

KNOWLEDGE, INSPECTION AND THE WORK OF GOVERNING

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the relationship between knowledge and governing as exemplified by the governing work of school inspection. We argue that there have been changes in the practices and processes of both governance and knowledge in recent years, and suggest that these changes are interdependent, contributing to a new relationship between governing and knowledge. The interdependence of governing and knowledge may be identified through attention to the ways in which expertise, especially expertise in developing 'practical knowledge' has moved from the traditional task of *policy-informing* conventionally carried out through elite or professional knowledge production in bureaucratic, hierarchical relations, to the 'applied' or integrated use of expertise in the *formation* of policy in a more complex, networked form of governing. The paper discusses approaches to conceptualising these transformations of governance and of knowledge, before offering some exemplification of the governing-knowledge relationship and its working in practice that draws primarily on data on inspection in England, but with some contrasting points from Scotland. For more detailed discussion of the knowledge-governing relationship and its impact on inspection in Sweden see Lindgren 2014 (in this issue).

KEY WORDS

Knowledge; Governing; Inspection; Regulation; Meditative governing.



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INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with the relationship between knowledge and governing, as illustrated by our¹ current research on the work of the inspectorates of schools in England, Scotland and Sweden² Details of the project methodology are given in the introduction to this issue. Put briefly, our hypothesis is that, as governing has changed to become more networked, less bureaucratic, more flexible and interrelated, so too has knowledge changed, moving from its traditional construction and location in disciplinary silos into a more problem-based form, involving new actors in its production, working in new ways. We suggest that these changes have the effect of reconstituting knowledge as policy-forming rather than policy-informing and that attention to the shifting forms of knowledge and knowledge production is informative in enabling better understanding of the contemporary governing of education. In examining the role of knowledge in the work of the inspectorate, we

¹ This paper draws on the collective work of the project team: Jacqueline Baxter, John Clarke, Sotiria Grek, Agneta Hult, Martin Lawn, Joakim Lindgren, Linda Rönnerberg, Christina Segerholm — so I use the term ‘we’ throughout.

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draw on earlier work in which some members of the inspection project team were involved, work that interrogated the relationship between knowledge and policy³ Referencing ideas developed by colleagues in that project, we take knowledge to be socially constructed (Smith-Merry, Freeman & Sturdy, 2008) and to emerge in close proximity to social, economic and political contexts (Grundmann & Stehr, 2012, p. xiii). We shall attempt to illustrate this argument later in the paper, through close examination of some elements of the work done by and in the processes of knowledge production in the school inspectorates of England and Scotland. Before moving to the empirical data, however, we first need to discuss the approaches to knowledge and governance that inform our work.

GOVERNING KNOWLEDGE

Governing knowledge has developed in relationship with the growth of performance management regimes, alongside decentralisation and deregulation: in these regimes data enable goal-governed steering of outputs and outcomes, accompanied by the monitoring of targets. This is a repertoire that reflects the global circulation, adoption and adaptation of neo-liberal principles in the design of ‘reform’ and restructuring programmes across all social and public policy fields. Policy and provision have been distributed or decentralised to a range of actors and agencies, including, in some cases, private companies (Ball, 2012; Ball & Junemann, 2012). Government now presents itself as the ‘enabler’ of provision and the ‘ringmaster’ of internal markets. In England — a leading exponent of neo-liberal principles — repeated attempts to engineer competition in education and elsewhere have produced waves of market-oriented reforms combined with increasingly centralised prescription of school policies and direct technical, rather than political accountability to the centre (Ozga, 2013; Ranson, 2003). Figure 1 (below) summarises our understanding of the changes in governing with which we are concerned here.

The key element of these developments on which we focus in this paper is the centrality of knowledge and information (especially information about comparative performance) to the neo-liberal project (Hayek, 1969). In the neo-liberal imaginary, society is organised in networks held together through the

3 See www.knowandpol.eu.

BUREAUCRACY	POST-BUREAUCRACY
State-centred	Polycentric
National	Inter, trans, sub, national (Europeanisation)
Main actors: formal policy-makers, professionals [academics]	A greater diversity of actors
Actors/organisations clearly defined by state and sector	Permeable boundaries, more interdependent
Hierarchical organisation and formal regulation	Hierarchy partially blurred. More involvement of non-formal actors
Action through norms (+ incentives) seeking mainly to change the rules	Action through knowledge (reflexivity) also changes understanding of problems and relations

FIGURE 1 (ADAPTED FROM DELVAUX AND MANGEZ, 2008)

flow of comparative knowledge and data, and standards, benchmarks and indicators serve to manage some of the tensions that arise between centralised and decentralised levels of governance, deregulation and (re-) regulatory instruments of governance. The complex landscape created by neo-liberalism's adherence to the principle of diversity in provision (so that choice and competition can operate appropriately) produces an increasingly varied set of activities and institutional arrangements. Public-private hybrids offer education services, provision is shaped by parental choice and other new public management methods, and this 'systemless system' (Lawn, 2013) requires the production and circulation of apparently objective data that conceal the 'messiness' and complexities of national and local education practice through 'thin descriptions' making statistical data a key governing device (Ozga, Dahler-Larsen, Segerholm & Simola, 2011). In this respect, the policy technologies in play in education reflect Grundmann and Stehr's assertion that, in current conditions, knowledge claims are most powerful if they are trans-historical and trans-situational, and that:

the decline or loss of the context-specificity of a knowledge claim is widely seen as adding to the validity, if not the truthfulness, of the claim (Grundmann & Stehr, 2012, p. 3).

Through these developments, the nature of knowledge is altered, as the explosion of knowledge production in recent years combined with its increased capacity to travel at speed produces a more intense and intimate relationship between knowledge and governing. As a recent OECD publication puts it: «the key question

posed is: how do governance and knowledge mutually constitute and impact on each other in complex education systems?» (Fazekas & Burns, 2012, p. 6). In this mutually-constitutive relationship, policy problems do not appear in the external environment but rather are called into being (Stehr, 1994, p. 10) through their statistical representation from which solutions are (apparently) also derived. As Grundmann and Stehr suggest, knowledge becomes relevant when «it includes the policy options that need to be manipulated» [and such] «practical knowledge (...) provides knowledge that identifies the levers for action» (op cit., p. 179). The need to identify levers for action acts to change the processes of knowledge production and circulation in governing networks. This ‘practical knowledge’ is activated and transferred in situations that are not fully defined through routine processes, where precedent is not referenced and institutional memories are absent or excluded. Knowledge in this mode is equated with and promoted as creative problem-solving and optimised through co-production of new knowledge that can be implemented in action. Creative thinking, innovation and problem-solving are frequently valued over and above the consolidation of so-called static knowledge stocks. Figure 2 (below) summarises some of the key elements in the shift in knowledge, its production and circulation.

KNOWLEDGE	KNOWLEDGES
Dominant legitimacy of academic knowledge and professional knowledge	Diversity of knowledges. Legitimacy of both scientific knowledge and know-how from experience
Limited number of specific legitimate knowledge holders (professionals, academics)	Diversity of actors producing «legitimate» knowledge
Disciplinary knowledge Segmented, fragmented, specialised knowledges Little attempt at transversality and globality. Silos	Policy-oriented K and evidence based policy Future-oriented What(ever) works Whatever solves problem Flexible K, light K, provisional K Usable, readable, auditable, translatable
Relatively slow circulation of knowledge, mainly within closed entities	Intensification and internationalisation of movement of knowledge (and partial opening-up of previously closed entities)

FIGURE 2 (ADAPTED FROM DELVAUX AND MANGEZ, 2008)

An example from a leading exponent of ‘practical knowledge’ may help to clarify this point. Sir Michael Barber headed the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU) from 2000-2005 in the UK Cabinet Office during Blair’s second administration. Here he explains the PMDU’s approach to data use:



Because we had some targets or goals that were public, we started from the targets. So we worked back from a target. So if you're talking about the patterns, we're looking for things that indicate we're on track or not to meet the target. (...) That's basically all we did. (...) So we didn't go into it with a kind of open research point of view where we say what are the many questions we could ask about this data. That's a perfectly valid thing to do but it wasn't our job. So we're going in with a particular perspective... And that's broadly how we did that. Because we were very focused on delivering the outcomes (Barber, 2014, pp. 77-78).

This statement illustrates the ways in which governing problems are 'framed' (Goffman, 1974), and the close alignment of that framing with political priorities, so that knowledge production is drawn into supporting the legitimacy and authority of target-setting and performance monitoring. Knowledge and policy are produced discursively as a form of cultural political economy (Jesop, 2008) that combines semiotic and material elements in changing the nature of knowledge and its role in governing. Policy makers suggest that social cohesion and effective government are interdependent, and now depend on integrating knowledge as well as on integrating, accommodating and managing different interests. This positioning promotes an agenda for the future in which potentially disruptive energies are harnessed to promote a discourse of continuous scientific and technical advance that also ensures social harmony (Mulderrig, 2008, p. 167). In these processes, new kinds of policy instrument are needed to organise political relations through communication/information and thus legitimate that organisation. Data, invoked as the basis for action, enable the appearance of deregulation and the development of dispersed, distributed and disaggregated forms of governing, while organising political relations through 'intermediaries' that combine technical and symbolic elements and displace politics (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007, p. 6).

These new, apparently inclusive and transparent forms of knowledge production and distribution appear more accessible and actionable than traditional (elite) knowledge production processes. Government bureaucracies were conventionally based on local, simplified, static and centrally controlled knowledge available only to those who produced and worked with it, but post-bureaucratic networked governing is decentralised, future-oriented, processual, autonomous and fluid (Issakyan, Lawn, Ozga & Shaik, 2008) and generates similar knowledge forms. Its networked nature (in the sense that it is



co-produced by different networks of policy makers, experts and practitioners) promotes its easy exchange and hence its operation as one of the prime engines of marketization within neo-liberal economies (Thrift, 2005), and as the driver of 'cognitive capitalism' (Moulier Boutang, 2011).

NEW KNOWLEDGES, NEW GOVERNING SKILLS

These new governing forms, and the knowledges that support them, create a demand for new governing skills and new kinds of governing work from particular groups of actors who are positioned at key points of intersection of knowledge production and practical problem-solving. This work demands skills in translating information into 'practical knowledge', mediating conflict and brokering interests (Clarke, 2008; Larner & Craig, 2005; Lendvai & Stubbs, 2006). There is a growing literature on the influence, interconnections and work of networks of experts (Ball, 2012; Ball & Junemann, 2012), who promote cognitive consensus that makes political action easier. These experts are: «more than the diffusers of ideas; they develop conceptual knowledge in order to promote educational reforms, drawing on their substantial experience as policy advisers to governments and IOs». Moreover: «their attributes as experts and consultants tend to obscure the ideological and political dimension of their activities of knowledge production for policy» (Shiroma, 2014, p. 2). The rapid growth of experts, advisers and consultants in education arises from the rapid expansion of knowledge, along with its increasingly contested nature: this provides opportunities for simplification of the problem of endless competing interpretation in order to provide a basis for action (Grundmann & Stehr, 2012, pp. 20-21).

Simplification may also be achieved through a focus on comparison (Grek et al., 2013; Nóvoa & Yariv-Maschal, 2003; Ozga et al., 2011): this removes the need for attention to context and enables knowledge to travel. The power of comparative knowledge is reinforced by its de-contextualised nature and thus its appearance of validity as noted above by Grundmann and Stehr. Comparison frames knowledge-governing relations through establishing three key principles (i) that regular and systematic assessments are truthful practices for the improvement of national education systems; (ii) that such improvement has to be analysed in relation to the pace of change of other countries; (iii) that international comparison of student performances develops the quality of

national education systems while capturing educational complexity and diversity (Carvalho, 2012). Comparative data, then, are more than information: they constitute what Jacobsson refers to as a 'script' for nation-states: a script that allows nations states to remain 'strong national actors' but attracted to, and voluntarily complying with, 'soft' rules (Jacobsson, 2006, p. 208). Jacobsson (2006, pp. 208-209) goes on to develop the idea that, in the current context of changing governance, three sets of interconnected forms of governing activity may be identified, that are developing sequentially. These he terms *regulative* (evidenced in formal laws and directives) *inquisitive* (a second stage reflecting the rapid and widespread growth of auditing and ranking) and *meditative* (the stage where lessons learned from regulation and audit may be considered and developed through the sharing of ideas and experiences).

The idea of governing work as meditative is useful for our research because, although meditative governing work builds on regulation and auditing, it encompasses these activities, and in identifying spaces for policy learning and teaching, and for the presentation of ideas and models it echoes, from a different perspective, arguments about co-production, translation and mediation. For our purposes, it is important that these processes of meditation, negotiation and collective, integrated working are recognised as part of a *governing* repertoire and as governing practices. The term 'meditative governing' recognises the new kinds of governing work and the new kinds of skills involved in the creation of what Sassen (2007) calls «imposed consensus» entailing «specific types of actual work, not merely decision-making» (ibid., p. 37), through which various actors are drawn together in governing projects. Put differently, meditation also draws attention to what Clarke calls the work:

of inscribing policies as a process of translation between the desires or ambitions of a political project and the institutional terrains of the apparatuses of governing (Clarke & Ozga, 2011, p. 2).

This is «political work»; i.e. work that «both discursively and interactively seeks to change or reproduce institutions by mobilising values» (Smith, 2009, p. 13). This work of translation, mediation, meditation and consensus-building, mobilises or articulates political blocs; builds alliances, negotiates and reconciles interests, and assembles projects that define the direction and purpose of governing (Clarke, 2009, p. 2).



In brief, what we suggest here is that these new governing forms, that seek to integrate knowledge production with governing work, and that are preoccupied with enabling a process of collaboration that is productive of ‘imposed consensus’, require different kinds of skills from their key workers, including inspectorates in the field of education, and that the work that inspectorates do may be more fully understood from this perspective. We attempt to justify this assertion in the next section by offering some instances of that work and its framing in England, as a strong exemplar of the neo-liberal governing project, with some brief contrasting references to Scotland.

REGULATED REGULATORS: INSPECTION IN ENGLAND

Inspectorates may be understood as epistemic communities (Haas, 1992), with strong claims to expertise: they are positioned as mediators and translators of information, because of their particular and unique positioning in the work of governing. As Clarke (2011) has pointed out there are three distinctive aspects of inspection as a mode of governing: (i) it is directly observational of sites and practices. That is, in the case of schooling, inspectors are empowered (and required) to enter the world of the school and observe what takes place within it; (ii) it is a form of qualitative evaluation, involving the exercise of judgement rather than only the calculation of statistical regularity/deviation. Judgement is at the core of the activity and thus raises questions about the articulation of knowledge and power and (iii) it is embodied evaluation: the inspector is a distinctive type of agent whose presence is required at the site of inspection and who embodies inspectorial knowledge, judgement and authority. Inspectors come to these tasks with varying degrees of historically-framed experience and expertise. They have always combined embodied and encoded knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991), although the balance between the two shifts over time and in different contexts. Inspectors bring their expert judgement and ‘objective’ data into relationship with one another, within more or less prescribed parameters; they are responsible for making knowledge about system performance available for translation into use by policy makers at all levels, and by practitioners; and they are also to a greater or lesser degree engaged in building improvement and knowledge about improvement within and across systems. At the same time inspectors are responsible for ensuring

that (sometimes shifting) accountability requirements are met: to greater or lesser degrees they claim independence from central governments, and offer public judgements about the performances of education systems that have political implications (Clarke, 2009). This summary of their characteristics highlights the fact that inspectorates embody complex and layered identities: the ways in which they have related to governing work and to knowledge have changed, and continue to change, over time.

A major source of change in the governing work of inspectors — as indicated in our earlier discussion — is the growth of data. In England, the commitment to data use in governing education has been particularly strong (Ozga, 2009) and the growth of data and its centrality in engaging ‘the public’ in governing remains a strong commitment in the UK coalition government’s statements about public sector reform in England. Education is the site of intensive data production, freely available to parents and others — much more transparency and unmediated information was promised when the coalition took office in 2010, and the knowledge-governing relationship is sharply illustrated in this excerpt from its first major education policy text, that also prefigured significant changes in the work of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted):

We will dismantle the apparatus of central control and bureaucratic compliance. We will instead make direct accountability more meaningful, making much more information about schools available in standardised formats to enable parents and others to assess and compare their performance. (...) In future: parents, governors and the public will have access to much more information about every school and how it performs (DfE, 2010, p. 72).

In the context of education policy in England, this commitment to more and better data, from a variety of sources, is accompanied by the construction of the active citizen-consumer, actively engaged in the extensive interrogation of evidence in order to make the best investment choices from a range of increasingly differentiated learning opportunities as centrally-driven intervention drives the creation of new school types (Academies, Free schools). Such a construction creates obvious difficulties for the traditional role and claims to authority of the inspectorate in England (as data translators and the source of independently generated system knowledge). This traditional role has a long history, but it is a history that has been disrupted. Though Her

Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) of Education in England traces its origins to the 1830s, Ofsted is a much newer creation, established in 1992, it came into being because HMI were seen by the modernising governments in the late 1980s and 1990s as elitist, as more focused on influencing government than on improving school performance, and as vulnerable to producer capture.

Ofsted came into existence with the promise that every school (primary and secondary) in England would be inspected within four years, and would then receive repeated inspections. The much-expanded scope of inspection required a change in personnel: HMI were reduced from over 500 to around 300, and the bulk of the work of inspection was sub-contracted. The recruitment of this new inspection force, employed initially by a large number of commercial contractors and, from 2005 by just three — SERCO, TRIBAL and CfBT — required efforts to ensure standardisation and consistency across the system, in the absence of the coherence previously achieved through unwritten rules, professional expertise and social cohesion of HMI. As a result there was a massive increase in inspection documentation, including inspection frameworks and handbooks—a shift that is also a shift in the governing knowledges that are being mobilised and circulated. There is a move away from the pre-reform resources — often implicit — of officer-class social behaviour, combined with professional experience and (at least in some cases) subject or pedagogic expertise, to the following of rules constructed elsewhere, and able to be applied in (increasingly) different school types.

There were constant changes to inspection frameworks within the period 1992-2010, accompanied by changes in the accompanying handbooks and web-based documentation.

Analysis of these key texts (Baxter, 2013; Clarke, 2011) reveals quite sharp contradictions in the knowledge claims and their relationship to governing that they contain: there is little evidence of an orderly progression from inquisitive to audit and thus to meditative forms of governing-knowledge relations, to use Jacobsson's (2006) terms. Instead there is oscillation between tighter and looser forms of regulation, and an unresolved tension between data use and inspection judgement. The picture is complicated by the entry of commercial, competitive agencies into the field (for further discussion see Lawn in this issue): this means that the frameworks attempt to impose consistency and quality control alongside pressures to minimise costs and maximise profit. Price is a key determinant in winning and keeping contracts, as this quotation from an inspector involved in training at one of the three providers illustrates:

I was working for xxx [agency tendering for inspection contracts] — they didn't have a clue. It was all on price not quality, they dropped the quality for the price. [The other agencies] both had much more quality. Going back to xxx, when they were brought in they really didn't have a clue, they were dreadful, awful (...) they didn't know what they were doing, they are better, but it's taken time, around 2 years before they could even get a handle on what they had to do (Lead Inspector 14)⁴.

Contracts also influence the ways in which knowledge can be shared between the three commercial contractors; as one inspector reported:

It would be good to share this good practice across agencies, but they [the inspection agencies] often consider this business-sensitive information; to be used when the contracts come up for renewal (Lead inspector, 12).

Whatever the requirements of the different frameworks of inspection, the key criteria (pupil attainment levels in relation to national performance targets) continue to dominate. Furthermore, the pre-inspection process ensures that data dominate: inspectors use data to arrive at a baseline evaluation using centralised data banks that provide detailed pupil-and class level information over time, on the schools performance against national targets and in relation to comparator schools. This forms the basis of the pre-inspection commentary (PIC) that guides the work of the inspection team. The process is also very strongly influenced by the speed with which it must be undertaken. Here we want to draw attention to the work of recording the inspection judgement in the very tight timescale of writing the report (which must be with the school's governing body by the end of the week of the inspection) and the inevitable reliance on formulae and concern to 'get it right'. The monitoring system that such a complex knowledge production regime generates is also significant in shaping the knowledge base of inspection and the relations between the different actors involved (i.e. the inspection team, the contracted service providers and HMI) as this rather lengthy but very revealing quotation illustrates:

4 We use role descriptions and numbers to protect the identity of our informants: a lead inspector is someone who has experience of leading an inspection team, a informants identified as HMI or HMIE are members of HM Inspectorate in England and Scotland, other informants may be contract inspectors (i.e. employed in England by SERCO, TRIBAL or CfBT).

They [the lead inspectors] are responsible for putting it all together in one report, and at the same time they will Quality Assure [QA] the sections that come in from other inspectors. When completed they will send it to the inspection service provider [i.e. CfBT, SERCO or TRIBAL] and they will also send the report to the QA readers that QA the report, then it goes to Ofsted and an HMI signs it off (...) now if HMI say no we are not signing it off, then it becomes a key performance indicator failure for the provider, so they are paranoid about this because they get slapped, you get contract action notices that will say, that unless you improve this will happen (...) so you get tied up in these knots and in the end what inspectors are doing is saying ok well I have to follow this rule (...) there isn't a rule but I have to follow it (Lead Inspector 12).

The introduction of a new inspection framework by the UK coalition government in January 2012 and subsequent updates mark a very significant change in Ofsted's definitions of success and failure (Ofsted, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d). In the new framework four key judgements now determine how well the school is performing: achievement of pupils, quality of teaching, behaviour and safety of pupils and overall effectiveness. There is a much tighter specification of the relationship between the grades for each category and the overarching judgement. Inconsistencies are not permitted: in the pre-2012 inspection reports could exhibit inconsistencies, where schools were graded 'good' but with judgements of teaching graded only 'satisfactory'. Under the new framework teaching must be graded as good if an overall judgement of 'good' is to be achieved. The new framework was promoted as «the product of an evolved inspection system» (agency inspector 12) in which there are around 2700 inspectors contracted and trained by the three agencies and quality controlled by 400 full time HMI employed directly within Ofsted. The framework gives much higher priority to the observation of teaching and to its evaluation over time: that is, inspectors are now required to make a judgement of the extent to which pupil learning has been effective over a specific time period rather than in a single observed lesson. In addition, the grades to be awarded by inspection have changed from the four categories of Special Measures, Satisfactory, Good and Outstanding to Special Measures, Requires Improvement, Good and Outstanding. The removal of 'satisfactory' as a grade reflects political frustration with the lack of impact of inspection on the per-

formance of many schools⁵. A lead inspector expressed some of the frustrations and anxieties that these changes have provoked among the inspectorate:

If a school remains judged as satisfactory over a period of time then how can we be an agency of improvement? We have to change something (...) I can appreciate that. What I don't appreciate is that now we can't compare different schedules, these are different systems with different levels of performance: floor standards have changed, so if you are going to change the goalposts, you can't compare four or five years ago (Lead Inspector 09).

The 2010 Framework is notable for its heavy deployment of the term 'professional', but it is combined, as we have seen, with a simplified set of judgements in a way that creates considerable dissonance. For example inspectors are now required to:

Use their professional knowledge and engage in a professional dialogue with the headteacher or senior member of staff (Ofsted, 2012c, p. 11).

At the same time, their capacity to translate or mediate judgement as a result of such engagement is much reduced through the simplification of the framework. Indeed the new Framework and accompanying Inspection Schedule (Ofsted, 2012b) bring considerable challenges to the role of the inspector, challenges that became apparent in our research as the training process for the new framework unfolded. Inspectors are being asked to use 'professional judgement' while greatly increasing the number of failing schools (an inevitable consequence of the abolition of the 'satisfactory' grade): they are also asked to 'take account of context' but contextual value-added data that take account of the number of pupils in receipt of free school meals are no longer included in the resources informing the pre-inspection commentary, they must assess teaching over time but without reference to specific criteria. There is considerable disquiet among the inspectorate, and the operationalisation of the new procedures is far from smooth, and may further reveal tensions within the inspectorate itself, especially in relation to the basis of their claims to

⁵ Data released by Ofsted in April 2012 revealed that in January 2012 out of 348 schools inspected under the new framework only 19% improved, 50% remained the same and over a quarter [28%] achieved a worse grade than on their previous inspection. This compares with 34% improving, 47% staying the same and 19% declining in performance at inspection under the previous regime in the period 2010/2011 (Wooley, 2012).

authority. Our interviewees are concerned about managing the delivery of an increased number of negative judgements, or, alternatively, the possible increase in unmerited 'good' grades in order to avoid those judgements and their consequences for head teachers, with whom they are supposed to be working more closely in the inspection process. The reduction in the number of judgements does undoubtedly put increased pressure on the inspectorate, as a senior Ofsted strategic manager noted,

(...) this change in the framework is a massive test for us as an inspectorate. It is very high stakes: if the proportion of failing/satisfactory schools doesn't start to fall, the credibility of inspection as an agent of improvement falls.

To summarise: knowledge-based claims to authority made by the inspectorate in England have changed since the creation of Ofsted in 1992. The pre-Ofsted HMI mobilized particular social and cultural resources to support their claims to authority. To some extent these claims depended on professional status as expert and successful practitioners, as educationalists, and as members of a highly bureaucratic and hierarchical elite that embodied a particular performance of authority. Authority, for pre-Ofsted HMI, was embodied in self-presentation, enacted in its relations with others, and encoded in its invisible, inexplicit assumptions about good practice. As a former senior inspector put it:

(...) it was a certain kind of style I would characterise as militaristic and hierarchical. It was driven by the sorts of people who came into the inspectorate, certainly in the post-war period I thought it was both very powerful as a means of inducting people and giving them a very good professional grounding in the business of inspection. (...) And I think there was something about the code that you almost had to just discern. It wasn't ever really taught (HMI 01).

In terms of governing work, these activities were regulatory but also quite inexplicit: knowledge and authority were embodied in the HMI, and strong social and professional coding enabled the inspectorate to govern through a combination of hierarchy and connoisseurship. Networked governance needs more explicit governing processes: the various inspection frameworks since 1992 attempted to specify in quantifiable and demonstrable terms the basis of Ofsted's profes-

sional judgment: this specification is complicated by the organization of the inspection workforce, by the relationship between judgment and attainment data, by shifting political priorities, and by the diminishing returns of a highly regulated system that is itself highly regulated, and that reveals its insecurities in the constant revision and expansion that characterize Ofsted's knowledge production from 1992-to the present. We return to the implications for the governing knowledge relationship in the discussion section (below). For the moment we turn to some brief examples of the work of inspection in Scotland.

MEDITATIVE GOVERNANCE? INSPECTION IN SCOTLAND

Like HMI in England, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMIE) in Scotland have a history as a very powerful presence in Scottish education, as movers and shapers of the system since the 19th century. The small scale of the Scottish policy community, and the fact that this community is a meritocratic rather than (as in England) a social elite, means that they were and are products of the public (i.e. state) school system that they inspect, and that they identify strongly with it as it has served them well (Humes, 1986; McPherson & Raab, 1988, 135). Their closeness to the profession they inspect — they are all former teachers, selected on the basis of their success in the classroom — is reflected in this quotation from a senior inspector:

I mean the Scottish system benefits from being a relatively small system. There is probably no secondary school in Scotland that I don't know someone teaching in or they don't know me. That's just the reality of it. The networks are very tight, they're very close (HMIE 02).

In the current context of political devolution in Scotland, the positioning of the inspectorate is strongly inflected by the governing 'narrative' of the Scottish national party (SNP) government, first elected in 2007 as a minority and then as a majority government in 2011 (Arnott & Ozga, 2010). This narrative is built around the idea of collective learning that provides a resource for strengthened national identity, growing national capacity and hence (the SNP government hopes) political independence (for further discussion of the influence of the political context on inspection in England and Scotland, see Ozga, Baxter,

Clarke, Grek & Lawn, 2012). The inspectorate thus has a role to play as ‘translators’ of this narrative into practice through their use of judgment, evidence, and the building of trust in governing processes through the knowledge production process of self-evaluation, which is propagated as a key resource for better public sector management and accountability, while they model and ‘teach’ self-evaluation within and beyond the national policy space. School self-evaluation (SSE) as set out in the key text ‘How Good is our School’ (HGIOS) is the key knowledge based process through which the inspectorate positions itself as guide and enabler of quality assurance processes that are built and maintained by the school, using HMIE guidance. Inspection provides ‘the mirror of a national perspective against which a school can reflect its own performance’ (HMIE02).

In 2011 a new body — Education Scotland — was created, combining HMIE with Learning and Teaching Scotland (the former curriculum development agency) and thus heavily underlining the alignment of inspection with improvement and development. Unlike Ofsted, which demonstrates considerable ambivalence if not downright opposition to the combination of regulation and development, the inspectorate in Scotland has united its development and regulatory roles. The new model of inspection and the whole philosophy of Education Scotland, we were told, are intended to provide, within one body:

Both that facility to provide a reflection on the national perspective, but at the same time corral the resource that is required to provide support to the school (HMIE 02).

This form of inspection places a premium on support and developmental practices, reinforced by psychological training of inspectors that seeks to develop appropriate skills:

We’re training our people quite actively in the social skills of inspection (...) we’ve got some occupational psychologists working with us to develop this framework — working on relationships with people — we must be able to win the support and constructive interest that will enable initiative (HMIE12).

In fact:

(...) how you inspect is almost more important than being right, in terms of making the judgments. I remember one time, 20 years ago, the absolute —



getting the judgment right was what mattered, nothing else — whereas now it's the social skills of being able to manage inspection to the point where you leave the school actually able to improve because they accept and are with you on the agenda — that's the real skill of inspection (HMI E01).

These social skills are also in play in the supportive role required of the inspectorate in discussion with schools as a core element of the inspection process:

What we've tried to do in the last 5 years, and particularly with the new inspection model, is create much more time during an inspection for professional discussion and professional dialogue to allow us to respond to issues that teachers might want to bring to the table but also to be able to sit down after a discussion or after an observation of a piece of learning and teaching and to say. From our perspective, that went well because of this, and then you say, but it didn't appear to go so well because of this and this. And that tends to be where the professional dialogue takes place (HMI E05).

These quotations illustrate a considerable shift in the basis on which knowledge-based claims to authority are made by the inspectorate in Scotland. Where authority was previously seen to follow from professional expertise and from the status associated with the HMI role, this is shifting towards softer, social skills. The inspector is required to enable the development of school culture and build consensus among the teaching profession in support of the overarching project. This shift has required quite considerable change in the performance of authority. The changing embodiment of authority is accompanied by change in the encoding of the knowledge production process of inspection, so that inspectors test the school's view of itself using processes including classroom observation and then move into a developmental rather than a judgemental mode if they are confident in the quality of the school's own judgment of its performance. The inspection is enacted as a process of collective learning (see Grek in this issue) that binds pupils, parents, teachers and inspectors together in a shared process, with a shared purpose that builds a collective identity as a community of learners (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This development is congruent with the Scottish government's self-promotion as a 'learning government' working in concert with its partners and thus creating more confident individuals that have the capacity for political independence.



DISCUSSION

The material presented above presents inspectorates in a constant state of change, in both England and Scotland (and further details of inspection developments in both systems are contained in the papers by Baxter and Clarke and by Grek in this issue). In England there is a contradictory and inconsistent trajectory, preoccupied with combining data use and inspection judgement to drive improvement through competition and fear of failure. Regulative and inquisitive (or perhaps inquisitorial) processes are combined to arrive at inspection judgements, and the new inspection framework, by 'requiring improvement' installs the identification of failure, and fear of its consequences, as its core governing principle. This offers little scope to the inspectorate in England to engage in the political work of enrolment of support and mobilisation of values that may be necessary for successful governing in the networked forms that we discussed at the beginning of this paper. At the same time, the new knowledge forms that we also identified — those that involve translation, mediation and the development of 'imposed consensus' (Sassen, 2007) are also excluded, so that inspection in England is constituted primarily as an enforcement agency rather than a 'partner' in the governing of education through expertise, support and example.

In Scotland the performance of inspection, through self-evaluation and collaborative development, looks much more like Jacobsson's meditative governing: and is also more likely to enrol the different actors involved in governing work in that process of continuous self-scrutiny and self-improvement. Schools, pupils and teachers-along with inspectors themselves have, it seems, been increasingly invited to imagine themselves as auditable or inspectable performative selves (Power, 1994, 1999), and this reflection of themselves, in the national 'mirror' of self-evaluation, integrates their performance with that of the nation in a unifying project. The authority of the Scottish inspectorate is now (at least in theory) embodied in their social skills, and enacted in their capacity to support development.

In governing terms, we note a contrast between the disciplinary regime of Ofsted, and the self-disciplining regime promoted by Education Scotland. The new processes of integration of knowledge production and governing work in Scotland may or may not generate trust and genuine collaboration rather than 'imposed consensus': in governing terms there is a high risk of performativity, especially given the attempt to bring the inspectorate into the overarch-



ing national governing project. In England, Ofsted's attempts to incorporate a professional discourse into a strongly disciplinary and regulatory regime are weakened by absence of trust, while its increased alignment with political agendas aimed at increasing school choice also undercuts the mobilisation of references to professionalism. Both inspection regimes are implicated in governing problems: what our research demonstrates is that the governing-knowledge relationship changes according to the definition of the problems it is asked to address. These vary, but they are always governing problems.

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