

Chapter 12

School Inspectors: Shaping and Evolving Policy Understandings

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Abstract As Chap. 1 explained, the factors at play in the implementation of public policy are not limited to the complex, confounding and often competing values that jostle with one another when education policy is formulated, but may also variously come to light depending upon the lens through which the process is viewed. In this the final chapter I move to examine what understandings the country studies in this book reveal about the impact of policy subsystems in education and inspection policy, and the role of the inspectors within this. In so doing I examine how far the implementation of inspection policy can be said to convene to a model of ten preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). I then move to examine the part played by inspectors in variously framing the idea of policy implementation as: evolution; learning; coalition; responsibility and trust, (see Lane in *Eur J Polit Res* 15: 532, 1987, in Ham and Hill 1984, p. 108), and to what extent inspectors can be said to be ‘coalition workers’ in influencing inspection policy. The chapter concludes that the work of inspectors is a key element within policy implementation and formation within the governance process and should be seen as central to any future research which investigates accountability from a governance perspective. It also concludes that it forms an important element within research into intended and unintended consequences of inspection policy.

Keywords Policy implementation · School inspection · Education · Education policy · Education politics

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Introduction

In the concluding chapter of this volume I argue that the cases illustrated in this volume support the role of the inspector as policy shaper and that examining evidence from these case studies, drawn as they are from differing cultures and contexts, provides a basis from which to draw particular conclusions regarding not only the ways in which cultural and political contexts influence education and inspection policy, but also a means by which inspectors and inspectorates contribute to policy learning in very particular ways. I also examine the implications of the employment of different theoretical frameworks as they converge within the inspector role, and explore what this means for the implementation of inspection policy the field of education policy implementation more broadly.

The studies in this volume emphasize that in considering inspection policy it is not enough to examine individual inspectors purely in relation to their organisations (inspectorates), but that their work must also be necessarily viewed from an interorganisational perspective, within which their ‘assumptive’ worlds are assumed to be colored and conditioned within a cyclical process in which they evaluate and reevaluate their work in relation not only to the inspectorate, but equally, in relation to the schools that they inspect. The original policy *intention* conveyed through recruitment and training processes not only frames the policy in a particular way, but is also coloured by both the traditions—cultural and political—within the inspectorate as well as organisations involved in the inspection process.

The case studies, in revealing that implementation is coloured by the assumptive worlds of inspectors—their values and sense of purpose, also reveal that this is further complicated by such elements as organizational culture, professional identity and conflicted professional identities—such as the case by Henry Moreton and colleagues in Chap. 7, and the conflicted and conflicting opinions around the purposes of inspection in Chap. 11.

In framing inspectorates as an institutions—relatively stable organizations which are also subject to transformation via a combination of mechanisms as in Chap. 2, Dederling and Sowada examine the role of the inspector through the triad of regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements. These frames resonate throughout the volume, reflected in the cognitive, situative and affective elements involved in inspectors’ work: the ways in which they frame their tasks, the context in which they carry out their work and the values that they attribute to it.

School inspectors, as this volume reflects, are not a homogenous group. They have different backgrounds and have been recruited for diverse and very particular skills. Although there appears to be an element of coalescence with regard to the work that they carry out, the ways in which they approach this work and the understandings they bring to it, differ according to the policy context in which they work. What is clear from the cases in this volume, is that in each case the policy subsystem (Fig. 12.1) has responded directly to external system events driven by changes in socio economic conditions, public opinion (as influenced by the media and government), along with changes to the systemic governing coalition and as a

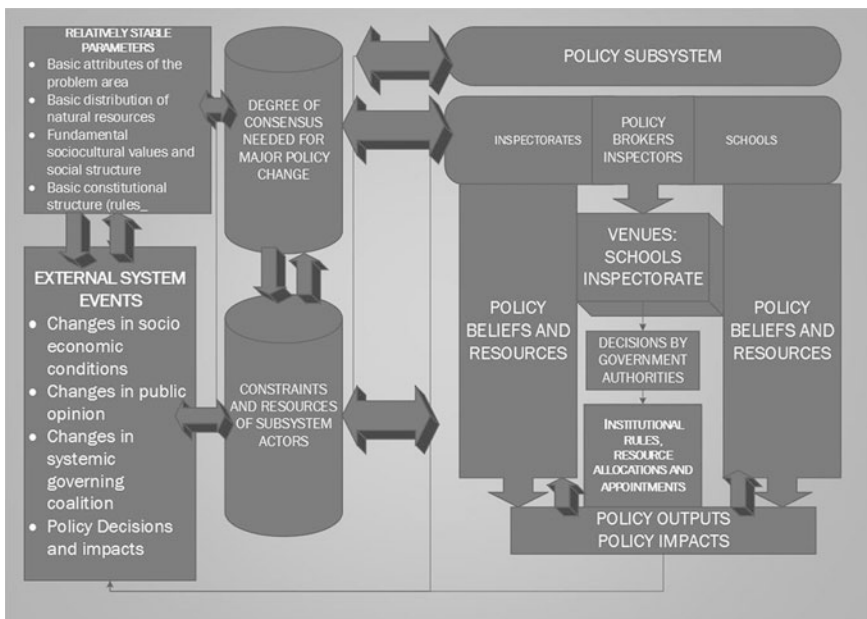


Fig. 12.1 An Adaptation of the Advocacy Coalition Model: Adapted from Weible and Sabatier (2006, p. 124 taken from the original model as seen in Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999)

result of policy decisions. These drivers have not only filtered downwards through the policy implementation chain, but have also travelled horizontally due to the governance mechanisms at play within the policy system, as policy brokers (some of them inspectors) work across the implementation sphere, both influencing and influenced by policy drivers and ‘bottom up’ revelations and insights provided by inspectors.

Returning once again to Hogwood and Gunn’s ten preconditions to achieve perfect implementation (Fig. 12.2), the country studies have revealed that whether inspection policy can be said to be well implemented depends largely upon what is understood to be the function of inspection, and whether successful implementation is seen as getting something done, or whether it is more a matter of regulatory compliance: As Barrett and Fudge (1981, p. 258), put it, if performance rather than conformance is the main objective, and compromise a means by which to achieve it, then it is possible to conclude from the studies carried out within this volume, that implantation of inspection policy is successful if viewed as a governance tool. This is largely because of inspectorates’ apparent ability to adapt and change in order to fit with government agendas and policy plans. This chameleon like ability to adapt and transcend the electoral cycle has also been noted in other studies, (see for example Ozga et al. 2013; Grek and Lindgren 2014). But some research also indicates that inspectorates or regulatory bodies can outlive their usefulness to government: Examining the work of similar regulatory agencies Döhler (2013),



Fig. 12.2 Ten preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (adapted from text by Hogwood and Gunn 1984, pp. 123–136)

points to Bernstein, who proposes a four stage life cycle of regulatory agencies (Bernstein 1955): gestation, youth, maturity and old age,

during this life cycle an agency is transformed from hopeful expectations of serving the public interest to a passive, underperforming bureaucracy that is losing political support and thus triggering a new drive for regulation (Bernstein 1955, p. 74 in Döhler 2013, p. 518).

During the final phase of the agency, ‘regulators are pressured by external groups until they move away from their original role and please the industry they were supposed to regulate in the first place’ (Döhler 2013, p. 519). Although these observations emanated from private sector regulation, they are useful to this study in examining the challenges posed by changing socio, economic and political environments and inspectorates’ need to remain responsive and agile in the face of such change. Although these studies do not indicate that governments are tiring of inspectorates, they do illustrate the inherent challenges posing as policy problems that require a ‘fresh start’ approach to inspection. This ‘rejuvenation’ of inspection in many cases, arises in response to a ‘policy problem’ framed in such a way as to link lack of state intervention with ‘low standards’ (see in particular Chaps. 2, 6 and 8).

In England the evolution of the inspectorate Ofsted, appears to have followed the lifecycle suggested by Bernstein—in reaching the final phase it has in many ways returned to the ‘old style’ of inspection it was originally designed to counteract (Maclure 2000): moving towards appeasing the teaching profession by the adoption

of a workforce largely made up from practicing headteachers; veering dangerously towards the type of inspector capture described by Boyne and colleagues (Boyne et al. 2002). In Altricher's account in Chap. 10, he points out that the cyclical nature of inspection policy is due to governments' wish to achieve 'the best of both worlds', an inspectorate which satisfies the governments' need for adequate accountability yet which also fulfills a developmental purpose. The changing form and shape of the English inspectorates is mirrored by that of Sweden which appears to have rejected the more ostensibly developmental focus in the search for a more rigid and 'impartial' form of inspection. Yet in its determination to avoid all of the classic issues around inspector capture—too great a proximity between inspectors and inspectees—the Swedish inspectorate appears to be coming full circle; finding that inspectors have a deep and abiding wish to influence schools and school improvement. Whether the legal and research experts employed in the present system of inspection are able to tap into the discourse of school improvement is highly questionable given their lack of credible background in education.

In terms of Hogwood and Gunn's ten preconditions necessary for 'perfect implementation,' the studies reveal a number of issues. The first arises in relation to the widespread confusion and lack of agreement as to what inspection is for. The studies revealed a distinct lack of consensus on the part of both policy makers and inspectors about what purpose inspection serves. The most obvious example appears in Chap. 11 in which the study reveals the true extent of the issue in the very different conceptualisations of the role of inspection according to policy makers, inspectors and practitioners. Penninckx and Vanhoof point out that expectations of the function of inspection focuses on three main functions: inspection as: accountability; inspection as 'development and inspection as a policy informing activity' (Chap. 11, this volume). But even this interpretation is conflicted, as each particular category contains nuance that further complicates the issue. This nuance arises in relation to the language of inspection articulated through conflicting understandings of inspection terminology. The accountability function is problematic in that it tends to refer mainly to contractual and public accountability, whilst taking little heed of professional accountabilities directed at internal and other stakeholders. The developmental viewpoint is conflicted in the sense that the term itself is open wide to various interpretations—it may mean that inspectors offer advice to schools on how to improve, or it may mean that inspection is in itself a driver for schools to take the initiative and improve. This conflicted interpretation of exactly how inspection affects school improvement is by no means confined to this study: it appears throughout the volume in one form or another, raising issues about the shared language of inspection and whether one exists. I will return to this later in the chapter.

In terms of preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (see Fig. 12.2)—inspection policy falls very far short of that ideal on several counts, namely: 4: *that the policy to be implemented is based on a valid theory of cause and effect; point 5: that the relationship between cause and effect is direct and that there are few if any, intervening links; point 7: That there is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved, and that this continues*

throughout the implementation process; point 8: That in moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each implementer and finally, point 9: that there is perfect communication among and coordination of the various elements involved in the programme (Hogwood and Gunn 1984, p. 122).

If inspection is designed to be effective in terms of policy learning then it is vital that initial objectives are not only agreed by inspectors, but implemented in a relatively homogenous way: a common criticism of inspectorates in many countries (not only within the context of education), is a perceptible lack of consistency in approach and judgements. In systems in which levels of inspector discretion are relatively high and where professional judgement is core to the task at hand, it is difficult to see how any level of consistency could possibly be reached if the inspectors themselves are unaware of, or disagree about intended policy outcomes. The challenge is even greater where powerful policy coalitions within the inspectorate and outside of it, strive constantly to form and shape public and government opinion of inspectors and their work. One form of this is illustrated in Chap. 9: Press and media clearly play a vital role in informing the public and policy makers of the results of inspection policy and bad news consistently sells better than good (see Baxter and Rönnerberg 2014; Wallace 1997, 2007). This influence on inspection is powerful in a number of ways: The media create a ‘black and white’ view of inspection, simplifying it for public consumption. As research indicates, through their own values and ideologies—and those of their readership—they tend to work with a particular view of where inspection fits within the national educational accountability system. Through polarizing narratives they form and shape not only the work of the inspectorate, but also colour the ways in which inspectees imagine inspectors. This then works with inspector professional identities to co create a version of the role that fits with the values and expectations of both parties—facets well documented in the literature on formation of professional identities (see for example Apesoa-Varano 2007; Fagermoen 1997; Beijaard et al. 2004).

Inspector Contribution to Inspection Policy as a Learning and Evolutionary Process

There is ample evidence that external system events within the case studies influence the practices of inspection within the policy subsystem affecting ‘traditions’ within inspectorates (Bevir and Rhodes 2006, p. 6), and causing dilemmas for inspectors. Changes to socio economic conditions and systemic changes to national and international governing coalitions, appear throughout the book to act as justification for enhanced government intervention in education and ‘creation’ of policy problems that, in turn, must be solved by acts and outcomes of inspection. They in turn act as catalysts within the policy subsystem.

One of these effects is the way in which knowledge has been re classified and reified by government projects, 'creating governance narratives that legitimize the work of inspectors' whilst also creating ongoing rationale for the existence of inspectorates (Bevir 2010). The influence is far from being top down, as the original model suggested. Inspectors appear to be highly influential in shaping inspection policy although how they achieve this is less clear.

The policy belief system within the Advocacy Coalition Model is modelled on Lakstos (1971) theory of knowledge and is:

Conceived as being hierarchically organized around a deep core of fundamental empirical and normative axioms, a secondary policy core that contains information about basic policy practices, and a range of instrumental considerations pertinent to the implementation of the policy core (Lakstos 1971 in Fischer 2003, p. 95).

There is considerable evidence within the accounts in this volume to support the role of the inspector as central to policy learning, therefore implying a strong bottom up element to inspection policy evolution. As mentioned earlier, and also as a focus in Chap. 11, the conflicts and tensions surrounding the purpose of inspection—the tensions between hard regulatory approaches and purportedly 'softer' developmental inspection frameworks are in part due to different perceptions of what inspection should be for and in part due to inspectors' ability to adapt to dilemmas placed upon them by both the policy and conflicting ideas surrounding it. The evidence from other policy implementation studies which take an interpretative perspective of policy implementation (Grin and Van De Graaf 1996), suggest that a constructivist view of policy learning convenes most to the learning that occurs during policy implementation. The work of Grin and Van De Graaf (1996, p. 304), proposes three guiding levels of action in the work of implementers:

The evaluation of solutions (empirical analytical arguments), problem definitions and the meaning of solutions (phenomenological arguments), empirical and normative background theories (hermeneutic-interpretative arguments), and normative ontological preferences (philosophical arguments).

Within this process inspectors are supported by guidance and extensive documentary support material, in the shape of inspection schedules; handbooks and lists of criteria which feature in the work of all of the inspectorates under scrutiny. But this is far from the only source of information for inspectors. Apart from initial training—which is often very short and focused on documentary procedures—a good part of their development is in employing the policy on site and, as Grin and Van De Graf suggest, in skillfully maneuvering their way around the policy dilemmas that form a good part of their everyday practice. As policy actors their agency and discretionary powers are also situated within the particular traditions of their inspectorate (Bevir 2011; Bevir and Rhodes 2006), and are necessarily limited in scope and reach. However in forming policy coalitions, sometimes in relation to schools, their ambit for change and policy interpretation is broadened considerably, as they work with schools to negotiate shared understandings of the elements under inspection. This role is very much underplayed in the literature on inspection, much of which tends to view inspectors purely as process implementers.

But as this volume illustrates, a leitmotif throughout appears as the need to employ sagacious judgement within a role that appears almost quixotic, as inspectors as policy actors' strive to attain a somewhat visionary ideal of themselves as crusaders—their mission, 'to drag schools from the mire', in order to achieve some type of school self-actualization—fulfillment of their (latent) potential, regardless of school actual capacity to improve. They must also learn to negotiate the vicissitudes of politics and the mercurial approach to their work taken by the press and media: who apotheosize and oppugne their practices—sometimes within the same report. Their work is further complicated by previous, outdated understandings of inspection, which still exert powerful influences on the policy sub-system. These are often present in the form of school improvement advisers operating on a consultancy basis, and who offer advice on what inspectorates are looking for from schools (Baxter 2014b). These consultants have often been out of education for some time and are blissfully unaware of changes to regulatory practices. Their approach is marketed on provision of 'The perfect inspection' and often involves teaching schools how to 'jump through hoops' rather than being focused on real development (see for example England, in Baxter and Clarke 2013; Baxter and Ozga 2013). This approach has also been noted in terms of local government intervention, whose interpretation of what inspection represents and how it acts on the schools within their jurisdiction is mediated (some may say controlled) by support services which reinterpret or re-frame inspection to suit local needs (see for example Moos and Paulsen 2014).

If policy change is viewed as a cycle of reflection on action, revision and implementation, such as for example in the Kolb model of learning and reflection (Kolb 1984), then the changes to inspection policy would be relatively straightforward: Involving a cycle beginning with policy theory (criteria and intended outcomes), moving to implementation, reflection on the implementation and finally change of practices fed back into the inspectorate as recommendations, which would at some stage feed into the formulation of policy. But in reality the process is more complex and conflicted than this. This is in part due to the conflicted nature of the aims of inspection, partly due to the lack of clarity over what constitutes success in inspection, and in part due to a powerful policy coalition that sees the only useful function of inspection as one of school development. According to the evidence in this book, inspectors do influence the inspection process and the outcomes of inspection, what is less clear is whether this is largely through their sense making activities, in terms of the practice of inspection, or rather the imposition of their own particular sets of values in order to bring the policy more in line with their own modes of thinking. In order to provide clarification, we need to find out more about formal mechanisms for this to occur, as well as researching what opportunities inspectors have to engage in professional dialogue about the practices of inspection and how far those practices go towards achieving a specific aim.

What is clear is that in learning within their workplace and in realizing and making sense of the sources of knowledge within their practices, inspectors create working clarity out of what is essentially a nebulous and enigmatic practice. Their

learning in practice and reflection in action that appear to negotiate the practice and the framing of that practice in relation to those they inspect, is instrumental in creating a congruency of meaning between policy intentions—as articulated through documentation and initial training/directives from the inspectorate, and influences that permeate horizontally through the policy subsystem (media reports, conversations with teaching staff, governors and local municipalities).

However, this learning, which begins well before they take up the role of inspector, is coloured and conditioned by their own assumptions about the nature of the work—these may vary greatly depending upon their background: for example a legal professional, employed to ensure compliance (as in the case of Sweden), may base their work upon very different values to an individual who has spent their entire career in schools. There is evidence in the professional identity research, as well as in the chapters in this volume, that these assumptions color not only what individuals do and why they do it, but equally who they are and the images they choose to project as they go about their work (Maclure 1992; Satterthwaite et al. 2006; Baxter 2011, 2013). As Chap. 8 reports, it is not only the practices of inspection that are coloured by this process but equally the weighing given to different forms of embodied, inscribed and enacted knowledge through the processes of inspection. Statistical data that has become the hallmark of most inspection systems, is understood in relation to the other forms of data; documentation, artefacts and qualitative observations and interviews that form part of the inspection project. The act of bringing together this data in the form of a coherent judgement is in effect a complex interplay of inspector discretion and negotiation in relation to both the inspectorate (who oversee the project) and the schools themselves. Success or failure of an inspection is also dependent on the extent to which the act of inspection is perceived to be legitimate. A concept which also includes the perceptual credibility of inspectors.

Inspectors and Communities of Practice

Returning to inspection as policy learning, the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger permits investigation of inspector learning as part of a community of practice. If inspectors are to be viewed as a community of practitioners (or practice), (Lave and Wenger 1991), within an organisation (the inspectorate) with the most experienced inspectors at its core, then attaining expertise as an inspector may be assumed to be for inspectors, the apotheosis of that practice. As many inspectors work in teams led by a senior team member, then their practices may well be assumed to colour and shape the work of more junior inspectors. In so doing the discourses and narratives around inspection concomitantly change or remain relatively static depending upon the assumed position of lead inspectors. In this respect they form the kind of ‘discourse coalition’ that Fischer refers to in his analysis of discourse versus advocacy coalitions (Fischer 2003, p. 103). If, as it appears from

the case studies in this book, inspectors learn their ‘trade’ from being part of a community of inspectors, then they not only learn in relation to that community, its influences, traditions and discourses, but equally according to the narratives and discourses that they create in the course of their sense making activities and their position in the hierarchy of inspectors within the organisation. These assumptions are supported by the work of Weik who argues that many of the strongest and most binding professional decisions are often formed in a retrospective manner: A decision is taken and then in arguing for its justification the decision is solidified, becoming part of the learned practice (Weik 2001), see also (Baxter 2016, Chap. 6). Inspector discretion must therefore be considered to be partly a sense making activity carried out in relation to senior inspectors within the organisation.

However, inspectors may well draw their identity and form their assumptions because of a greater affiliation with another community of practice; Henry Moreton and colleagues focus on this element in Chap. 7, in their work on inspector head teachers. In this case they may form part of a powerful policy coalition that exists outside of the inspectorate, drawing on head teacher and school communities whose discourse and narratives around inspection may be very different to those operating within the inspectorate itself.

In order to learn more about the ways that inspector learning shapes inspection policy, we need far greater exploration into how inspectors learn; which communities of practice they are most influenced by Lave and Wenger (1991). We also need to know the routes via which interpretation of inspection policy feeds into the inspectorate and back to policy makers. Equally as important to ascertain is knowledge relating to how much of their working practices derive from tacit knowledge. These accounts indicate that there is ample evidence to suggest that much of what inspectors do is tacit—and that successful inspection largely rests on this type of knowledge in order to achieve basic functionality. Turning to Polanyi’s interpretation of tacit knowledge and its relevance for communication skills, much of the work of inspectors is indeed tacit, in that it is founded on communication skills, (written and verbal), which are in turn formed from tacit knowledge that is both phenomenological and ontological in nature (Polanyi 2009). In attempts to quantify this knowledge through training and professional development, it too may become integrated into inspection practices, and over time form part of the discourse of inspection.

Inspection processes are not straightforward due to the background of inspectors and their contractual obligations. New inspectors or those drawn from the ranks of practitioners, either in the field of education or other fields, bring learning and skills that are equally valid into the implementation of policy; begging the question as to where exactly in the implementation chain the policy learning occurs. This question returns once again to what constitutes successful implementation. If the answer to this is laid down in very concrete terms then deviation—for whatever reason—will lead policy analysts to conclude that the policy has failed. But if the ways and means by which inspector interpretation of the role is seen to add to the learning and subsequent evaluation and re-evaluation of policy then their contextual

adaptations could well be viewed as positive. It also taps into the idea proposed by Majone and Wildavsky (1978), that, 'implementation is the continuation of politics with different means (p. 175).

The politicization of implementation at the level of the inspector and inspectorate, is key to understanding how much of inspectorates' work and crucially is imagined seen to be a continuation of government agendas. There is no doubt that it is essentially political in the wider sense of the term: a constant series of negotiations and resolution of policy conflict. However, it is in the resistance to inscribed policy goals that the real policy learning may well occur, as inspectors craft new narratives and discourses of inspection which tap into the many other actors and institutions within the policy subsystem.

Inspectors as Advocacy Coalition Workers: Responsibility and Inter-organisational Trust

If as Sabatier suggests, advocacy coalitions are based on shared values (Sabatier 1988; Weible and Sabatier 2006), then the alignment of inspectorate values and policy goals with school interpretations of inspection policy goals, creates potential for a powerful joint policy coalition. This is very likely to be why inspectorates are adopting ostensibly 'softer' approaches to implementation based on professional dialogue and a focus on school improvement. Tapping into these core educational values implies shared goals and trust: collaboration between school and inspectors. It implies a certain degree of trust on the part of both parties; trust that the school will have the capacity to self-evaluate and trust in the inspectorate to be able to facilitate a professional dialogue on improvement and support. Within this relationship, policy coalition workers join together to promote particular understandings of inspection policy, promote trust within institutions and create coherence outcomes of inspection policy and intended outcomes.

The role of trust in policy making has long been recognized as a core element within the policy process (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993; Avis 2003). But Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's extensive review into the nature, meaning and measurement of trust, revealed numerous interpretations of the term and how it is understood (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2000). In terms of education and inspection policy, trust is key not only to the implementation of the policy but to the way in which it is designed. Chapter 4 gives account of an inspection process that is based around trust in schools to be able to offer an honest self-evaluation, along with trust in inspectors to be able to unpick whether this self-evaluation is indeed an honest account of school capability.

Trust in the ability of inspectors to be able to convey inspection judgements in such a way as to promote school improvement is pivotal to most systems; so too is their ability to remain disinterested, yet collaborative in their approach. A tricky

balance to achieve. Distrust between parties tends to provoke feelings of anxiety and insecurity at institutional as well as personal level, as the literature on change management reflects (Lane 1987). Trust between regulators and the regulated is well documented in the literature on regulation and inspection (Pautz 2009), and is not only founded in the ways in which regulators go about their work, but their professional credibility within this work: the trust invested in them to go about their work with integrity and a highly sensitized and nuanced understanding of the contexts in which they operate.

The performative nature of teaching, engendered largely by belief in market principles, combined with a concerted push by western governments for policies in line with the economics of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School (Friedman 2009) has led to a lack of trust in teachers and the profession more generally (McNamara and O'Hara 2008; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002; Avis 2003). This is not confined to education but permeates all professions within the public services. Founded on the belief that so called producer interests, instigated by professionals working within the realm exert far too much dominance in terms of both the services they offer and the extent to which they are withheld. As a result of this belief, one which goes hand in hand with free market principles, the professional is viewed with suspicion: their motives and indeed their motivation, highly suspect. This mode of thinking, premised on rational choice theory, believes in a discerning and highly rational service user: one capable of choosing providers as they would choose any product available in the free market. This belief has eroded and undermined the role of teacher as professional portraying the profession instead, as a technical rational occupation (Ozga 2000), a view which all but denies the altruistic reasons why individuals enter and remain working in conditions that are at best demanding. Governing by inspection is a reflection of this lack of trust—a narrative that permeates and is implicit within much of inspection documentation, yet one that is wholeheartedly denied by politicians who on one hand argue for more trust in teachers whilst on the other, bay for more rigorous systems of regulation (Ball 1993, 1998). Inspectors themselves are landed with the unenviable task of creating trust in political accountability whilst they work in climates and cultures that are riddled with suspicion and doubt. Their work must be seen to be transparent with punctilious attention to criteria, yet must also be characterized by high levels of professional judgement and integrity. Fulfilling both functions is imperative in order to make judgement in a fair and ostensibly disinterested manner, whilst also having the skills to be able to convey those judgements in ways that convince inspectees that the judgement is a valued and valuable pointer in how to go about the business of improving. To do this they must be able to create a coherent narrative that both convinces and contrives.

An essential part of putting together such a narrative, involves storying and sequencing inspection events, from initial inception—preschool visits and documentation, to final judgements-reports and feedback to the school. It is in this act of storifying that trust—making activities occur most. In order for the narrative to work, the trust building activities must occur at every stage in the process—failure

at any level will cause an abrupt break in the narrative, giving cause for suspicion, doubt and possible formal complaints or lack of compliance on the part of the schools.

In creating narratives of trust, inspectors themselves become policy coalitions which act to create particular narratives of inspection. These narratives are colored and complemented by interactions with inspectorate and inspectees to produce a final draft that will articulate narrative and contribute to wider conceptualization of what constitutes 'successful inspection.' It is within these narratives that the beliefs, values and actions of inspectors are woven into a complex tapestry of policy documents, official reports and political necessities in order to create change. It is within these narratives I believe to most influence the bottom up changes that most powerfully influence inspection policy. One of the reasons for this is that they also have the power to respond to particular views on what inspection is for. By largely negating or focusing on a particular area, the narratives (not just the inspection reports), have the power to effect change, becoming effective policy coalitions which advocate for particular understandings of the inspection process and its aims. They are then picked up by inspectorates and woven into the policy fabric, changing and evolving policies. As reflected by the chapters in this book, these narratives are as telling for what they leave out as for what they include in their storifying of the process.

The very particular approach used in the Republic of Eire requires practitioners with very particular communication skills in order to hone with the ideal of the 'self-improving school', a facet also reflected in the chapter by Dobbelaer (Chap. 5). In each case inspectors, during the processes of inspection, create an idealized narrative of what a self-improving school looks like. Within a very different system, Swedish inspectors work with artefacts and extensive lists of criteria which not only create a narrative of inspection, but one in which the inspector features centrally as an agent for compliance. In England the hard regulatory approach is narrativised as a developmental approach through the prism of in service head teachers who know what's what and can create a powerful coalition with inspectees—jointly creating the inspection process via the use of shared language; shared traditions of education and shared values.

In creating and shaping these narrative inspectors and their teams bring together the regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements of inspection into one convincing narrative that forms and shapes the traditions of inspection and contributes to its evolving nature. For this reason it is important for future research into inspection, both as a governing/accountability mechanism and a school improvement driver, to consider the important role of trust, and to identify, or go some way to being able to identify systemically, where breaches may occur within policy implementation processes. Research that moves in this direction may be helpful in identifying why and how inspection appears to have so many unintended consequences and why it so often appears to be in constant evolution in order to avoid the 'policy paradoxes' that occur when resolution to policy problems only serves to give rise to different dilemmas and policy problems (Clarke 2008; Baxter 2014a).

Conclusions: Inspectors as Policy Implementers Within the Governance Process Intended and Unintended Consequences

Colleagues within this volume (and elsewhere) have done much to investigate not only the outcomes of inspection, but the unintended consequences provoked by education and inspection policies. A recent case in point developed by Ehren et al. (2015), proposes a framework of causal mechanisms of school inspections (p. 379). The framework looks at both processes and outcomes of school inspection and concludes that, to make inspection work in a way that is beneficial to the overall system, improvement of educational quality is better thought of as a culture change rather than the 'implementation of an inspection instrument,' (p. 394). This, the authors argue, will go some way to preventing the unintended consequences that occur as a result of inspections, for example, gaming the system, putting systems in place purely during inspection periods and seeing inspection as a tick box exercise. If, as the authors of this study conclude, and which is also supported by other work (Ehren and Visscher 2006), one of the key drivers for school improvement via inspection is the expectations it creates in terms of school self-evaluations and pre inspection activity, it is vital that any effective policy relating to school inspection is able to create a discourse of inspection which is focused around school improvement. As this study has revealed, inspectors are instrumental in effecting this, forming powerful policy coalitions that are capable of colouring and conditioning inspection policy. The model proposed by Ehren and colleagues includes accepting feedback and setting expectations as core elements in the inspection process: these are both areas in which the skill and knowledge of inspectors is pivotal in order to create dialogues and spaces for schools to be able to discuss their improvement needs in a safe space (Cordingley et al. 2005; Clark et al. 1996; Baumfield and Butterworth 2005). In order to do this effectively inspectorates need to draw on the dialogues and narratives of their inspectors to create a culture change, one that focuses on the potentiality of the work of inspectors as individuals capable of harvesting and synthesizing good practices in order for inspection policy to work in harmony with other accountability mechanisms in the system.

But in order for this to happen, inspection policy needs to be implemented using a whole system approach, one that creates powerful policy coalitions that buy into the idea of inspection as improvement. In order to do this, as the chapters in this volume have pointed out, there needs to be public consensus on what inspection is for, so that policy can be implemented clearly. As this chapter has pointed out, trust is a key element in policy implementation and a combination of politicization of inspectorates, constantly changing frameworks (which the public assume to be rigid), and soft combined with hard regulatory mechanisms, serve only to undermine this trust, in the eyes of both public and profession.

In addition to the points above; the book has pointed out that we need to better understand what knowledge is most useful in promoting this culture shift in

inspection; which of the elements and actors within the implementation process undermine trust, and which have the power to enhance it. We also need to better understand inspector learning and how this is used argumentatively and dialogically to promote improvement, and how this learning contributes to establishing trust in relationships with the profession and also with the public.

If inspection is to remain a useful tool by which to govern education, it needs to prove that within the regulatory agency lifecycle it does not cease to be useful to government, in becoming a passive, underperforming bureaucracy that is losing political support and thus ‘triggering a new drive for regulation’ (Bernstein 1955, p. 74 in Döhler 2013, p. 518). In this sense it needs to ask whether its regulatory function is competing with a powerful policy coalition within and outside of inspectorates; one which recognises a true function as one of improvement. This is a difficult area for governments who have become very fond of the idea of development in terms of a form of ‘soft regulation’. But development and regulation are very different beasts; the former reliant upon trust and confidence in the implementer, the latter very often based on fear of sanctions. While both exist in tension with one another within the inspector role, and whilst neither inspectors nor policy makers can fundamentally agree on the real purpose of inspection the implementation procedure will without a doubt be compromised. This may mean that rather than fighting against them, the system merely acknowledges these tensions and works with them within inspector development that acknowledges the inspector as a key shaper of inspection policy. This may well involve a rethink of the inspector role and what it is designed to accomplish in the longer term future of the implementation of education and inspection policy in the complex and evolving national education systems of OECD member states.

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