Governing By Inspection: School Inspection and Education Governance in Scotland, England and Sweden

Key Concepts in the Governing by Inspection Project

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Introduction

School inspection is understood as part of the governing of education;

Governing of education is increasingly co-ordinated and standardised across Europe;

Particularly through ‘soft governance’ forms (Lawn 2006) including use of comparative data (Ozga et al. 2011).
Key Questions

What is inspection for?
How might we understand inspection as a governing practice?
Does the European arena offer opportunities for national inspectorates to strengthen their authority?
What models of inspection are available in different national contexts and do they learn from one another?
A Productive Moment….

Education/learning increasingly important to economic and societal well-being

Over-regulation produced performativity, technical rather than political accountability…

So there are tensions about how to govern in and across national systems and within the emergent European education policy space

Are inspectorates a resource for managing there tensions, a site where these tensions are embodied and enacted?
Three contexts: England, Scotland, Sweden

ENGLAND: Ofsted-the most ‘developed’ inspection regime in our study but the new UK government elected in 2010 is sending Ofsted ‘back to basics’ (Maths, English, Science and school discipline) ‘freeing’ schools and teachers from ‘targetry’ and central prescription. (John Clarke and Martin Lawn will talk about Ofsted)

SCOTLAND: HMIe is recovering its influence, moving into curriculum development, promoting self-evaluation in Europe and acting as expert teachers of the system at home. (Jenny Ozga will talk about HMIe)

SWEDEN; reintroduced a light touch inspection 2003, new government decided on ‘sharper’ inspection in 2006, created a new agency in 2008 more focused on assessing student performance and systems of quality assurance, and individual students’ rights. (Joakim Lindgren, Agneta Hult and Ingrid Nilsson will talk about Sweden)
Key concepts

The three key concepts that we concentrate on here are:

- Europeanisation
- Governing
- Knowledge
EUROPEANISATION

Policy actors use new policy instruments and project the idea of ‘Europe’ through the redesign of institutions, networks, and the flow of comparative knowledge and data (Giraudon & Favell 2007).

These are simultaneous global, national and local developments (Grek et al 2009).

Comparison pressures the nation-state to ‘modernise’, but is also used within nation states to steer policy: nation states remain ‘strong national actors’ but with a ‘script’ (Jacobsson 2006:208).

Inspectors may become translators between Europe and the nation, making information carried by data ‘actionable’ (Grek & Lawn 2011).
GOVERNING

Governing is dynamic, neither limited by traditional ideas of ‘governance’ nor-as with ‘governmentality’-predestined to impose its logic on disciplined populations;

Governing draws attention to the continuous process of managing tensions between centralised and decentralised levels of governance, deregulation and new instruments of governance within nation-states where relationships are multidimensional, overlapping and fluid (Clarke 2009:2);

Governing draws attention to the constant work of ‘doing’ governing in unstable contexts with possibly contradictory relationships (Newman & Clarke 2009)
KNOWLEDGE

Governing seeks new forms of knowledge-problem solving knowledge collectively generated and implemented in action;
Governing valorises knowledge that helps create coherence across unstable networks and new actors;
Governing work demands new knowledges and skills—‘Transacting, translating, mediating, brokering’ (Clarke 2008);
Expertise moves beyond the task of policy informing towards expertise in the formation of policy.
Knowledge-based governing

Is *regulative* (formal laws/directives)

Is ‘*inquisitive*’ (demands information for auditing and ranking)

and is ‘*meditative*’-generating and sharing ideas among experts, presenting ideas and models that design regulations and ranking (Jacobsson 2006:208)
Inspectors and Inspection

Inspectorates and inspectors engage in all three knowledge-based governing practices; They simultaneously regulate, audit and ‘meditate’
In and across national contexts where these practices vary in intensity and scope.

This is illustrated in the presentations that follow now…..