Compliance or Culture Shift: Reflecting on the Impact of Education Inspection on Educational Institutions

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Abstract

This reflective work delves into education inspection as an entity operating across various countries. It draws from international organizations, particularly the OECD, for operational guidelines and support to ensure the quality and evaluation of educational services, and is seen as pivotal in evaluating and monitoring educational institutions in many countries. Inspectors gauge education quality and hold schools accountable for achieving teaching, organizational, and leadership objectives. Despite recognizing the diversity of educational systems and governmental mechanisms from a European standpoint, their actions have both positive outcomes. These comprise organizational improvement through fostering self-evaluation and guiding organizational changes, and unintended negative consequences, including minimal impacts on student progress and increased workload for educators, highlighting the complex nature of inspection systems. Inspection systems exert pressure on schools, fostering intentional consequences and serving as benchmarks for improvement. It can be concluded that globalization drives convergence in methodologies and shapes educational policies across nations.

Keywords: education inspection, inspection internationalization, inspectors, quality of education

Cumplimiento o cambio cultural: reflexionando sobre el impacto de la inspección educativa en las instituciones educativas

Resumen

Este trabajo reflexivo explora la ispección educativa como una entidad que opera en diversos países, basándose en organizaciones internacionales, especialmente la OCDE, para obtener pautas operativas y apoyo que garanticen la calidad y evaluación de los servicios educativos. Se observa que la inspección educativa es crucial para evaluar y monitorear instituciones educativas en muchos países. Los inspectores evalúan la calidad educativa y responsabilizan a las escuelas para lograr objetivos de enseñanza, organización y liderazgo. A pesar de reconocer la diversidad de sistemas educativos y mecanismos gubernamentales desde una perspectiva europea, sus acciones tienen tanto resultados positivos, como la mejora organizativa a través de fomentar la autoevaluación y guiar cambios organizativos, como consecuencias negativas no deseadas, incluyendo impactos mínimos en el progreso estudiantil y una mayor carga de trabajo para los educadores, resaltando la naturaleza compleja de los sistemas de inspección. Los sistemas de inspección ejercen presión sobre las escuelas, fomentando consecuencias intencionales y sirviendo como puntos de referencia para la mejora. Se concluye que la globalización impulsa la convergencia en metodologías, dando forma a las políticas educativas entre naciones.

Palabras clave: inspección educativa, internacionalización de la inspección, inspectores, calidad de la educación

Conformité ou changement culturel : réflexion sur l'impact de l'inspection de l'éducation sur les établissements éducatifs

Résumé

Ce travail réflexif explore l'inspection de l'éducation en tant qu'entité opérant dans divers pays, s'appuyant sur des organisations internationales, notamment l'OCDE, pour des lignes directrices opérationnelles et un soutien visant à garantir la qualité et l'évaluation des services éducatifs. On observe que l'inspection de l'éducation est cruciale pour évaluer et surveiller les établissements éducatifs dans de nombreux pays. Les inspecteurs évaluent la qualité de l'éducation et tiennent les écoles responsables de l'atteinte des objectifs d'enseignement, d'organisation et de leadership. Malgré la reconnaissance de la diversité des systèmes éducatifs et des mécanismes gouvernementaux d'un point de vue européen, leurs actions ont à la fois des résultats positifs, tels que l'amélioration organisationnelle grâce à la promotion de l'auto-

évaluation et à la conduite de changements organisationnels, et des conséquences négatives non-intentionnelles, notamment des impacts minimes sur la progression des élèves et une charge de travail accrue pour les éducateurs, mettant en évidence la nature complexe des systèmes d'inspection. Celles-ci exercent une pression sur les écoles, favorisant des conséquences intentionnelles et servant de points de référence pour l'amélioration. On conclut que la mondialisation conduit à une convergence de méthodologies, façonnant les politiques éducatives entre les nations.

Mots-clés : inspection de l'éducation, internationalisation de l'inspection, inspecteurs, qualité de l'éducation

The Internationalization of Inspection

The contexts in which inspection operates vary significantly from country to country and require careful analysis of the history and cultural formations of different contexts if the objective is to frame and justify it. However, educational and inspection policies have ceased to be limited to national contexts and have become part of a new European political community (Grek, 2015). They manifest through organizations such as the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates of Education (SICI) and are shaped by guidelines that emanate from international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). SICI, which was founded in 1985 by the OECD in search of a transnational connection between systems, brings together inspectors, inspection systems, and evaluation methodologies in education from different European countries. It commenced its responsibilities in the mid-1990s, stemming from discussions among heads of inspectorates from several European countries, including Scotland, England, Portugal, France, the Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. They recognized the mutual benefit of regular, informal meetings without strict structures (Grek, Lawn, Ozga, & Segerholm, 2013). Ensuring the quality and evaluation of educational organizations was among the main interests of this body, and with the increase in internationalization and European mobility, it was forced to formalize its operating process. It became a legal association in 1995, with objectives that included sharing experiences, updating and evolving educational systems, actively seeking ways to improve working methods, and establishing bases for cooperation between the various authorities.

In recent years, the growth of SICI has come from Central and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Albania, Romania), which, according to OECD assessments, would need more focused support. Its primary support is related to principles and practices that ensure the quality of educational services (SICI, 2001). It is carried out through the organization of training workshops, the promotion of bilateral and multilateral collaboration projects related to inspection activity, the seeking of knowledge on critical

themes in inspection policy, the anticipation of forms and methodologies of intervention, and the sharing of experiences and viewpoints. This collaboration occurs through the SICI Inspection Academy (SIA). This training school develops projects that seek to expand the competencies of European inspection systems, supporting the possibility of producing common areas of knowledge and work methodologies. Through these projects, cultures and intervention models are compared, and the production of specific instruments, design of methodologies, training, and fieldwork are encouraged. SIA has become a learning community where more experienced inspectors work closely with younger inspectors to improve the quality of their processes. In this way, SICI, through SIA, gives rise to a new European inspection model and a standard body of inspectors linked through the web and annual meetings in the different member countries (Grek et al., 2013).

In order to contribute to the development and affirmation of each of the inspection bodies, and under the umbrella of "Better Inspection, Better Learning," the SICI Strategic Plan 2016–2020 (2016) defines the following specific objectives: supporting the development of institutions and professional skills of inspectors, promoting and supporting partnerships and cooperation between inspection systems, and actively participating in the international debate on the assessment and improvement of quality in education.

This internationalization of inspection is translated by Grek (2014) as the phenomenon of "travelling inspectors" (p. 40) because, although it has always been an activity that involved travel, inspectors were firmly rooted where their local position was very influential and were considered as knowledgeable about education. In recent years, these professionals have been increasingly viewed as specialists equivalent to others in the educational context, a concern felt by SICI when it states:

> Inspectorates are the sole entities among numerous institutions and organizations generating evaluative content regarding schools, teaching, and learning. The significance, function, and position of inspectorates warrant earnest consideration. The quality of their offerings and services will face growing scrutiny compared to alternative sources and could face competition from other assessors. Failure to meet this challenge jeopardizes the future of inspectorates, as they risk being unable to provide the necessary information and analyses demanded by our societies. (SICI, 2004)

In this regard, it is pertinent to reflect on the profile of the new inspectors, analyze their characteristics, and try to understand what has changed in these professionals. According to Bruggen (2010), there are two generations of inspectors. The first generation includes England (Ofsted), Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Netherlands, Flanders, Wales, Portugal, Ireland, and the Czech Republic. The second generation, starting from 2003 onwards, often seeks insights from the "older" inspectorates to inform their practices. This group includes Sweden, Norway, Slovakia, most regions of Spain,

the 19 German Länder with varying systems of full inspection, Estonia, the German-speaking Swiss cantons, and France.

For Grek and Lawn (2011), younger inspectors seem more organized regarding teaching and learning benchmarking to the detriment of observations and judgments that are part of the most common practices. However, Bruggen (2010, p. 59) states: "My impression is that older inspectorates like the inspectorates of England, the Netherlands and other ones are less detailed in these lists and leave more (professional) room for the 'clinical eye' and the professional judgment of their inspectors." We are, therefore, faced with a "new" inspection body: one that presents and advertises itself as less mechanistic and bureaucratic without ceasing to be permeable to economic and management techniques, while continuing to be subordinate to performance comparisons and measurements that induce competitiveness.

SICI's functions of sharing, developing, improving, and cooperating must be sufficient. This requires designing and achieving more ambitious goals, justifying the internal drive to improve services (Grek et al., 2013). Assuming a more vital role, the organization claims its place in a new EU political space as an expert organization, recognized by various international agencies for providing added value by offering experience in evaluating education, comparing data and analyzing aspects key to European education (SICI, 2004).

In this scenario, the main objectives of this association are to provide international access to knowledge of national inspection services, raise the quality of educational debate in Europe, reinforce the status of national inspections, and strengthen the position and knowledge of inspectors through international cooperation (SICI, 2004). These objectives reflect an attempt to combine the national development of inspection services with an international presence and influence, reinforced through positioning SICI as the primary source of knowledge in European debates. This situation, however, raises questions related to the problem that Freire (1997, p. 47) calls the "historical understanding" of a given event. In other words, when making comparisons that may exist within the scope of activities developed through SICI, one must be aware that understanding a specific educational practice or work methodology will only operate in the same way in different contexts. "The intervention is historical, it is cultural, it is political" (Freire, 1997, p. 48), requiring experiences not to be transplanted from one country to another but reinvented, taking the characteristics of each one into account.

In this context, let us look at one of SICI's structuring documents, "The Bratislava Memorandum on Inspection and Innovation" (SICI, 2013). It is the result of discussions, debates, and sharing of ideas that were carried out for two years by the members that compose SICI and presents ten premises that should guide the member organizations:

1. Inspection, prevalent for centuries, now holds a central role in education across Europe and globally.

2. Inspection serves as a quality evaluator, assurer, and agent of accountability, aligned with each country's cultural and traditional contexts.

3. Inspection focuses directly on evidence of learning and the necessity for high-quality teaching.

4. Emerging trends in inspection respond to international education policy, emphasizing agility, risk assessment, and capacity-building at both school and system levels.

5. Inspection encourages self-evaluation and improvement within schools rather than passive compliance.

6. Inspection balances traditional roles with fostering innovation and adaptability in education systems.

7. Inspection's support for innovation varies based on national policies, yet its influence in challenging norms and fostering improvement remains significant.

8. Successful innovation relies on teacher acceptance, with inspection highlighting its impact on classroom practice.

9. The media often portray inspection negatively, but its potential positive impact relies on inspectors' credibility and public understanding.

10. Governments should integrate inspection's potential for innovation into education improvement strategies from the outset.

Although most European countries have an educational inspection system (SICI, 2014), its origin and mode of operation varies significantly from country to country, and even at a regional level within the same country. The origin of this organization depends on the characteristics and historicity of each country.

The Purposes of Inspection

Although there are variations from country to country, the basis for these instances is to guarantee the quality of education, accountability and school improvement (Caldo & Mariani, 2020). Inspectors undertake to present solutions to different problems by offering to monitor the implementation and performance of schools in the application of educational policies. They examine the performance of semi-autonomous professionals and promote the competitive identity of each educational organization through both objective and legitimate evaluation processes. With this commitment, not leaving "everything to the nature" of each institution, as this would be "denying the very idea of education," many governments consider it necessary to create an actual body. This

administrative institution carries out the instruction process. The achievement of "complete and harmonious development of all capabilities," with its social counterpart of an enlightened and progressive humanity, requires a specific organization (Dewey, 2007, p. 93).

In this line, Bolívar (2012) also highlights the importance and need for incentives and resources that improvement, emphasizing the fact that one cannot "rely on the initiatives and processes of all teachers by chance" (p. 13) and, as such, it requires a fair and coherent balance between internal and external forces and dynamics.

From a European perspective, the diversity of inspection systems is enormous as each responds to a specific culture and context of their educational systems. Different national political contexts, educational systems, and governmental apparatuses incorporate the inspection system, with structures that vary in governance procedures, methodologies, and impact mechanisms.

Historically, two essential axes of educational inspection styles can be highlighted (Eurydice, 2013; García Garrido, 2000): one that sees the school as a whole and seeks quality at an institutional level, and another that seeks educational quality based on the quality of its teachers. These inspection styles refer to two types of governance that Clarke and Ozga (2011) define as "soft governance" and "hard governance." While the first operates by attracting people to participate in mediation processes and creating networks and partnerships of actors, it is based on democratic values of participation in all educational subjects, which are essential for political and social democratization. The second requires setting goals, managing performance, creating indicators and using data to promote competition. It is characterized by an environment of compliance with what is imposed and not deliberated in mutual collaboration. Since what is previously established is not negotiated, it is quantified at the expense of effective standardization and control, attesting to the rationality inherent to a centralized administration.

In recent decades, several comparative studies (Allen & Burgess, 2012; Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015; Bruggen, 2010; Ehren et al., 2015; Gustafsson et al., 2015; Hussain, 2012; Klerks, 2012; Nelson & Ehren, 2014; SICI, 2014) were carried out to understand the effectiveness of educational inspection and the contributions it offers to improving educational systems. These studies provide a more thorough understanding of the characteristics of different inspection systems and how they interfere with and influence the quality of educational systems, pointing to their impact on the students' teaching/learning path. From these studies, it can be concluded that (i) the frequency of visits, (ii) the quality indicators, (iii) the consequences, (iv) the publication of inspection results and (v) the feedback given at the end of each visit are among the most vital aspects for producing changes in schools, as explained in Figure 1.
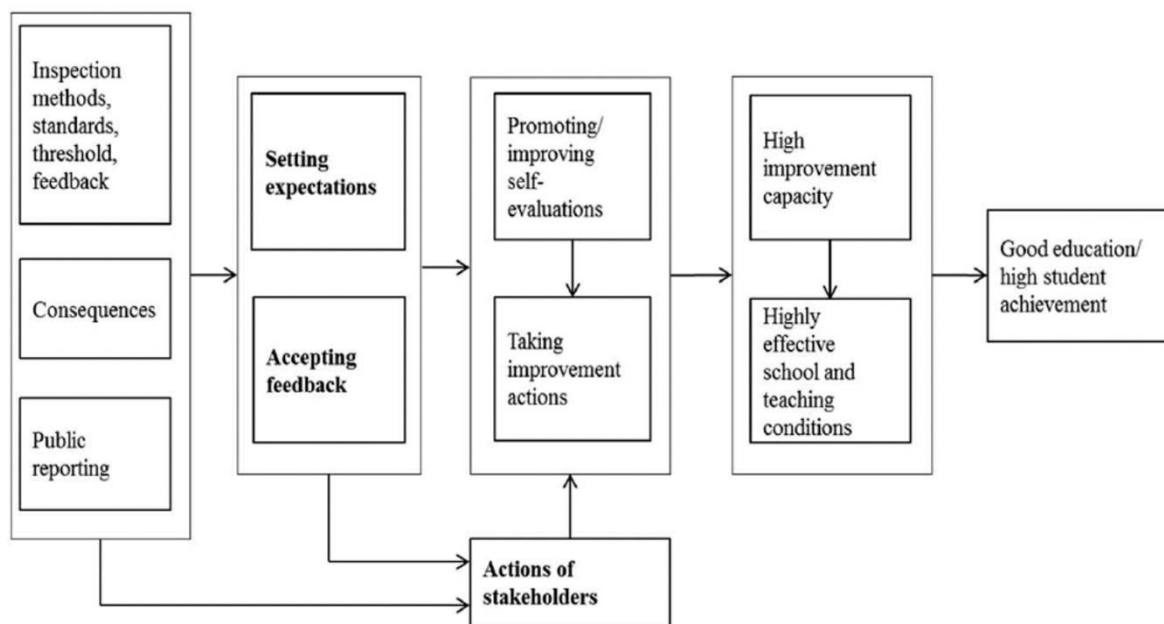
Figure 1. Effects resulting from the inspection action (Ehren et al., 2013, p. 14).

For Ehren et al. (2015), the most effective inspection systems use a differentiated model of practices and methodologies, evaluating educational practices and school results and publicly reporting their conclusions. They add that, for an inspection system to positively influence education and improve quality, changes must be considered a change in culture, not an imposition determined by external agents. This idea breaks with the notion of effectiveness and efficiency of the "optimal solution," a portrait of strongly hierarchical structures and autocratic government where changes are imposed from above. Douglas (1999) shares the same opinion when he states that improvement cannot simply be an external imposition; there is a need for an internal process. For this to happen, the culture and evaluation system must be built based on an understanding of the path that the institution will have to follow (Brennan & Shah, 2000), considering the uniqueness of each one and the professional capabilities of those who work there, and insisting on a communicative rationality that involves and holds people accountable, in a search for autonomy.

Despite the influence that inspection systems have on improving the quality of education, it is essential to note how each one promotes this improvement and how the type of improvement they support differs from system to system (Ehren et al., 2013). The Irish inspection system, for example, sets comprehensive objectives related to the contribution they wish to make to the self-evaluation and development of schools and the improvement of the education system. In Sweden, the inspection system aims to ensure the right to quality education for all students, promoting a harmonious and safe environment, thus improving the entire educational system. In Austria, the objective of

this body is also to provide the necessary support to schools so that they can solidly and constantly develop the quality of the education they provide and ensure legal compliance with regulations. The Dutch inspection system aims to improve schools by promoting quality education, with "quality education" defined explicitly in the organization's structure. The Swiss inspection system focuses on school leadership, cooperation, climate and management in the classroom context, and parental involvement, which are essential elements in improving the quality of education (Schweinberger et al., 2017). Ofsted in England focuses on promoting school improvement, ensuring that educational services are student-centred, and encouraging the development and improvement of the education system. In Portugal, the general objective of IGEC is to improve quality, equity, and justice in education.

Inspection systems constitute entities that catalyze the quality of education, helping schools to ensure quality standards in the educational service they provide, producing information about the service they offer, and enabling internal reflection processes (Sanches, 2005). These bodies comprise a means of governing and improving educational standards and have witnessed exponential growth in popularity, with increasing attempts at government decentralization. They act as implementers of educational policies and they promote and facilitate the achievement of each country's national accountability goals, sometimes assuming control and regulatory roles expressing technical-instrumental rationality and others, assuming a more dialogical and guiding stance, promoting emancipatory education.

Positive Effects of Inspection Activity

Empirical studies focusing on the effects of inspection action reveal that inspection has impacted the development and improvement of schools by encouraging and improving organizations' self-evaluation and enabling schools to improve their students' learning (Allen & Burgess, 2012). However, some reveal that the inspectorate, being an external body responsible for the system, may lead to the manifestation of unintended negative consequences (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Luginbuhl et al., 2009; Matthews & Sammons, 2004; Nelson & Ehren, 2014; Rosenthal, 2004).

The preparation of school visits is an essential factor regarding the impact of the inspection action. Some studies have shown that schools reflect on the quality of education when a previously announced inspection forces the school to undertake preparatory work. In this context, the assumption is that schools focus on improving priorities, understanding their characteristics better, sharing resources, and building a development plan for the institution (Bubb & Earley, 2008). Plowright (2007) also describes how preparation for inspection visits, mainly the self-assessment carried out before one, is reflected in a more excellent opening of dialogue between the various educational subjects; for the author, inspections function as drivers of critical thinking in

aspects that the school needs to improve, acting as catalysts to accelerate the review of policies and the development of educational actors.

Sharing this opinion, Penninckx et al. (2014) describe how teachers and principals in the Flanders region in Belgium view inspection visits, stating that they lead to an appreciation of the value of their profession and a better understanding of educational policies. Teachers from this region demonstrate that the notice of the inspection visit allows a reflection on teaching in light of the reference frameworks of the inspection system (Penninckx, 2015).

In England, for example, this preparation and reflection process must be continuous as the inspection only warns schools the day before the visit, and, as such, they will have to ensure that they are prepared to receive it at any time (Ehren, 2016). In this line of work, studies carried out in the Netherlands, Scotland, and Ireland also demonstrate positive results from inspection actions, explaining how inspectors drive improvement actions and help identify priorities and more excellent knowledge about what is most urgent to change (Blok et al., 2008; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education [HMIE], 2010).

Changes regarding how teachers organize teaching and alter the format of their classes can also be ascertained. Spink (2012) describes how, following an inspection visit, teachers define more precise objectives in lesson planning, change assessment practices, and improve the use of assessment results. In Germany, the directors of most inspected schools say they develop concrete measures after an inspection visit, implementing improvement plans with associated timelines (Dedering & Muller, 2010). Studies referring to the inspection systems in Wales and Scotland also reveal that the inspected schools implement improvement strategies such as targeted support for students with more difficulties, the reorganization of curricular content, the reinforcement of the quality of leadership, or the promotion of vocational education (HMIE, 2010; Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, 2012). The study by Ehren and Visscher (2008) concluded that English schools used feedback from inspectors to improve their functioning. Half a year later, the improvement plans continued to be implemented and improved. In the Netherlands, schools formulate and implement action plans according to inspection feedback guidelines, leading to improved student learning (Hogenbirk & van de Braak, 2013). In Flanders (Belgium), the impact of inspections focuses more on improving school buildings (Penninckx et al., 2014). Schweinberger et al. (2017) show how, in Switzerland, teachers evaluate inspectional feedback that affects the acquisition of knowledge within the school, engendering a practical improvement in the quality of education. Even so, they state that feedback is very focused on aspects linked to the management and administration of institutions and neglect aspects which are more focused on student learning. In practice, this can lead to a school with higher quality management and administration, but does not necessarily mean an institution with higher-quality teaching.

However, reflection on inspectors' considerations may lead to something other than real change (Spink, 2012). Plowright (2007) reveals that after a discussion about what needs to be changed for improvement, actions may not be implemented; or, if they are, they may fall into oblivion and there is a return to the situation before the inspection. This reality can be justified by the lack of clarity in inspection reports, as improvement actions may need to be specified (Matthews & Smith, 1995). They may also focus on what needs to be changed without paying attention to how to do it, which could be difficult for the school. Some schools consider that the changes observed are essentially created during the passage/stay of inspection teams and do not constitute a long-term effect of change (Perryman, 2010). The authors present us with a school that appears to have changed after an inspection intervention without ensuring that it has been appropriated by the actors who are part of it, compromising its sustainability, credibility, and durability. It is, therefore, urgent to value measures that guarantee, the creation of internal capacity for transformation in each organization, which requires the adoption of educational policies that develop conditions that stimulate the development of internal learning capacity. Its actors must be prepared to carry out their functions and this consequently favours the continuous adaptation of the school to the challenges and contexts that arise.
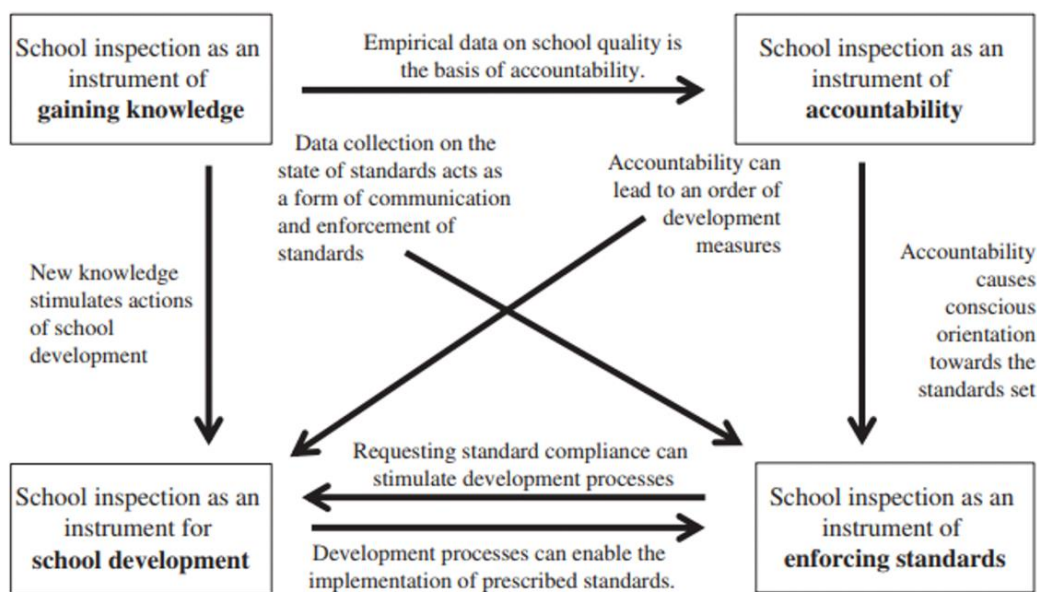

Figure 2: Effect and effectiveness model of educational inspection (Landwehr, 2011).

Considering the scheme, educational improvement and development constitute just one of the four functions that inspection action satisfies, according to Landwehr (2011). The primary function of inspection systems is to characterize the quality of the organizations they visit, meaning that principals and teachers who expect to learn something new about their schools may be disappointed with the teams' feedback reports (Gaertner et al., 2014), as the primary function of collecting this type of data contributes to making existing perceptions about the problems encountered official (Landwehr, 2011). In other words, inspection teams typically pinpoint issues already recognized by schools, confirming their presence through their elevated hierarchical status within the educational structure. However, when they are highlighted and described and made official through reports, problems are transformed into something that can be addressed outside and inside the school. Furthermore, in a certain way, the knowledge obtained by the inspection teams is evaluative knowledge, which can be highly significant since, during visits, the characteristics of schools are evaluated based on standards, objectives and expectations.

Thus, recognizing certain aspects will allow the school to identify starting points to act accordingly and, at the same time, act as pressure for action. The justification behind this vision is that a well-performed inspection should provide an impetus to solve problems and strengthen schools' potential (Landwehr, 2011) in an attitude that distances itself from autocratic administration as much as possible. This process assumes that the inspection is widely accepted, which requires the construction of transparent and plausible criteria that become credible in the eyes of those visited. The report they create must also be accessible, acceptable, and transparent (Gaertner et al., 2014) to witness a transfer of educational policies from neoliberal-influenced modernization to democratization. This knowledge can also be used as the basis of an accountability mechanism, insofar as the knowledge created by the inspection, in the form of a report, can be used by the school and the guardianship to explain the reality of the organizations under its jurisdiction, and require those who are least prepared and most vulnerable to adopt attitudes and paths that lead to improvement. In this case, the accountability function results in a drive to improve schools from a top-down perspective rather than a self-determined one, pointing to a stance present in various forms in the theory of bureaucracy. Usually, the results of inspection visits contained in the reports are used as a basis for negotiation between schools and those responsible, with the latter being committed to continuously verifying compliance with previously agreed terms. The four primary functions of educational inspection presented by Landwehr (2011) have the verification and establishment of educational policies and standards as their central objective. In this sense, inspection is a mechanism that communicates expectations and standards to educational organizations in a logic of verification and supervision of what is legally established due to the control that must be maintained without fail.

Negative Effects of Inspection Activity

There are, however, intentional effects resulting from the action of these organisms that must be considered. Since the 1990s, we have seen more documentation regarding the unintended effects of specific systems, including inspection (Ehren et al., 2016). These unintended consequences are often negative, and they may cancel out the positive ones. Despite what was previously described about the positive effects of the inspection action, some studies reveal the scarce, null, or even negative impact of the work carried out by these organisms. An example of this is the study by Klerks (2012), which proves the existence of residual effects of the impact of inspection action on students' progress, suggesting that the majority of the results of these professionals' actions are inconclusive. Another example comes from the study by Ehren and Shackleton (2014), which proves the positive influence of these organizations in terms of the academic success of secondary school students in literacy without, however, being able to demonstrate this in other subjects.

It is also important to mention that other authors state that the inspection action does not increase the capabilities of students or teachers. Both intermediate and top leaders seem to state that the inspection does not bring any new aspects to their action and that the feedback given does not add anything that these professionals did not already know (Ferguson et al., 2001; Wilcox & Gray, 1994), making no difference to students' development and learning (Brookes, 2008). Interestingly, even schools that develop improvement plans in response to inspection reports are generally less than optimistic about the changes and the actual improvement that will result (Kogan & Brunel, 1999).

Studies from countries such as Germany, Belgium, and Ireland reveal little change in schools after the intervention of inspection teams, which can be explained by the surface-level approach to activities, lacking any repercussions for teachers' actions, as they receive no tangible recommendations or practices applicable to the classroom setting. For this reason, these visits are considered "one-off events" with little support for overcoming the diagnosed difficulties (Ehren et al., 2016). Gaertner, Wurster, and Pant (2014) also demonstrate how inspection actions result in unclear changes in German schools. The study developed by Ehren et al. (2015) concluded that some Dutch schools consider there to be little impact on teachers' actions in the classroom, the curriculum, and school governance. Joana (2021) concludes that the main impact of the inspection action in Portuguese schools is more associated with improving the functioning of schools at an administrative and organizational level, with no recognized impact on improving pedagogical processes.

Other intentional consequences must also be considered: the strategic behaviour of the school (or façade) during the inspection visit; tampering with data; teaching or management practices by the profile of the inspectors or the reference frameworks of the inspection system; stress; increased workload in preparing the documentation that the inspection requires from the school; and demoralization of teachers and other

educational actors (Berry, 2012; Hardy, 2012; Tunç et al., 2015). In this context, some studies present examples of strategic responses by teachers and principals to inspection, explaining how they artificially plan certain classes to please inspectors and how they manage what they are going to teach in order to meet the frames of reference and expectations of visitors (Hardy, 2012; Jones & Tymms, 2014) on a "teach to inspection" principle (Ehren et al., 2016, p. 89). Other authors demonstrate how teachers prepare classes better during the inspection visit (Brimblecombe et al., 1996; Chapman, 2001), planning them in the safest way possible, avoiding the possibility of losing control during the inspection observation. Ehren et al. (2016) present an effect that they call "organizational paralysis" that occurs when schools do not develop innovative behaviours that motivate change because they feel that inspectors are a threat, as they are not considered by the supervisory teams of the inspection teams and are not part of the measurement indicators. Schweinberger et al. (2017) also allude to this situation, stating that schools must comply with a set of standards, which can lead to stifling impulses in the search for innovative solutions. Alongside this, the pressure and focus on improving schools means they are encouraged to develop unique profiles that suit their unique characteristics, which limits the comparison between organizations and the appropriate response to standards.

In some cases, inspections also seem to reduce the productivity of schools because, by spending too much time preparing for visits, teaching activities may be reduced or, in extreme situations, suspended (Berry, 2012). The consequences could even include the loss of pedagogical value felt by teachers as they feel that their activity is reduced to numbers and percentages, resulting in a feeling of persecution and guilt through the bureaucratic control that is carried out (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996). To this extent, inspection causes teachers to lose professional confidence in their work, redefining their profession from a moral perspective to an instrumental perspective, aiming to achieve the highest level in the tests and assessments to which they are subjected. These feelings could undermine teachers' trust and commitment by increasing cynicism and resentment about the inspection process, reducing trust within the system (Bates, 2012; Berry, 2012; Courtney, 2013).

The results of these studies require careful reflection on the causes that motivate these behaviours and a more careful reading of the characteristics of the inspection systems that trigger them. In this regard, Altrichter and Kemethofer (2015) state that at the basis of these behaviours is the pressure for improvement prompted by the inspection action that motivates educational actors to act according to what they consider to be the evaluation standards used.

Terrasêca (2011), alluding to the Portuguese inspection system, is quite critical regarding the effects of one of the activities implemented by this body, external evaluation. The author argues that external evaluations, regardless of their intrinsic quality, fail to achieve the results they promise by defining objectives. Often, these

assessments provoke defensive reactions that lead to manipulating trajectories and adopting strategies to present the data more favourably, aligning them with previously established expectations. She also adds that the transformations resulting from the evaluation of schools are superficial, do not address fundamental issues, and, therefore, do not enable genuinely significant changes in the quality of educational services, student learning, or even in the practices of education professionals. In addition to these effects in the school context, Penninckx and Vanhoof (2015) highlight those that can also be observed within the inspection. The authors state that adverse emotional effects may impact the inspection itself and undermine the validity and confidence of the results achieved by these professionals.

It is challenging to clarify the results of educational inspection regarding the impact and effects produced (Ehren et al., 2015). Inspection constitutes a central element in the implementation of educational policies and the measurement of educational results.

Conclusion

Inspection systems, whose governance style seems hard and of a more punitive nature, could lead to increased pressure on schools and thus an increase in intentional consequences. Likewise, schools that present more weaknesses and where education is deficient (even if the inspection system does not have a hard governance style) are pressured to adopt strategies that make them more robust, and, in this pressure for improvement, intentional effects end up arising. In other words, establishing expectations by inspection systems regarding what qualifies as quality education appears beneficial. It serves as a benchmark for educators and school administrators to aspire towards, enhancing teaching quality and school organization. On the other hand, it can be the reason for coming up with dysfunctional long-term strategies that respond adequately and positively to the demands of the inspection teams during visits.

From this analysis, we can also understand how the different inspection systems, recognizing best practices, are based on each other's methodologies and ways of acting and adapting them to their realities to seek to improve themselves. This reality is justified by the "phenomenon of globalization (and Europeanization), [through which] the production of global frameworks for interpreting the world tends to escape the national state, borders and government restrictions" (Costa & Pires, 2011, p. 336), now calling itself "transnational regulation" in the face of "the hybridity of national regulation" (Barroso, 2013, p. 19). This positioning is visible from the influence that the EU has on the guidance and legitimization of specific political measures in member countries, making it possible to understand a set of transnational changes, influences and interdependencies that contribute "to the progressive structuring of a European space of common education" (Costa & Pires, 2011, p. 336) and allow the comparison of systems. In other words, this situation highlights the adoption of meritocratic policies that encourage competitive environments based on economic-business rationality. Policies

that support competition as an educational component by the confusion fostered between progress and efficiency corroborate the natural superiority of one over the other and consequently allow competition between individuals and groups, reproducing the disposition of markets as something to preserve and exalt.

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