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Different systems, different identities: school inspectors in England and Sweden a comparative study

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Abstract

School inspection has formed part of both English and Swedish approaches to governing education for some time now (Maclure, 2000; Segerholm, 2009) But latterly both countries have begun to adopt different approaches to the process, reflected in in the recruitment, training and development of their inspectors. In Sweden the inception of a new inspectorate in 2008 introduced an intensified scheme and a sharper mission, but also a departure from the recruitment of teachers and those with an educational background in a move to recruit individuals with backgrounds in either law or investigation. In England the inception of a New Inspection Framework early in 2012 (Ofsted, 2012a, 2012b) was accompanied by a drive to re-model the inspectorate workforce in aiming to recruit in-service school leaders as part time inspectors (Baxter and Clarke, 2013; Baxter, 2012) Using Jacobsson's theory of governance as a regulative, meditative and inquisitive activity, this paper investigates the effects that these shifts have had on the recruitment and training of inspectors and the shifts have had on the inspection experience .(Hult & Segerholm, 2012; Lindgren et.al., 2012). The research questions within the study are :

- Which competencies are required for school inspectors within both systems, and why?
- How do changes in the both systems affect school leader perceptions of inspection as a governing tool? The paper concludes that in spite of the concerted efforts of both inspectorates to ensure that their systems combine regulatory rigour with developmental impact, the changes are causing substantial tensions in the recruitment, training and operating capacity of inspectors.

Introduction

School inspection has formed part of both English and Swedish approaches to governing education for some time now (Maclure, 2000; Segerholm, 2009) But latterly both countries have changed their approach to the process, reflected in in the recruitment, training and development of their inspectors. In Sweden since the inception of a new inspectorate in 2008 school inspection has strengthened in intensity; transforming its former far softer and advisory approach to assume one far greater regulatory approach involving strict penalties for failure to comply. The new regime has, in common with the new regulatory framework in England, engendered a re-modelling of the inspector workforce with a move away from the recruitment of those with a background in education to the recruitment of individuals from the fields of law or academic investigation. In England the inception of a New Inspection Framework early in 2012 (Ofsted, 2012a, 2012b), marked the inception of a system which aims to combine rigorous regulation with a developmental approach in an attempt to create an organisation which is, 'Much closer to the ground and much nearer to schools.' (Parliament, 2013a:Q66). As part of this, it has combined a change in framework by a drive to re-model the inspectorate workforce in aiming to recruit in-service school leaders as part time inspectors (Baxter and Clarke, 2013; Baxter, 2012).

Using Jacobsson's theory of governance to examine the work of inspectors as a regulative, meditative and inquisitive activity, this paper investigates the effects that these shifts have had on the recruitment and training of inspectors and its effects upon the inspection experience. (Hult & Segerholm, 2012; Lindgren et.al., 2012). Jacobsson identifies three principal types of governing activity applied to inspection these are as follows: The first focuses on regulative activities: the extent to which inspection activities rely upon formal laws and directives with penalties for their violation. The second set of activities, termed, inquisitive activities; concentrates upon making those who are to be inspected 'show and tell', to open up for control. This overlaps with the third genre of activity: the meditative activity which centres upon discussion, professional dialogue and negotiations around what constitutes best practice in that particular context. Taking these three forms of governing activity this study looks to investigate:

- Which competencies are required for school inspectors within both systems, and why?
- How do changes in the both systems affect school leaders' perceptions of inspection as a governing tool?

This paper investigates the extent to which the work of inspectors in each country focuses upon the three governance activities, regulative, inquisitive and meditative, described by Jacobsson (2006, 2010). In so doing, we also explore the ways in which they are prepared for this work: the qualities for which they are recruited and impact of training on their ability to perform these three interrelated but differing activities. Finally we investigate how these activities are perceived through the eyes of school leaders. The research draws upon data gained through semi structured qualitative interviews with inspectors, inspector trainers, school leaders, and heads of inspection services in both Sweden and England (60 in all). Using an ideographic case study approach the research uses discourse analytic techniques to draw out elements relating to inspector identities and the challenges facing them within each system. (Marshak & Grant, 2008; Satterthwaite, Atkinson, & Gale, 2003; Van Leeuwen, 2007).

The paper concludes with a discussion into the challenges that these changes represent for inspectors in both systems, examining them in light of the effects on inspection in both countries. This research forms part of an ESRC study which examines inspection as a form of educational governance in Sweden, Scotland and England.

A tale of two inspectorates

We start with a brief background of the two inspectorates to give a sense of the rapid changes that they have undergone in recent years and to highlight the ways in which they are currently placed in the educational, cultural political contexts in which they operate.

School inspection in Sweden was reintroduced in 2003, 'following a period of soft evaluation in the form of 'development dialogues' and self-evaluation.... during this period inspection was carried out by The National Agency of Education (NAE)2008 (Lindgren, 2012a:3). Since the inception of the new inspection agency, The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI) in 2008, not only has the model changed but the scale and nature of the work of inspection has undergone substantial changes too. The current model based more on, 'control, results and formal or judicial aspects of education,' (ibid 5) was launched as part of an, 'ambitious attempt to by the right wing coalition to reform the Swedish Education system which had

been and is still described as inefficient and underachieving,' (ibid:6). These changes also heralded the beginning of a far more systematic approach which involved far greater numbers of inspections:

In 2011 the Inspectorate assessed 2 400 comprehensive schools, 550 secondary schools and 660 other publicly funded educational enterprises. In their annual report to the government they stress the increase in productivity of around 1 000 visits compared to the previous year, (or a 41% increase in productivity, our calculation) (Skolinspektionen n.d. a, p. 8 in Hult & Segerholm, 2012a:2)

This change in approach engendered a re-modelling of the inspection workforce: led by a New Director General whose former role was that of National Police Commissioner, the agency decreed that inspectors who formerly had been recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of former teachers and head teachers, should now also emanate from the field of law and investigation: that they should be legal scholars schooled in the ways of the law or professionally trained investigative researchers with an academic degree. The aim; to recruit a third of each profession.

The Inspectorate is commissioned by the government to carry out: a) regular supervision of all schools and principal organizers (municipalities and operators of independent schools), and b) quality audits where a sample of schools are audited thematically, e.g. one school subject, or a particular area of interest, for example assessment in the lower attainment (Regeringen Utbildningsdepartementet 2010, 2011, Skolinspektionen n.d. b). The SI also handles c) complaints from individuals (e.g. concerning bullying) and d) licences for independent schools. All activities are based upon the agency's interpretation of the Education Act and Ordinance Acts (2010:800), and a range of other national formal documents, with which all schools are mandated to comply. The quality audits may also include analysis of educational research and longitudinal studies of practice. But in order to focus on the comparative elements in both Sweden and England, this paper focuses primarily the element of regular supervision.

Laws, rules and regulations are particularly important in regular supervisions (Regeringen Utbildningsdepartementet 2010, 2011, Skolinspektionen n.d. b). Once a school or locality has been inspected the inspectorate expect to receive a communication from the Principal Organiser with a plan of how to comply with SI recommendations. Following acceptance of this response a follow-up inspection is conducted approximately three months later. From the first of July 2011 failure to improve may be penalised according to the statute contained within the new Education Act (2010:800). This may involve a range of responses from the imposition fines or for independent schools withdrawal of school operating licences.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate may make use of penalties and apply pressure so that a principal organizer rectifies its activities. If the principal organizer does not take action or seriously disregards its obligations, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate may decide to impose a conditional fine or measures at the principal organizer's expense. In the case of an independent school, its licence to operate may be revoked. (<http://www.skolinspektionen.se/>, 2013)

The Inspectorate is organized in five regional departments and the head management group is composed of the Director general, the Director of Inspections, the five department head managers, and the managers from central functions like communication, internal support, personnel, etc., and law. As mentioned earlier the agency has aimed to re-model its workforce, at present its inspectors are made up from those with a background in education (teachers, headmasters and local administrators), qualified investigators, and those with a legal background (Skolinspektionen n.d. a, p. 51). Most of the inspectors with an educational background also worked as inspectors during the period when the inspections were part of the National Agency for Education 2003-autumn 2008 (Johansson 2012, p. 20).

Although the English inspectorate Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) has been in existence far longer than its Swedish counterpart it has, since its inception in 1992 undergone many iterations (Maclure, 2000). Formed at a time when public and political confidence in the English Education system was low and the right wing neo liberal agenda which had begun over a decade earlier and gained pace under Prime Ministers James Callagan and Margaret Thatcher, was cemented by John Major, who echoed earlier speeches by both premiers that, 'the state must step into schools,' (Chitty, 2004:43), Ofsted was designed to both regulate education and ensure that progressive left wing methods of teaching popularised during the 60's were not permitted to 'compromise standards,' as well as opening up the secret garden of education by informing parental choice of schools via, 'impartial advice and information' offered by means of inspection reports (Ozga, Baxter, Clarke, Grek, & Lawn, 2013). The new agency required a new breed of inspector: one very far removed from those employed by the previous agency: Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI): inspectors that were expected to leave behind the collegial relationship enjoyed by their predecessors and employ far more regulatory approach which subsequently came to be characterised (and caricatured), as punitive and rather than developmental (for further discussion see Baxter, 2013c).

Since then the education landscape has altered a great deal. The 1988 Education Reform Act formalised the expansion of the marketized forms of education (Parliament., 1988), this was followed by a number of Acts all designed to offer schools so called freedoms from Local Authority control and greater autonomy over curriculum and teacher employment (Parliament, 2010). But concomitantly, the role and purpose of Ofsted became increasingly called into question. A number of influential international reports such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment, showed English education to be underperforming compared to its European counterparts,(Grek, Lawn, & Ozga, 2009; OECD, 2010b) and as a result tasked Ofsted to enhance its impact on school improvement (Parliament, 2011). In order to do this it would also have to make considerable efforts to re-build its relationship with the teaching profession: a relationship which had moved from bare tolerance to outright aggression, culminating in 2013 with the National Association of Headteachers formation of an alternative inspectorate (INSTEAD) at their annual conference in 2013. (Elmes, 2013; Marquand, 2013; Paton, 2013).

In order to effect these changes Ofsted introduced a New Inspection Framework in January 2012, refining it in autumn of the same year (Ofsted, 2012d, 2012e). The new Framework and its accompanying handbook reduced the number of judgements from the previous twenty nine to just four. Not only did the new framework make the role of school improvement a core element of the inspection process, but also heightened the emphasis on inspector

professional judgement, doing away with the tick box approach that had been subject to sustained criticism in the previous version (for further discussion see Baxter & Clarke, 2013).

As in the case of the SSI, These innovations were accompanied by efforts to re-model the inspector workforce: a workforce that had been accused by profession, press and Parliament of being out of touch with current issues in education (Abrams, 2012a, 2012b). In order to counter these accusations Inspection providers, in the form of three agencies; CFbt, Tribal and Serco (Ofsted, 2009c), were given a Key performance indicator of recruiting in-service school leaders as part time inspectors. This, it was hoped would enable to more readily effect school improvement by their ability to *speak the same* as those being inspected whilst the fact that they are practising school leaders from good or outstanding schools would concomitantly enhance the credibility of their judgements.

To sum up, both inspectorates have undergone substantial changes over a relatively short time. The inspection carried out by The NAE in Sweden was, to a great extent, directed towards school development through professional dialogue and self- evaluation. The SSI (inspired by Ofsted), in contrast has adopted a tougher, control focussed approach that is often anecdotally compared to that of Swedish Motor Vehicle Inspection by inspectors with a background in the teaching profession; echoing criticisms of earlier, similar Ofsted inspection frameworks (see for further discussion Baxter & Clarke, 2013)

Theoretical approach

Public sector inspection involves a number of elements which are described as fundamental to a successful inspection (Boyne, 2006) in order to render it both effective and credible. In the case of this research we understand effective inspection as a tool by which to govern education (Ozga, Baxter et al., 2013). But the process of inspection is a complex one leading in many cases to the type of ‘performance paradoxes’ outlined by Clarke (Clarke, 2008) and described in the case of educational inspection in earlier work (Baxter, 2013a). These paradoxes emerge as regulatory bodies strive to represent the public interest in an increasingly complex system (Clarke, 2008:125). One such paradox he terms , ‘the paradox of independence’, is indicative of the extent to which the regulatory body can be said to be impartial , as Ofsted describe it , ‘to inspect without fear or favor.’ (Ofsted, 2012d).Clarke argues that in striving to fulfil their regulatory function whilst concomitantly retaining credibility in an constantly changing environment (and often in the face of considerable criticism by press and public), inspectorates inadvertently produce paradoxical inspection effects; these effects often creating new problems in terms of their legitimacy and credibility (see for further discussion Baxter, 2013b).

A body of research into school inspection agrees that inspectorates are to a great extent judged by public, profession and government in terms of the quality and credibility of their inspectors (Ferguson, Earley, Fidler, & Ouston, 2000; Perryman, 2007), and that this is particularly so in within regimes that emphasise the relationship between inspection and school improvement (Matthews & Sammons, 2004; Sammons, 1999). In order to investigate the work of the inspector we draw on the work of Bengt Jacobsson who, in his work on global trends of state transformation describes three dimensions to inspection (Jacobsson, 2006): these are illustrated in figure one.

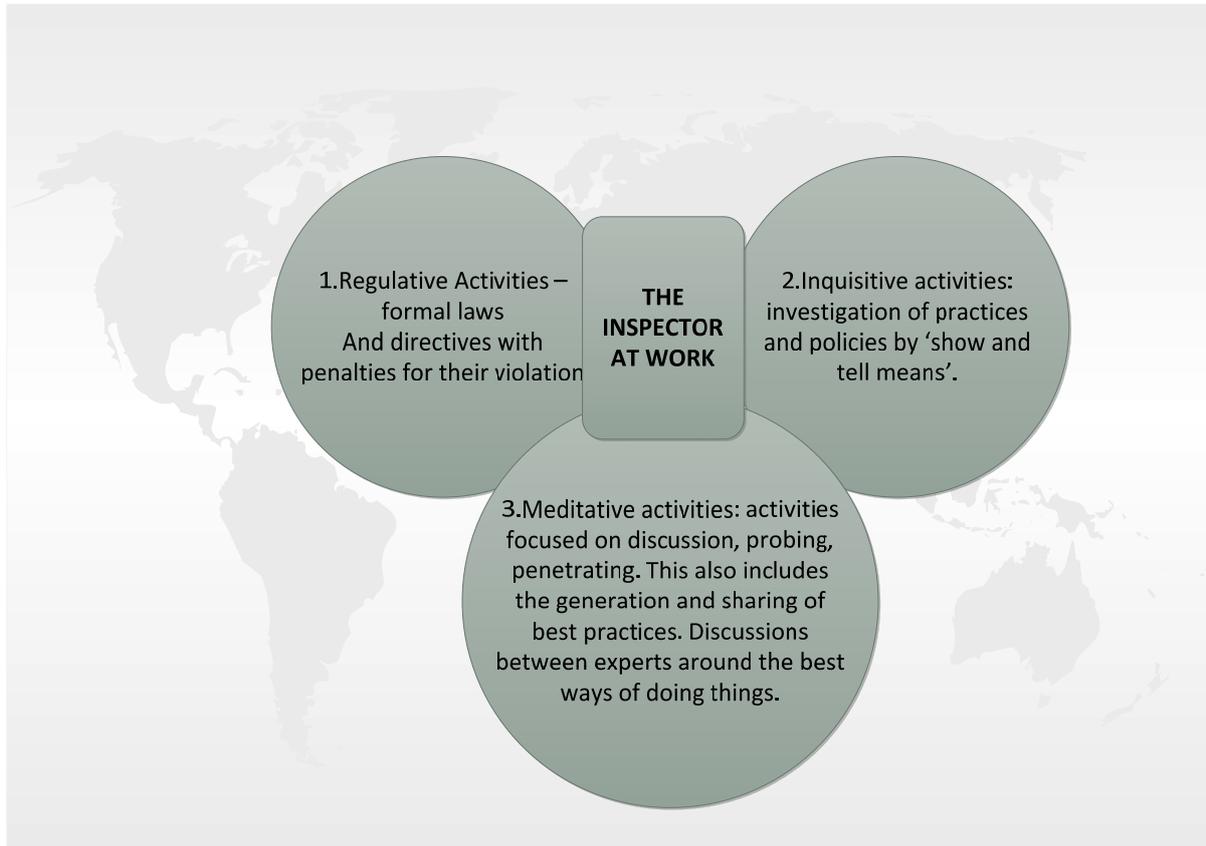


Figure 1 Activities of Inspection Adapted from Jacobsson (2006)

Figure one is adapted from Jacobsson and illustrates the three forms of activity involved in inspection work. The first focuses on regulative activities: the extent to which inspection activities rely upon formal laws and directives with penalties for their violation. The second set of activities, termed, inquisitive activities; concentrates upon making those who are to be inspected 'show and tell', to open up for control. Examples of this is the way in which inspectors demands access to schools' inner life and observe classes and interview school leaders, teachers, students and governors in order to find out what is really going on. This overlaps with the third genre of activity: the meditative activity which centres upon discussion, professional dialogue and negotiations around what constitutes best practice in that particular context. Using these three understandings of the ways in which they carry out their work this paper investigates the extent to which the work of inspectors in each country focuses upon the three areas. In so doing, we also explore the ways in which they are prepared for this work: the qualities for which they are recruited and impact of training on their ability to perform these three interrelated but differing activities. Finally we investigate how these activities are perceived through the eyes of school leaders.

Research into inspection and the qualities of inspectors (Baxter, 2013c; Hult & Segerholm, 2012; Segerholm, 2011) has shown that training falls into two principal categories: induction training and ongoing continual professional development. The induction phase focuses primarily upon inspection values and addressing preconceptions that may be possessed by the nascent inspector. What these values are and how they manifest may be very different depending upon the particular inspector's background. In Sweden as we have discussed, the inspection system has latterly acquired far more of a regulatory focus than previously; when

the SSI recruited new inspectors it primarily was those educated in either the judiciary or in investigative directions¹. In contrast, the English inspectorate with the inception of the 2012 Inspection Framework and its very firm focus on the quality of teaching and learning in a school (Ofsted, 2012b), has moved away from its former compliance focus; moving to one in which it hopes to combine developmental work with regulation, effecting this with a move to recruit in-service school leaders as inspectors, in order to facilitate more effective levels of professional dialogue: to ‘put in place, an organization that is much closer to the ground and much nearer to schools,’ (Parliament, 2013b) (Baxter & Clarke, 2013). As discussed earlier, this move has instantiated a renewed focus on the professional teaching knowledge of inspectors. These changes have created training challenges for both agencies; in the case of the Swedish inspectorate, their challenge is in equipping these legal and investigative professionals with enough pedagogical knowledge, and inspectors with educational background with legal and investigative knowledge to permit them to carry out their regulatory role in a way that trustworthy in the eyes of head teachers and teachers. In the case of Ofsted, their task is conversely to parse context specific teaching and school knowledge from that required in order to function in a way that whilst employing professional knowledge, can still be said to be operating, ‘without fear or favor.’ (Ofsted, 2012c).

The challenges inherent within the initial training period are then carried forward into the next stage of inspector development: the continuous professional development in which the inspector learns ‘on the job’, and develops in experience and knowledge moving from a peripheral role in terms of their experience (see Lave, 2009) to one in which they may be considered to have ‘expert inspector status’. In this paper we understand this learning to take place within the constructivist premise in which inspectors learn as much from one another as from their trainers; that they bring knowledge to the process as well as learning from it and that their professional standing as inspectors is one in which their professional identity is negotiated in relation to the relationship and standing they acquire with their inspectees (Dewey, 1916; Piaget, 1954). We employ this understanding of inspector development to investigate the ways in which inspector development, preparation and work is affecting the inspection process under the new systems in both countries, and consider the challenges, tensions and opportunities inherent within the processes.

Data collection and analysis: Methodology

This paper is based on upon a three country study of inspection: Governing by Inspection School Inspection and Education Governance in Sweden, Scotland and England (res-2009-5770)². The research project on which this paper is based examines inspection as a means of governing education and investigates the governing work that inspection regimes do in three national education systems: Sweden, England and Scotland. The project methodology also includes analysis of the extent to which inspection offers a resource for trans/intra-national

¹ This is not purely research as would be understood in England but someone trained to investigate research and analyse and who would normally possess an academic degree. Academic research would be too narrow a definition of the Swedish term which encompasses a wider perspective than this.

² The Authors acknowledge the support of the ESRC Governing by Inspection: School Inspection and Education Governance in Scotland, England and Sweden (ESRC RES 062 23 2241A and the Swedish Research Council (*Vetenskapsrådet*). The project is funded from 2010-2013 and the authors acknowledge the support of their respective Research Councils. Further details about the project and working papers are available at: <http://jozga.co.uk/GBI/>. We also acknowledge the support from Umea School of Education, Umeå university to the project: Juridicering av skolans styrmedel (Juridification of the governing over school).

policy learning within and across these policy spaces. The project investigates tensions between increased regulation through technical means such as performance data and the rules followed by inspectors in their school assessments, and their expert knowledge, professional judgement and use of support, development and persuasion in encouraging self-regulation in the teaching profession.

The wider project methodology includes: documentary analysis of relevant literature, including official literature and inspection handbooks and inspection reports within each system sample; interviews with key ‘system actors’ at the international, national and local levels [90 in total] and investigation of the background, training, experience and ‘assumptive worlds’ of each national Inspectorate. There are also detailed case studies of a sample of inspection ‘events’ (5 in each system). This paper is based upon the case studies carried out in Sweden and England and the interview data emanating from the studies.³ Transcripts from forty qualitative semi- structured interviews from both the English and Swedish case studies, each interview lasting between 45 mins and an hour, were analysed using key themes arising from the analytic framework for this research (figure two). The key themes employed emerged by translating Jacobsson’s classification of inspection activities into inspector’s work and include: laws, regulation, penalization, practices, teacher observation, feedback, policies, action planning, discussion, professional dialogue.

Analysis was then further broken down according to each genre of inspection activity and is outlined in diagrammatic form in figure two.

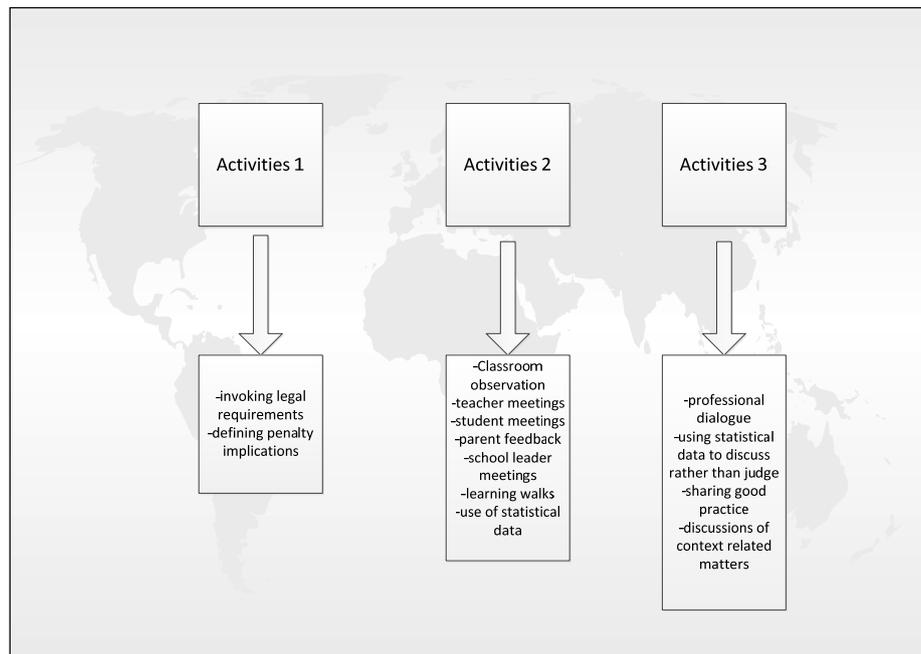


Figure 2. Interview analytic coding framework

³ Also including a master thesis interviewing head teachers, Novak, J. (2013)

Findings

In this section of the paper we discuss our findings in relation to the three areas of activity outlined in figure one: we begin by a discussion of the role of regulative activities within the two systems.

Regulative activities

A large portion of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI) activities are directed to so called regular supervision , meaning controlling that schools and municipalities abide by the national intentions laid down in the Education Act and Ordinance, the National Curriculum, General Guidelines and other national policy documents. But laws and regulations are based on certain values and have to be interpreted into areas, indicators, criteria, etc. for what to supervise/inspect and how to do it. And in interpretation and translation into what and how to supervise/inspect, values also enter. (Segerholm, 2011:3)

The quotation above illustrates that although the SSI system of inspection is heavily weighted around issues of compliance there is a very significant discretionary element to the process. This is reflected in the three main competencies that the agency focuses upon in their inspector training programme: juridical, pedagogical and investigative. The new training programme takes place over six months and includes twelve centrally organised days of face to face input, accompanied by submission of written assignments that build into a portfolio of experience. To make sure that the departments has inspectors with the right competences, a new competence tool has been developed by the inspectorate. This examines inspector abilities across 107 different competencies. The list was compiled according to the results of a number of qualitative interviews carried out across the different departments; the aim being to create tool which accurately reflects the skills, knowledge and personal attributes required of jobbing inspectors. All inspectors are asked to self-report on each competency. This is then discussed with the department manager who will compare the self-evaluation with their own view of the inspector's fitness to practice. For the SSI the new system has a number of strengths as a Swedish Inspector Competence developer recounts:

You can look at the individual level, unit level, department level, authority level and also related to the three different professional backgrounds (S1)

The new competency framework was also premised on the fact that a number of inspectors had moved from the previous regime (The National Agency for Education) and were found to be lacking in some of the skills needed for the new system. Many of these had been heads or senior teachers and the new recruitments were, according to managers at national level, motivated by the need for interview techniques and analytical skills. The mix of skills would secure their capacity to perform constructive developmental work as part of their supervisory role.⁴

⁴ The supervisory role is a Swedish term which denotes both the school's capacity to comply with educational policy whilst also agreeing and acting on a developmental action plan in collaboration with the SSI. It is part of the function of the SSI to ensure the on-going compliance with the developmental plan in order to achieve the required degree of improvement.

The role of the training in regulatory matters is articulated by this inspector who recognises the challenges inherent within the role:

On the one hand it [the school inspection] is to be one piece of the large jigsaw puzzle in which so many policy actors have different types of responsibilities and where we are one, as mentioned, helping to contribute to the development of the Swedish school [.....] but we also have a commission to control, and in that way act as the extension of the government and see to that in fact it turns out the way it has been decided. (Officer 6 in Segerholm, 2011:6)

The idea of the inspector as government agent is more readily acceptable by those with a legal background than those whose educational background can make them prey to the type of partiality referred to as ‘capture’ by Boyne and colleagues (Boyne, Day, & Walker, 2002) and also referred to by Clarke in terms of the paradoxes of inspection (see Baxter, 2013b). This element of proximity or partiality in maintaining a professional distance whilst also retaining credibility is also an issue in the English context. England in comparison to her Swedish counterpart is focusing on the engagement of in service heads and senior leaders from good and outstanding schools in order to carry out at least one inspection a term. The rationale for their recruitment is discussed more fully later in this paper, but the challenges they pose in training and recruitment are outlined by these lead inspectors:

We do interviews and assessment and part of that interview and it’s quite a crucial part is to try and look at the nature of the person: we are looking for people who can apply the criteria fairly and err, leave behind their baggage. That is actual quite difficult; it’s one of the issues that we face above anything else; even throughout the training, we often encounter people that say, ‘that’s not the way I would do it’ and the emphasis is not only what they would do but what a school or other institution is doing and whether it works. (EP5)

In terms of the regulatory and legal function of each inspectorate the SSI have very clearly prescribed lists of criteria which require a tick box approach as to whether the school complies or not, as stated on their website:

Swedish Schools Inspectorates conducts regular supervision of all municipal and independent schools, from pre-school to adult education. Activities are scrutinized on a number of points. Our decision states in which areas a school is failing to meet national requirements. At a seminar with those responsible from the municipality and school, we discuss the areas where improvements are needed. (<http://skolinspektionen.se>)

In the case of the English inspectorate there is certainly a compliance element to the process but this tends to be centred upon aspects such as for example; safeguarding⁵. This aspect did appear as one of the criteria for judgement in the previous Inspection Framework produced in 2009 in which it featured as one out of some 29 judgements (Ofsted, 2009b) along with

⁵ Ensuring that children/ students are safe whilst on school site.

elements of pastoral care. But the new Framework comprises only four judgements and the inspection team is expected to integrate the compliance elements of inspection into these.

Inquisitive activities

The regulative activities of both the SSI and Ofsted are supported by evidence it is to a great extent within the inquisitive activities (numbered two in figure one), that this evidence is brought into play. The role of what constitutes knowledge and evidence in inspection has changed and evolved according to political and policy changes (Chitty, 2004; Lindgren, 2012b; Ozga, 2009b). Lindgren points out how this plays out in the case of Sweden:

'Judgements tend to be located within an on-going struggle between two parallel professional cultures: a pedagogical and a juridical.' (Lindgren, 2012c:1)

In England the tensions tend to be between the use of statistical and numerical data weighed against the extent to which qualitative, context specific data is used to inform judgements (Ozga, Baxter et al., 2013; Ozga, Dahler-Larsen, Segerholm, & Simola, 2011). In both systems the inquisitive activities of the inspectors manifested by the ways in which they investigate practices, policies and data not only provides them with an evidence base upon which to work, but equally offers individual schools the opportunity to show their work in the best light. In the English system the current inspection framework was designed to eradicate (as far as possible), any opportunity for schools to 'play the system', as one headteacher outlined:

'You know, you just know that the guy down the road has shipped all of the bad kids out to the seaside for the day.' (EP14)

Shorter lead in times (schools only have one day's notice), more teacher observation, inspections which only last two days and a system which places an emphasis upon teaching over time as opposed to the classroom *performance* of the teacher, all combine with the aim of making inspections: '*shorter and sharper.*' (EP 12). But the short sharp inspections are creating tensions of their own as one school leader told us:

'They [Ofsted] come in and they see around 50 observations, but say my best staff work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and they come Thursday Friday?' (EP20)

The shorter nature of inspection has brought challenges of its own to the process, raising questions about the scale and nature of the inquisitive process and the extent to which qualitative data is weighed against student attainment data. In some cases this has led to increasing levels of cynicism amongst heads who feel that the present scale and nature of inspector duties render it impossible for them to go by anything other than statistical data based evidence:

'Do you really get a feel for what a school is like over 2 days?I actually think that they [Ofsted] should have that first conversation with the SIP (School Improvement Officer), [.....] tell me about the leadership and management of the

school, where do you see the grades over the next 3 years under this management? Then we will go and inspect it. Otherwise, stay in London and look at RAISEONLINE⁶

Recent changes to the inspection system in Sweden have also placed additional demands. In contrast to their English counterpart, Swedish inspectors do not inspect teaching. Instead their inquisitive activities centre upon individual school development plans, documentation and data pertaining to student achievement. Swedish school leaders complain about the time-consuming nature of the task of collating the required levels of documentary evidence, and they, like their English counterparts view the changes as specious; voicing concerns that the short time spent in school, combined to the quantity of written, statistical and legal compliance documentation means that many inspectors have judged a school before they even embark on the inspection visit:

'The time they met students and teachers were really short [...] so I think it's a short time for them to really see.' (SR17)

'I thought that the SSI didn't always listen to what we had to say, but rather they had already decided and they were not interested in the truth.' (SR11)

The short timescales for inspection combined with the sheer quantity of evidence for analysis, put considerable pressure upon inspector's abilities to synthesise and analyse a range of evidence. In Sweden this has led to the recruitment of individuals with academic degrees in the art and science of investigation. In England the employment of in service head teachers has meant that this skill has had to be honed within the context of initial and on-going training. One inspector explained the challenges that this poses to lead inspectors in the English system:

'It's a very, very difficult role; because you've got all of that responsibility at the start of inspection: to prepare; you've got to build a relationship with the head teacher and the senior team and I think that's a crucial part of a successful inspection: if they feel they've been listened to and you've gone to look at the stuff they suggested: lesson plans etc. .One of the criticisms made [recently] about our evidence forms was that they weren't clinical enough, judgemental enough or explicit enough.' (EP2)

Striking a balance between building a relationship with school leaders: listening to their story of their school and the evidence that they are keen to present and yet remaining impartial and drawing on evidence that may place them in a poor light, is a delicate one to achieve. It overlaps a great deal with the meditative activities outlined in section three of figure one, yet it is in essence quite a different activity. The tensions between the inquisitive practices and the meditative activities are elucidated by this English lead inspector and inspector trainer who talks about his own experiences of learning to be an inspector whilst working as a head teacher:

'I used to drive away from the training [to be an inspector] thinking, you know any of my staff could do this, whether it is the most high flying senior teacher that you've got

⁶ Data management system for school attainment and achievement data in English secondary and primary education.

or the newly qualified teaching assistant with no experience. Cos surely it's a case of applying a set of criteria to a given situation? In my naivety I underestimated the interpersonal element and as I inspected more it came very vividly to me that actually it's 98% interpersonal.' (EP11)

The interpersonal element of inspection is intrinsically linked to both the meditative and regulative activities: a facet that is recognised and articulated within the new English system in which teaching inspectors are thought to add credibility to the process and, it is hoped, will encourage school leaders to more readily enter into professional dialogue with inspectors, and concomitantly be more ready to accept judgements (for further discussion see Baxter & Clarke, 2013).

In the Swedish system not only the lack of a teaching background but the particular *manera de ser*⁷ of those from a legal background has created problems which then overlap into the meditative activities of the inspectorate, as two Swedish school leaders told us:

'We felt it [inspection] as a medieval inquisition more than as an inspection.' (SR11)

'[They] could not think outside of the box: this is what the law says [...] this is our directive...so he was a real jobs worth⁸.' (SR9)

Meditative activities

The comments above demonstrate the perceptual problems engendered by having individuals without an educational background working as inspectors. The new English system in contrast with its drive to introduce a perceptual proximity between inspectors and inspectees, has done so at the risk of inspector capture, as discussed earlier; with its accompanying occluded discourse of partiality. (Boyne, 2006). The notion of professional inspectors who can effect positive change within schools has proven deeply seductive to the English inspectorate who, influenced by evidence given at a Parliamentary inquiry into the work of Ofsted in 2011 which commended the manner of inspections carried out in the independent inspectorate:

Within our system, the team inspectors are themselves current serving practitioners. We deploy around a thousand of these a year to go into and inspect other schools. The exchange of information and the opportunity to see the most effective practice and to take it back into their particular institutions is phenomenal. The inspectors themselves frequently comment that it is the best professional development that they get, as well as the benefit to the sector as a whole'(Parliament, 2011)

This very much reflects the type of meditative activities alluded to by Jacobsson, the generation and sharing of best practices and the idea of inspection as a discussion between professional experts, as one head reported :

⁷ Way of being

'It felt much more collaborative: like we were doing inspection with them rather than having it done to us.' (EP22)

In the new inspection Framework the word professional appears 40% more frequently than in the previous 2009 version (Ofsted, 2009a, 2009b, 2012a, 2012b) and the Handbook for Inspection and its accompanying Framework makes the link between inspection and school improvement much more specific than it has been in the past, stating that the agency aims to:

*2. Provide information to the Secretary of State for Education and to Parliament about the work of schools **and the extent to which an acceptable standard of education is being provided**. This provides assurance that minimum standards are being met provides confidence in the use of public money and assists accountability, as well as **indicating where improvements are needed**.* (Ofsted, 2012a, 2012b)

The Swedish Inspectorate also pertains to take a developmental view of inspection, but this is effected in a slightly different way to the new English system. In the Swedish regular supervision there are very few teaching observations and no individual feedback sessions. However in the newly introduced feedback seminars after the report is published the inspectors meet with the representatives for the municipality and the head teachers and have a dialogue on deficiencies and how to deal with them. This kind of meditative activity is highly appreciated by those attending, here one chairman of the (political) municipal board of education:

When it comes to the feedback seminar I'm actually a bit impressed, they have organised the process so that they both have written the reports and also helpfully arranged group work with school leaders to work through their reports. So far they have topped my expectations. (S10)

However the developmental aspect of Swedish inspection foremost relies on the school's response to the judgement as Lindgren reports;

Before the final and public version of the decision is published on the SI website there is an internal quality assurance meeting at SSI where the responsible inspector, the team inspector, the team lawyer and occasionally the head of unit, specify the judgements in the decisions. The decision is published at www.skolinspektionen.se and a press release distributed. Finally, after three months, schools are obliged to submit an account describing how they have acted on the criticism in the inspection report. (Lindgren, 2012c:6)

This combination of evaluation and response to evaluation is interesting since in the interviews there are both representatives from municipalities and schools (head teachers) that refers to their transformation of critique in the evaluation report to a response document that will function as a valuable steering document for development. This contrasts greatly with the English approach. Viewed in light of Jacobsson's three areas of activity it is evident that whilst both systems use inquisitive activities to reach their judgements; whilst the English system appears to choose superficially meditative activities to govern; its Swedish counterpart relies very firmly on the regulative activities as outlined in area one (figure one). Our final discussion explores these aspects in light of Jacobssons' original theory and examines the challenges and tensions for the new inspection regimes in each country.

Concluding Discussion

This paper has revealed that although the two inspectorates are tasked with governing their national education systems, within the context of their new systems, they go about this in ways which appear to have little in common. The legal and regulatory backgrounds of the new Swedish inspectors permit them to exercise a formal judicial role over schools; this is also accompanied by penalisation should schools fail to deliver adequate action to deal with reported deficiencies. Jacobsson's original work asks the rhetorical question: 'why would states and other organizations follow rules without being formally required to?' and goes on to report, 'this is frequently done, for example by claiming special expertise.' (ibid: 208). This special expertise is the tool by which the English inspectors achieve their credibility; exercising their authority through a combination of meditative activities which, if carried out effectively, combine with their inquisitive activities to create a powerfully convincing governing effect which echoes the idea of soft governance, a less overt but none the less equally powerful manner of regulatory control (Grek & Lawn, 2010; Ozga, 2009a). But if both inspectorates aim to effect school improvement then this paper has argued that it is the meditative activities that seem to provoke the unintended consequences that have the power to exert a detrimental effect upon the canon of inspection. As discussed earlier, the very overtly legal approach taken by Sweden employs individuals who operate, as Clarke puts it, 'at arms-length' from those they inspect (Clarke, 2008). This, whilst minimising the risk of accusations of partiality, concomitantly creates a bureaucratic discourse which precludes many of the meditative activities that affect the inspection 'effects' and convince the profession that inspection is indeed a useful and developmental activity for their school (Hult & Segerholm, 2012a:3).

In contrast, the heightened focus on regulation via meditative activities described in the English system, creates different challenges for both inspected and inspectors. As the qualitative data has illustrated, decisions about what data to include: as to what constitutes the most powerful evidence when faced with a range of externally generated and school generated data, combined with professional proximity can lead to accusations of subjectivity and partiality. This is borne out by an increase in the number of complaints made about the system since its inception in 2012 (in the first five months of the new Framework 262 schools – one in 12 of those inspected made a formal complaint afterwards (Garner, 2012), and culminating in a major rebellion by head teachers at their annual conference in 2013 (Paton, 2013).

A definition of what it means to govern education is not easily discerned and any interpretation risks sounding reductionist. Governing education has, as others have pointed out, a complex mix of political rhetoric, ideological positioning and manipulation of the teaching profession for political ends (Ozga, 1995). If, as a number of writers have argued, schools are best placed to effect their own development (MacBeath & McGlynn, 2002; MacBeath, 1999; MacBeath, 2006), then both the Swedish and English systems of inspection need to take account of this in the context of their regulative, inquisitive and meditative inspection activities, or risk failure in the eyes of public, profession and their political masters.

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