytic vocabulary for redesigning practice in ways that are alert to power/knowledge effects.

Taken together, the contributions move the conversation from general claims about performativity in Korean schooling to an empirically specified account of how the SSAS governs via pastoral power and capillary enactment; from abstract invocations of governmentality to an operational vocabulary for analysing accountability assemblages; and from neutrality-seeking methodology to reflexive discursive analytics appropriate to poststructural research. In each domain—empirical, conceptual, methodological, and comparative—the thesis states what is new and precisely how the field is taken further.

### **10.2.2. Limitations**

While the research provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations.

First, the case study methodology, while providing in-depth, context-specific findings, limits the generalizability of the results to broader contexts, as it gathered data from only several innovation schools registered at the GOE, though there are a number of innovation schools across the country and the schools that are not innovation schools but undergo the SSAS. The selected schools and participants in Gyeonggi-do represent a specific socio-political and cultural setting, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across South Korea or other countries with similar accountability systems. **The findings are context-bound to several innovation schools in Gyeonggi-do. Rather than claiming generalisability, I invite readers to consider transferability in relation to cognate policy regimes and professional cultures, supported by thick description in the analysis.**

Second, the study's reliance on qualitative data, particularly interviews, poses challenges regarding the subjectivity of both participants and the researcher. **As with all qualitative inquiry, interpretation is situated: participants' accounts and my readings are shaped by context and by the Foucauldian lens adopted here. Rather than claiming neutrality or "objective analysis," I pursue trustworthiness—through transparent analytic procedures, attention to discrepant cases, triangulation in the sense of juxtaposing heterogeneous materials, and reflexive positionality—and invite readers to assess transferability to cognate settings.**

Lastly, the study's focus on teachers and policymakers excludes other significant stakeholders such as school leadership, administrative and supporting staff or even students. Their perspectives could offer a more holistic understanding of how the SSAS operates and its broader implications for educational ecosystems. For example, including student voices could provide insights into how accountability affects

classroom dynamics, as discussed by Biesta (2005) in his work on education and accountability. In addition, if the voices of school leadership were included, the thesis would provide insights into how this new approach to accountability affects governance or governmental practices of the school from the perspectives of school-level governors.

### **10.3. Further Research: The Future of the SSAS**

Building upon the findings of this study, future research could explore several avenues to deepen the understanding of power dynamics around accountability systems and their effect and consequences on education.

One important area for further research is the long-term political impact of the SSAS on teacher professionalism and subjectivity, which may significantly related to the matter of control. A longitudinal study could provide valuable insights into whether the perceived impacts of the SSAS, such as the feeling of enhanced professionalism, and new kinds of subjectivities can lead to further subjugation or stronger sense of freedom among educators over time. Moreover, expanding the scope to include other stakeholders, particularly students and parents, would enrich the analysis of the SSAS's impact. Understanding how these groups perceive and interact with accountability measures can shed light on the broader contextual implications of policies like the SSAS.

Another promising direction is a comparative analysis of similar systems in different cultural and political settings. Investigating how neoliberal governmentality manifests in varied contexts could reveal universal trends and unique adaptations of accountability policies worldwide.

Another research topic that could be pursued is an investigation into

other accountability mechanisms based on the principle of autonomy and the various self-management techniques currently employed within the Korean education system. For example, under the control of the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (hereafter SMOE)—the second-largest local authority (LA) in terms of student enrollment, following the GOE—there is a policy of innovative self-managed schools, which serves as the next iteration of the innovation school policy. This policy focuses on a school's self-management of funds, curriculum, and appraisal processes. Under this system, schools are intended to operate independently of restrictions and external controls regarding the use of funds and staff management, among other aspects. This represents a significant shift in government and governance, as schools in South Korea have traditionally been tightly regulated and closely overseen by central or local governments or offices of education, including the GOE and SMOE. The policy indicates a process of power devolution and redistribution, granting greater autonomy and accountability to frontline schools and teachers. I am particularly interested in how this transition is experienced by teachers and school leaders, as well as how control mechanisms will be restructured under this political framework in education. It is crucial to examine whether this shift results in the disappearance of oversight or merely redistributes and reinforces pervasive control, from the perspective of teachers and school leadership.

Finally, there is a need to explore alternative accountability frameworks that balance the demand for accountability with genuine teacher autonomy. Research could focus on designing and evaluating policies that prioritise empowerment and collaborative practices over surveillance and control. Such efforts could inform more equitable and effective approaches to education policy, fostering environments where teachers can thrive as independent professionals while meeting societal expectations.

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# APPENDICES

## A. Research Information Sheet

### Information sheet for the subject teachers in ○○○ School

My name is Taeyoung Yun and I am inviting you to take in part in my research project, "Self-Appraisal System", A Case Study on Teachers' Enactment and Subjectivity under the Accountability Policy in South Korea.

I am a PhD candidate in the Department of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment, Institution of Education, University College London (UCL IOE). I served as a full-time teacher of English in a public-funded private secondary school in South Korea for about eight and a half years. I was subsequently involved in a few research projects which are related to teacher policy as a member of research teams in the local educational authority (LEA) of Gyeonggi-do and Korean Education Development Institution (KEDI) in South Korea. After these research experiences, I started my own project, which is self-funded, as a research student belong to UCL IOE, an institution which specialises in education and teacher policy, in March 2019.

### Who is carrying out the research?

Mr Taeyoung Yun

### Why am I doing this research?

I am hoping to explore how the practice and subjectivity of teachers as professionals are presently affected and transformed, with a focus on the current accountability policy, as represented by the self-appraisal system in South Korean schools.

### Why am I being invited to take part?

You are invited to take part in my research project as one of the sixteen to twenty participants who will be interviewed about the current self-appraisal system for teachers in innovation schools, which fall under LEA of Gyeonggi-do. As you may know, since 2011 the current appraisal system replaced the previous inspection system for schools, asking teachers to self-evaluate their own lessons, pedagogy and performance. This new accountability measure is in line with a series of school transformation

policies, as represented by innovation schools. I am very interested in your views and experiences of the new self-appraisal system.

### **What will happen if I choose to take part?**

Involvement in this study will be over a period of 12 months, from February 2021 – January 2022, during which time the researcher is likely to visit you between one or two times to interview you. During the interview, you will be asked to:

- Complete a participant information questionnaire, gathering basic information about your age, gender, years of teaching experience and current role in the school.
- Participate in an in-depth interview with the researcher. The interview will be solely about your perception and enactment of the self-appraisal system and its influence on your subjectivity and practice as a professional.

This interview will last approximately 60 minutes. This interview will be audio-recorded using a microphone and a voice recorder, with your consent, and transcribed for analysis. All data used from these interviews will be made anonymous and may include the use of anonymised quotes.

All of the data collected from you will be translated into English and both versions (Korean and English) stored securely in the researcher's laptop and at UCL IOE, once the researcher returns to England, and will be completely confidential. Any names or identifying features will be removed from the data collected from you before it is disseminated.

### **Will anyone know I have been involved?**

All information gathered from you will be handled in confidence by the researcher. All data will be stored on encrypted computers or in locked cabinets. Audio-recordings of the interview will be transcribed, coded and the results anonymised. Quotes from interviews may be used, but these will also be anonymous, any names or identifying features will be removed. Data from this study will not be available to other researchers, apart from the research teams including the researcher in the future. After this point it will be disposed of securely.

### **Could there be problems for me if I take part?**

There are no foreseen disadvantages or risks of taking part in this study, as it will not be directly linked to your personal and professional life, since this research has nothing to do with any level of governmental body both inside or outside of your workplace and all the data will be anonymised and



pseudonymised. However, if you feel uncomfortable, you are entitled to stop at any point.

### **What will happen to the results of the research?**

It is intended that the results of this study will be published in journals and presented at national and international conferences. Results may also be publicised through the education press. A 'newsletter' giving an overview of the study results will be sent to you and all other participants once the study and analysis have been completed. You will also be invited to a meeting where the results will be presented. Your individual results will not be available, as they are going to be anonymised.

### **Do I have to take part?**

It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. If you choose not to take part there will be no negative repercussions for you e.g. it would not have an effect on your current career or any professional implications for those where the research is linked to your employment. In addition, you can withdraw from this study at any time without giving a reason.

However, I believe that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience. I cannot promise that this study will provide any immediate benefits to you, however the information we get from this study will help to inform the educational communities, organisations, teachers and those in research development, as well as policy-makers at LEA or national level about how the current accountability measures are being used in this transformational era of education.

### **How is the safety during data collection secured in Covid-19 situation?**

Please understand that face to face data collection cannot be replaced by any other methods and it is the only way to guarantee the success of this research project, as this research aims to describe the how teachers live and change themselves in practice under a particular accountability culture in the context of the participants as detailed as possible. However, the face to face data collection will be conducted with through preventive measures of infection based on the risk assessment.

The researcher will start data collection only when he has no symptoms of coronavirus at all and get negative response in the test which will be taken at least 72 hours ago before the data collection. He will strictly follow the safety guidelines that are applied to the settings of fieldwork events in

institutional, local and national level. In addition, the researcher will take thorough care of the safety needs of participants if required before, during and after the data collection. Please refer to the risk assessment for more details.

## **Data Protection Privacy Notice**

The controller for this project will be University College London (UCL). The UCL Data Protection Officer provides oversight of UCL activities involving the processing of personal data, and can be contacted at [data-protection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:data-protection@ucl.ac.uk)

This 'local' privacy notice sets out the information that applies to this particular study. Further information on how UCL uses participant information from research studies can be found in our 'general' privacy notice for participants in research studies: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/legal-services/privacy/ucl-general-research-participant-privacy-notice>

The information that is required to be provided to participants under data protection legislation (GDPR and DPA 2018) is provided across both the 'local' and 'general' UCL Institute of Education privacy notices. The lawful basis that will be used to process any personal data is: 'Public task' for personal data and 'Research purposes' for special category data. I will be collecting personal data such as: age, gender, years of teaching experience and current role in school.

Such personal data you may provide will be processed only so long as it is required for the research project. I will anonymise or pseudonymise your identity and will endeavour to minimise the processing of personal data wherever possible.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, or if you would like to contact UCL IOE about your rights, please contact UCL in the first instance at [dataprotection@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:dataprotection@ucl.ac.uk)

## **Contact for further information**

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me at:

Taeyoung Yun  
20 Priory Road  
Felixstowe  
Suffolk  
IP11 7NE  
+44(0)73 9540 2978  
[taeyoung.yun.09@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:taeyoung.yun.09@ucl.ac.uk)

or my supervisor:

Dr. Jane Perryman  
Room 737  
UCL Institute of Education  
20 Bedford Way  
London  
WC1H 0AL  
+44(0)20 7612 6577  
[j.perryman@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.perryman@ucl.ac.uk)

If you would like to be involved, please complete the following consent form and return to [taeyoung.yun.09@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:taeyoung.yun.09@ucl.ac.uk) by 31/01/2021.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

## **B. Interview Questions for Teachers**

### **[Intro Questions]**

- Tell me briefly about your school and your history as a teacher.
- Tell me about your professional life as a teacher in the school, such as daily routine, lessons, pedagogy.

### **[Main Questions]**

About how teacher perceive the self-appraisal system in relation to autonomy or control:

- Do you remember what you felt when you were first introduced to the self-appraisal system, which is based upon teachers' autonomy rather than direct supervision or inspection? What did you feel and how did you find it?
- What do you think is the main difference between the self-appraisal system and the former inspection system? (only for those who have experienced the former inspections system)

About how teachers are involved in the self-appraisal system and demonstrate autonomy or gain control:

- How does the self-appraisal system work in your school?
- How do you use the self-appraisal system in your practice, such as in your lessons, pedagogy or admin work?
- What and how do the standards you (or your school) set work for your jobs at school?
- Do you think the self-appraisal system helps your and your colleagues' professional development? Then, how?
- Describe to me how the activities apart from your lesson, such as CPD, peer observation, professional learning groups, work with the self-appraisal system?
- Tell me the impacts of the self-appraisal system on your professional life and practice.

About how the subjectivity and professionalism of teachers are transformed in terms of promotion of governmentality:

- Do you feel your professional identity (subjectivity) is being affected by self-appraisal? Then, what made you change?
- Are you feeling freer than before or being pressed for performance under the self-appraisal system? If you still feel pressure for performance, in what ways?

-What do you think that the work ethic under the self-appraisal system should be?

-How and in what ways does the self-appraisal system affect your being as a teacher?

-What do you define a 'good teacher', a 'good school' and a 'good education' under the current trend emphasising teachers' or schools' autonomy?

[Extra Questions]

-What do you think about the coexistence of the self-appraisal system and the other pre-existing accountability policies for teachers, such as the consulting inspection, the performance-based payment or the assessment for teachers' professional development?

## C. Interview Questions for Policy Makers

### [Intro Questions]

- Tell me about your jobs in the Gyeonggi office of education.
- Tell me your professional life as a policy maker, such as daily routine, how you make or deliver policy.
- Tell me about the current inspection scheme of Gyeonggi Office of Education.

### [Main Questions]

About the aims of the self-appraisal system:

- What do you describe as the self-appraisal system?
- What are the main differences between the self-appraisal and the former inspection system?
- What are the aims or expectations you would like to see when the self-appraisal system works properly in schools?
- How does the self-appraisal system work for the promotion of teachers' autonomy?

About how the self-appraisal changes the practice of teachers:

- What kinds of changes are the self-appraisal system supposed to bring into practice for teachers, in particular relation to the use of their autonomy?
- What kinds of changes are the self-appraisal system supposed to bring into professional life, apart from lessons and pedagogy, of teachers?
- How does the self-appraisal system work in schools? Is it working as it is supposed to do? If yes, in what ways and why? If not, in what ways and why?

About how the self-appraisal changes the subjectivity of teachers:

- How should teachers work under the self-appraisal system?
- What is the blue-print of the self-appraisal system aimed for in relation to 'good teacher', 'good school' and 'good education'?

### [Extra Questions]

-What do you think about the coexistence of the self-appraisal system and the other pre-existing accountability policies for teachers, such as the consulting inspection, the performance-based payment or the assessment for teachers' professional development?

## D. Participants Consent Form

### Participant Consent Form

If you are happy to participate in this study please complete this consent form by ticking each item, as appropriate, and return to the researcher via the contact details below:

- 1) I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet, and have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions, and have had these questions adequately answered. ☐
- 2) I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw the consent at any time, without giving any reason. In this case, the data collected from them will be destroyed, and neither be used nor be reported in the study. ☐
- 3) I know that I can refuse to participate at any point of the research. ☐
- 4) I agree for the interview/observation to be recorded, and that recordings will be kept secure and destroyed at the end of the project. I know that all data will be kept under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). ☐
- 5) I understand that my personal information, such as age, gender and teaching experiences, and data collected from me will be used for the purposes presented in the information sheet and explained to me. ☐
- 6) I agree that small direct quotes may be used in reports (these will be anonymised). ☐
- 7) I understand that I will not benefit financially from this study or from any possible outcome it may result in in the future. ☐
- 8) I understand that the researcher will attempt to get the necessary permissions from the concerned school authority and the participating teachers for the purpose of audio (or video if necessary) recording of the meetings. If the researcher does not get the necessary permissions for audio (or video) recording, then the researcher will attempt to seek permission to take copious field notes. ☐
- 9) I understand that the researcher will follow the government's and institution's Covid-19 guidelines when face to face interview or observation is conducted. ☐