



Exploring effects from the context of school inspection: Three interlinked research projects

Linda Rönnerberg, Umeå University

Christina Segerholm, Mid-Sweden University

Outline

1. The research projects: Key issues, data collection etc.
2. Inspection as evaluation
3. Constitutive effects as an analytical tool to explore effects

Three interlinked projects

Swedish National School Inspections: Introducing centralised instruments of steering in a decentralised context..

Analyses the simultaneous tendencies of decentralisation and centralisation in contemporary Swedish education policy, by focusing on the school inspections. The agenda, implementation and effects of the inspections are in focus.

2008-2014, Research Fellowship project, funded by the Swedish Research Council (VR), Dr Linda Rönnerberg)

Governing by Inspection.

Compares the use of school inspection as a form of governing of education in the three systems of Sweden, Scotland and England, in the context of current changes in inspection practices in Europe.

2010-2013, Bilateral project, funded by the Swedish Research Council (VR) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Swedish team: Prof Christina Segerholm, Miun (proj. leader), Dr Agneta Hult, Dr Joakim Lindgren, Prof Ingrid Nilsson and Dr Linda Rönnerberg, all UmU. UK team: Prof Jenny Ozga (proj. leader), Univ of Oxford, Prof Martin Lawn and Dr Sotiria Grek, both Edunburgh Univ and Prof John Clarke, Open Univ.

Inspecting the ‘Market’: Education at the Intersection of Marketisation and Central State Control.

Focuses on the intersection and possible interdependence of two main contemporary educational policy developments in Sweden in which re-centralising tendencies on part of the state occur at the same time as market mechanisms continue to pave their way into the education sector.

2011-2013: Young Researcher’s Award, Umeå University, Dr Linda Rönnerberg (proj. leader), Dr Joakim Lindgren, UmU, from May 2012 also Sara Carlbaum, UmU.

Key issues in brief

- Governing by and through inspection: We understand school inspection as part of the governing of education
- This covers issues such as what problem/s inspection is represented to be targeting to exploring the lived effects in municipalities, schools and responsible authorities.
- And this also include explorations of international policy transfer and ideas and historical outlooks, as well as Inspectors' expert knowledge and judgement.

From a comparative horizon

- Education and learning are important to economic and societal well-being in Europe and beyond.
- Governing activities are increasingly co-ordinated and standardised across Europe, also in education. For instance through 'soft governance' forms (Lawn 2006) including use of comparative data (Ozga et al. 2011).
- Inspectorates are important actors in these processes of education governing.
- There are tensions about how to govern in and across national systems and within the emergent European education policy space.
- Are inspectorates also a resource for managing these tensions, a site where these tensions are embodied and enacted?

Data collection and empirical studies

In the three interlinked projects, the Swedish data collection include:

- a) Document analysis, such as government reports, bills, minutes, materials from the Inspectorate etc. - mapping the policy context
- b) A questionnaire to all Swedish School Inspectors - analysing their experiences
- c) Interviews with national policy brokers and Inspectors - tracing policy flows and policy learning
- d) A study of how inspection is represented in a (selection) of local newspapers – exploring (an aspect of) the intersection of the ‘audit society’ and ‘media society’

Data collection and empirical studies

e) A study of a thematic Quality Review from its initiation to its completion. Two schools are selected for further study (ongoing) – exploring inspection practice and impact

f) A study of the relation between evidence and expertise (connoisseurship) in inspection decisions and impact on educational practice

g) Qualitative case studies in twelve schools in four municipalities. Participation at Inspection on-site school visits, interviews with inspectors, local politicians and officials, head teachers and teachers, collection of written material are included. Also with a follow-up (ongoing). This large material include appr 70 interviews in total – to map, illuminate and explore inspection experiences from both Inspectors and Inspected.

Qualitative case studies: A closer look

		Schools	
		Few remarks	Many remarks
<i>City South</i> M1	Few remarks (Mun. grouping type A)	<i>S1</i> <i>ID1</i>	<i>S2</i> <i>ID2</i>
<i>Rural West</i> M2	Few remarks (Mun. grouping type B)	<i>S3</i>	<i>S4</i>
<i>City East</i> M3	Many remarks (Mun. grouping type A)	<i>S5</i> <i>ID3</i>	<i>S6</i> <i>ID4</i>
<i>Rural East</i> M4	Many remarks (Mun. grouping type B)	<i>S7</i>	<i>S8</i>

A sample of eight compulsory schools (S1 to S8) and four independent school (ID1-ID4) located in four municipalities (matching pairs type A: urban areas, type B: Sparsely populated/rural).

The selection involved several steps. Firstly, the cases had to meet two prerequisites: to be inspected during 2011 by two out of four geographical divisions within the Inspectorate. Secondly, matching pairs of municipalities were identified. Thirdly, the final selection of municipalities and schools was guided by previous inspection history as evident in inspection reports.

Inspection as evaluation

- Evaluation is inherently political
- Inspection is a type of evaluation
- Concepts related to impact; intentions and aims of evaluation/inspection (e/i), (object of e/i, procedure, direction of e/i, use of e/i), all these matter for the influence, effects, consequences, impacts and functions of evaluations/inspections
- And...context matters (political, social, economical, juridical, historical, etc)

Inspection as evaluation

- **Two concepts to capture inspection impacts:**
 - ◆ Influence pathways (e g. Mark & Henry 2004, Mark 2011)
 - ◆ Constitutive effects (Dahler-Larsen 2007, 2011a, b)

Inspection as evaluation

Mark and Henry: The Mechanisms and Outcomes of Evaluation Influence

Table 1. A Model of Alternative Mechanisms that May Mediate Evaluation Influence

<i>Type of Process/Outcome</i>	<i>Level of Analysis</i>		
	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Interpersonal</i>	<i>Collective</i>
<i>General influence</i>	Elaboration Heuristics Priming Skill acquisition	Justification Persuasion Change agent Minority-opinion influence	Ritualism Legislative hearings Coalition formation Drafting legislation Standard setting Policy consideration
<i>Cognitive and affective</i>	Saliency Opinion/attitude valence	Local descriptive norms	Agenda setting Policy-oriented learning
<i>Motivational</i>	Personal goals and aspirations	Injunctive norms Social reward Exchange	Structural incentives Market forces
<i>Behavioral</i>	New skill performance Individual change in practice	Collaborative change in practice	Program continuation, cessation, or change Policy change Diffusion

Mark & Henry, 2004, p. 41

Constitutive effects

Argument

- Drawing on Dahler-Larsen (2011a, b, 2007), we argue that the term *constitutive effects* can be used as an analytical tool to explore effects from the context of school inspection
- Constitutive effects is “a term that seeks to capture the way tests, measurements etc. help define the social realities of which they are a part” (Dahler-Larsen, 2011a, p. 3)
- Evaluation (of which inspection is a part), redefine the “meaning of education and the practices of education by means of installing new discursive and cultural markers defining standards, targets and criteria” (Dahler-Larsen 2011b, p. 153)

Constitutive effects

Rationale: Effects as "intended" and "unintended"

- "Unintended": Portrayed as negative, for instance by using terms such as "perverse effects", "dysfunctional effects" or "deceases": This implies a normative standpoint.

"The term unintended effects represents in fact only one among several ways, and perhaps not the best way, in which these phenomena can be conceptualized and thereby understood" (Dahler-Larsen, 2011a, p. 3)

- "Intended": What are they? Whose intentions? Are they stable or re-negotiated?

"it is assumed that these good intentions are shared by all, based on a consensual and unproblematic view of, say, "what constitutes school quality" or "what is a good achievement." (Dahler-Larsen, 2011a, p. 2f).

Constitutive effects

Include

- a) particular content, such as “traits”, “skills”, “competences”, “qualities” etc. or “results” that are claimed to be (objectively) measured.
- b) a particular definition of time frames in which certain results are expected
- c) a configuration of social relations among actors (...) based on an attribution of roles
- d) a broader world view (or set of world views) in which the meanings related to a)-c) are knit together (Dahler-Larsen, 2011a, p. 4).

Constitutive effects in the context of school inspection: Examples and illustrations

- fostering (a) particular view(s) of education e. g. as an individual Right for all, as rational planning and documentation
- fostering a particular view of the teacher profession, teachers and students – and schooling in general
- fostering compliance and lack of independent and critical thought
- fostering awareness of a need of transparency as quality in education



Thanks for listening!

Linda.Ronnberg@pol.umu.se
Christina.Segerholm@miun.se

Publications:

- Segerholm, C. (2011) Values in Evaluation. The What and How values in Swedish School Inspection (Paper presented at the American Evaluation Association in Anaheim, November 2-5, 2011).
- Rönnerberg, L. (2011). Exploring the Intersection of Marketisation and Central State Control through Swedish National School Inspection. *Education Inquiry*, 2 (4), (accepted, publ December 2011)
- Rönnerberg, L. & Segerholm, C. (2011). Skolinspektionen. I Agneta Hult och Anders Olofsson (red.) *Utvärdering och bedömning i skolan. För vem och varför?* (ss. 49-65) Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.
- Rönnerberg, L., Lindgren, J. & Segerholm, C. (2011). In the Public Eye. School Inspection Reports in Swedish Newspapers (Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), network 23: Policy Studies and Politics of Education, Berlin, Germany, 13-16 September 2011).
- Lindgren, J. Hult, A. Segerholm, C. & Rönnerberg, L. (2011) Mediating school inspection – Key dimensions and key words in official Swedish discourse 2003-2010. (Paper presented at the symposium Governing by Inspection, at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), network 23: Policy Studies and Politics of Education, Berlin, Germany, 13-16 September 2011).
- Ozga, J. Dahler-Larsen, P. Segerholm, C. & Simola, H. (Eds.) (2011). *Fabricating Quality in Education: Data and governance in Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Rönnerberg, L. (2010). Political Party Convergence and Divergence: The Issue of Inspecting Educational Performance. (Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research (ECER), network 23: Policy Studies and Politics of Education, Helsinki, Finland, 25-27 August 2010).
- Rönnerberg, L. (2010). Inspecting the 'Market': Education Policy, School Choice and State Control. (Paper presenterat på statsvetenskapliga förbundets årsmöte i Göteborg, 29 september – 1 oktober 2010).
- Jarl, M. & Rönnerberg, L. (2010) *Skolpolitik. Från Riksdagshus till klassrum*. Stockholm: Liber.
- *Journal of Education Policy* (2009). Issue 24 (2).
- Grek, S., Lawn, M., Lingard, B. Ozga, J., Rinne, R., Segerholm, C. & Simola, H. (2009). National policy brokering and the construction of the European Education Space in England, Sweden, Finland and Scotland. *Comparative Education* 45(1):5-21.
- Segerholm, C. (2009). 'We are doing well on QAE'. The case of Sweden. *Journal of Education Policy* 24(2):195-209.
- Rönnerberg, L. (2009). Creating an Institutional Framework for Educational Control: The Swedish National Agency for School Inspection. (Paper presented at the 37th Annual Congress of the Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA), NW22: Politics of Education and Education Policy Studies, Trondheim, Norway, March 5-7, 2009).
- Rönnerberg, L. (2008). The re-emerging State. Motives and arguments underlying the reintroduction of Swedish national school inspections. Paper presented at the NOPSA Congress (Nordic Political Science Association) Workshop on "Education and Research, Democracy and Governance", Tromsø, Norway, 6-9 August 2008 and at the European Conference on Educational Research, network 23: Policy Studies and Politics of Education, Gothenburg, Sweden, 10-12 September 2008).