State School Inspection: The Norwegian Example

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Summary

This PhD thesis investigates the institutional characteristics of state school inspection, set within an international research and policy context. The thesis, coined the NOSI-project (State School Inspection in Norway), is nested within the larger LEXEL-project (Legal Standards and Professional Judgment in Educational Leadership). In the NOSI-project, the main aim is to inquire upon the formation and reformation of the institutional aspects of a system which has not yet been settled, and the enactment of school inspection (SI) as a regulative set of tools which states use in order to govern local authorities and public schools. The main point of focus is the Norwegian example. I first show how educational policy and legal statutes articulate state school inspections in Norway and Sweden. Next, I examine how inspections are perceived and projected by policy actors. Finally, I consider how they are institutionalized in the Norwegian system that is currently shifting, and in which toolsets are being employed.

In the Norwegian context, little empirical research has been conducted on how school inspection (SI) represents a major resource in the central state's quest to govern the educational sector within a system that is changing in order to meet new expectations. Tools currently being employed in Norway include circulars, White Papers, and legal statutes (on the policy level), as well as inspection handbooks and, increasingly, School Self Evaluation (SSE) on the practical level. The combination of these tools and how they are administered is shifting in order to include additional methods of evaluating schools and school districts. Norway, in particular, but also Sweden, serve as examples of how policy trajectories evolved in the 2000s and are shaped by the composition of tools and governing modes across contexts.

The findings of the NOSI-project are reported on in three research articles viewed through two conceptual lenses that draw on governing literature and new-institutionalist theory. In the first article (Article I), school inspection policy and regulation (2002-2012) in Norway is compared to parallel developments in Sweden through the analysis of 23 policy documents, legal statutes, and regulations. First, the paper demonstrates that even if the cases of public administration appear homogenous from the outside, there is substantial evidence of major differences in the inspection policies of these two countries. Secondly, findings show that in Norway, governing has, until recently, focused on legal and pragmatic approaches to inspection, while in the Swedish case, the emphasis in the same period placed on professional and expert-defined modes in addition to regulation.

The second article (Article II) includes case studies of three County Governors' Offices (CGOs) in Norway, using semi-structured interviews with three educational directors and six school inspectors. I first demonstrate that the CGOs are characterized by informal as well as formal meeting places. Secondly, there are clear internal as well as external expectations at the CGO level. Third, there is clear change in how the CGOs collaborate externally, especially with their superiors in the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Finally, the role of state school inspection in Norway is shifting from merely compliance-based control towards a system focusing more on evaluation and support, which is both challenging and gratifying, according to the school inspectors.

Finally, 13 meetings held at three different schools between school inspectors and school principals/teachers in Norway were observed (Article III). The study also drew on pre- and post-inspection documentation, such as letters of notification on upcoming inspections, SSE reports, preliminary inspection reports, as well as final inspection reports. The study observed a shift away from the use of governing tools as mere legal compliance toward an increased use of SSE as the means of obtaining the information used in the evaluation of the inspected schools. Secondly, standardized templates largely dictate how SI is carried out. Finally, inspections of schools are more targeted at controlling the formative assessment routines of schools and teachers.

Drawing on new-institutional theory, the NOSI-project first provides new insight into how policy actors, such as CGO officers and their leaders, interact both intra-institutionally and inter-institutionally in adapting to new expectations and new governing roles. In the Scandinavian context in general, and the Norwegian context in particular, the study secondly contributes methodologically by combining interviews and observation studies, since following school inspectors in the field is a method which seems to be difficult to employ in high-stakes settings, such as that which is found in England. Using such combinations of methods has not yet been identified in a review of the research literature in the field. Finally, the study contributes empirically by offering new data on how school inspectors in the Norwegian example relate to shifting policy contexts and the renewed role of the inspector.

Acknowledgements

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Part II   Articles I, II, and III

Article I

Hall, J. B., & Sivesind, K. (2015). State school inspection policy in Norway and Sweden (2002–2012): A reconfiguration of governing modes? *Journal of Education Policy*, *30*(3), 429-458. http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1080/02680939.2014.945488

Article II

Hall, J. B. (2016). Examining school inspectors and educational directors within the organisation of school inspection policy: Perceptions and views. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (online), 1-15. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2015.1120234

Article III

Hall, J. B. (in review). "Governing by templates" through new modes of school inspection in Norway. *Journal of Educational Change*.

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Part I   Extended abstract

1. Introduction

Nation states have long desired to control, develop, and support the enactment of centrally initiated education policies and regulations, which have been, in recent decades, increasingly influenced by transnational trends and ideas (Ozga & Lingard, 2007). The "audit explosion" in late modern society has thus led to an upsurge in both the number and forms of inspections of many sectors in society (Power 1994, 1997). This development has resulted in new sets of tools being used in order to scrutinize and govern these sectors, not the least in the educational systems of Scandinavia.

In the following, I will denote my PhD project as the NOSI-project,[1] which is a study of the institutional formation and enactment of state school inspection set within an international research and policy context.[2] In this thesis, which is influenced by a constructivist approach to understanding state school inspection situated within new-institutionalism, ideas and policy are seen as "constantly in flux, being reconsidered and redefined as actors debate and communicate with each other" (Béland & Cox, 2011, p. 5). In the NOSI-project, I critically investigate the making and enactment of school inspection as a regulative apparatus that states utilize in order to govern local school authorities and schools. I first examine how school inspection (SI) policy is expressed in regulatory documents from the first decade of the new millennium in Norway and Sweden. Secondly, I study how state school inspection in Norway is perceived and projected by key actors. Thirdly, I analyze how recent major shifts in SI policy in the Norwegian example have made use of new combinations of tools for scrutinizing municipalities as well as schools within the public education system in Norway. Such renewed sets of governing tools are created by both adopting transnational ideas and result from varying national traditions (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010).

The main focus of the NOSI-project is regular state school inspection in Norway; however, the Norwegian example is located within, and studied in relation to, other European inspectoral contexts, such as that which is found in neighboring Sweden. Throughout the analysis, I study the ways that state authorities make use of modes and tools to govern

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[1] Norwegian State School Inspection (the NOSI-project).
[2] The NOSI-project was conducted as a part of a larger research project in the form of the LEXEL-project (Legal Standards and Professional Judgment in Educational Leadership); funded by the Research Council of Norway (RCN). The LEXEL-project's leader is Professor Jorunn Møller at the Department of Teacher Education and School Research at the University of Oslo. See Section 4.1 and Appendices 9 and 10 in this thesis for a further outline of the project.

educational policies and practices in the public education system. Norway, in particular, but also Sweden, represent examples of how policy trajectories evolved over the 2000s and to demonstrate how school inspection policies are shaped by the composition of tools and modes of governing in different organizational contexts.

Analyzing policy documents, legal statutes, interviews, and observational data, enables me, as a researcher, to closely investigate how SI is expressed professionally and politically in Norway by the state and regional authorities responsible for conducting inspection, and to observe how these institutions use various tools in order to govern schools and school authorities through their interplay with local actors. Conceptually, the thesis opens up the possibility of employing theoretical perspectives where different configurations of governing tools are expressed through macro- and meso-theoretical lenses. Through such an approach, the empirical data thus functions as a significant mirror in which the theoretical framework may be reflected.

Against this backdrop, I consider the inspection of schools as being formed and reformed by a set of governing tools used for monitoring, controlling, supporting, developing, and holding schools, school principals, and school districts accountable for their practices and outcomes. Reformation is in this thesis understood as natural evolutions and shifts in society, either slowly or more rapidly evolving (Hansson, 1991). Finally, as will be seen in the articles in the review section of this thesis, as well as reported in Articles II and III, making judgments is not an easy task for school inspectors, as it implies striking a challenging balance between control, evaluation, and support.

1.1 Aims and research questions

The main aim of the NOSI-project is to inquire upon the formation and reformation of the institutional aspects of a system which has not yet been settled, and the enactment of school inspection (SI) as a regulative set of tools which states use in order to govern local authorities and public schools. The overall focus is, as mentioned, the Norwegian system, which until now has been a largely under-researched area, through observing ongoing changes in the attentions and compositions of the inspectoral "toolbox" in comparison to parallel developments and other key research studies in Sweden and Europe.

The NOSI-project first analyzes the differences and similarities between the inspection policies in Norway and Sweden that are regulated by legal statutes and key policy documents and inspired by the general idea of the European Education Policy Space (EEPS) (Ozga, 2012). Secondly, the perceptions of Norwegian policy actors are studied, specifically with regard to how they understand the current and future role of regular state school inspection. Through social interaction, I understand policy actors as contributors to policy-making and the enactment of policy in various contexts (Bowe et al., 1992). As a third step, shifts in Norwegian state school inspection policies and practices are studied, where a new and extensive inspection handbook that includes legal standards, templates, and SSE (School Self-Evaluation) forms is currently being enacted (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013).

Seen as fundamental in all theory development is the formulation of carefully grounded research questions (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013, p. 1). The overall research problem for this PhD project to address is: How are governing tools and modes formed and reformed across contexts of school inspection policy?

In addition, there are in all three overarching research questions which have guided the study and will be followed up in the final discussion in Chapter 6; these should be seen in relation to the research questions underlying each article, as presented in Table 4.1:

> *RQ1* What characterizes shifts in state school inspection policy in Norway compared to Sweden during the period 2002-2012?

> *RQ2* How do perceptions and expectations of key actors contribute to shifts in school inspection policy across contexts?

> *RQ3* What is the role of policy tools for enacting school inspection policy across contexts?

RQ1 is mostly centered on Article I, RQ2 addressing mostly Articles II and III, and RQ 3 linked first and foremost to Article III. Chapter 6 however discusses across findings in all three articles. In the following sections, I will position the NOSI-project within an international context and follow this with an outline of regular state school inspection in Norway.

1.2 Positioning the study

An assumption in the study is that public administration is a multi-layered, multi-faceted, and complex endeavor to coordinate policies and practices on behalf of political institutions which legitimize and authorize mandates and decisions representing society. In late-modern society, legitimacy is ensured through new modes and tools via the formation of governance (Kooiman, 1993). An example of such complexity is reported on by Ozga et al. (2011a, 2011b) discussing an increase in data-driven governance and governing and quality assessment and evaluation (QAE) in Europe. This complexity reflects a process of globalization, according to the argument presented by Dale and Robertson (2009; Also see Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga, 2009).

Intense pressure on schools to deliver results through an increase in data-driven standards, international testing (for example, PISA), and performance-based benchmarking revived through the Lisbon Summit in 2000 is on the rise (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Perryman, 2009). These supra- and macro-political changes in educational policies form a part of what has been coined "The Audit Culture" (Apple, 2005) deriving from a strong belief in the post-industrial, Western world to lean towards knowledge-based economies; for example, by data, through numbers, or by inspection (Ball, 2015; Ozga, 2009, 2012; Ozga & Segerholm, 2015). Through the use of such new modes and tools to assess and scrutinize schools, school leaders, and school districts, key stakeholders are held accountable to deliver "good results," for example, in the course of inspection visits (Møller, 2016a).

Lingard et al. (2013) demonstrate how globalization, through the role of the OECD and international testing regimes, has led to increased accountability where global comparison in education policy is central to the governing of the educational sector (Nóvoa & Yariv-Mashal, 2003, cited in Lingard et al., 2013). This shift, they argue, has moreover led to changes in state policy structures through the use of new technologies and tools (Ball, 2013a; cited in Lingard et al., 2013).

As part of the rise of the "Evaluative State" (Neave, 1988, 1998), national entities, such as state school inspectorates, have further developed these tools indirectly through governing performance-based goals and standards, which enables local and regional authorities to operate relatively freely within certain legal and institutional boundaries. In spite of key policy actors and practitioners having such leeway, an increased focus on performance-based

objectives where teachers are subject to control and accountability mechanisms, has been suggested as a threat to their professional judgment and traditional autonomy (Ball, 2003; Lyotard, 1984; Mausethagen, 2013).

At the same time, through the process of the "hollowing out of the state" in the 1990s, such as that which was reported by Rhodes (1994, 1996), for example, the supreme authority of the nation state has possibly been undermined (Ministry of Labor and Administration, 2003). However, others have argued that through the return of the state, new configurations of tools are introduced, implying new ways of steering both directly as well as indirectly (Hudson, 2007; Rönnberg, 2012). I support the view taken by Rönnberg (2011), for example, that the state has "reinstated" its role as a strong governing body aimed at steering various facets of society (see Section 3.2.8).

From the outside, Norway and Sweden resemble each other in many aspects, such as culturally, historically, and politically. However, as seen from the inside, I argue that the two states have chosen different trajectories as a result of both their individual national traditions and their transnational influences (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2010). There are several ways to conceptualize such transnational movements and national processes, such as by viewing transnational movements as processes of Europeanization wherein states are mutually influential (Ozga, 2012).

Moreover, policy and the development of policy tools go through different processes of institutional evolution and change (Helgøy & Homme, 2006). In this sense, countries seem to be more convergent than they were previously through their applications of policy tools (Bleiklie, 2000; Helgøy & Home, 2006, p. 161). However, as argued by Pollitt (2001), processes of convergence must be viewed as multifaceted and diverse and for this reason they can result in national reform trajectories (Pollitt, 2001, p. 936).

In an attempt to highlight the ongoing process of the convergence of policy tools, concepts borrowed from the European Educational Policy Space (EEPS) and Europeanization are helpful (Dale & Robertson, 2009; Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga, 2012). Through processes within the EEPS, nation states draw upon a common pool of ideas in the making of their solutions and toolsets, thus embarking on a trail of "borrowing and lending" (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). Concerning inspection policy, these processes are represented through the SICI (Standing International Conference of Inspectorates), for instance, which convenes and

discusses future school inspection policies within the member countries (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Grek, 2015).

The current literature suggests that most European inspectorates are moving in the same direction towards placing a greater emphasis on School Self Evaluation (SSE) and possibly less on mere control- and compliance-based supervision (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga, 2009). Within the European Union (EU), there has seemingly been a shift from an earlier system based on reliance on data, monitoring, and hierarchical forms of regulation towards a more developmental mode based on decentralized and horizontal network forms (Ozga, 2009). Finally, Segerholm (2012) argues that Sweden acts as a "teacher" to third-generation countries such as Norway, signifying a "governing from behind" approach.

The developments of state inspectoral policy are in this thesis understood as taking place in the context of Europeanization and contributing to the inspection systems of the two Scandinavian countries, thus bringing the two closer together. Nevertheless, dissimilarities in policy and practice may be understood by acknowledging that political, cultural, and historical differences have led to different national trajectories in attempting to solve common educational challenges (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010).

Norway, as in neighboring Sweden, adjusts to international influences and is undergoing major changes in its school inspection policy. By studying the existing literature on school inspection, I have identified gaps in reporting on the Norwegian example (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Thus, little empirical research has until now been conducted on how SI represents a major set of tools in the central state's quest to steer the educational sector in Norway, and how the system is currently changing due to new expectations formed either by or within an international context (see Chapter 2). Therefore, it is necessary to shed light on this phenomenon which the NOSI-project achieves through an analysis of key policy documents, legal statutes, interviews, and observation of the enactment of SI policy within schools. Through such a project, and by drawing on new-institutional theory, it is possible to open up policy discourses within "the black box of Norwegian school inspection" to fellow researchers, as well as practitioners, on state, regional, and local levels (Ball, 1993; Latour, 1987; Lindgren, 2015).

School inspectors in Norway and their leaders on the County Governor's level act upon government policy, but at the same time they must relate to the schools under scrutiny. Thus,

the NOSI-project will provide relevant feedback for these actors to contemplate the complexity of their role as the executors of state policy.

Finally, since teachers and school principals are exposed to a wide range of different policies and government initiatives, the project moreover seeks to furnish input for the teaching and leadership professions in public schools by allowing them to reflect on their own roles and work within the dynamic processes of state educational policy to which they have to relate and form a part of.

1.3 The Norwegian example

Even if there are several cultural, historical, and political similarities between the two welfare states of Norway and Sweden, their state educational authorities have chosen different reform trajectories through their selection of governing modes and tools (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). The Swedish School Inspectorate (SSI), "Skolinspektionen," has had as its main objective to determine whether local school authorities and public and free schools comply with legal statutes and regulations. In addition, the SSI carries out QAE of schools (Segerholm, 2009).

In Norway, inspections are carried out relatively differently than they are in the Swedish system, and the systematic inspection of schools dates back to the mid-19th century (Mediås, 1996). Currently, the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research initiates regular state school inspections ("Felles nasjonalt tilsyn") in specific areas, and these inspections mainly focus on the extent to which students' legal rights are observed; however, as reported in Articles II and III, it is reconfiguring its focus. The inspection process of public schools itself is executed by the 17 County Governors' Offices (CGOs), while private schools are scrutinized by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The NOSI-project limits its focus to a study of SI in public schools.

The revised handbook for state school inspection in Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013) signals a clear shift in policy scope and inspectoral practice, shifts which are reported on throughout the three articles in this thesis (Articles I, II, and III). One of the most interesting traits of the new handbook is its sheer size: it exceeds 130 pages, includes a wide range of templates used for SSE, and gives feedback from inspectors to schools. Regular state inspections of public schools in Norway that are regionally executed by one of the 17 CGOs are increasing in quantity, but are also adjusting in focus. Moreover, local

school authorities, school principals, and schools are increasingly prone to external evaluation of their daily routines and practices (see, Table 2, Appendix 2).

Before 2012-2013, the main goal in Norway was to identify aberrancy in regards to legislation (Møller, 2016b). In White Paper no. 31 (2007-2008), "Quality in Schools", the government states that local school authorities are to be followed up through increased national supervision and guidance (Sivesind, 2009). Sivesind (2009) also claims that a common national inspection regime recommends applying the same procedures nationwide in order to ensure common legal interpretations and practices. However, referring to Lorentzen (2005), Sivesind (2009) argues that professional discretion is needed. Furthermore, as Sivesind and Bachmann (2011) point out, when legislation allows for local responsibility, it is necessary to utilize both legal discretion as well as pedagogical judgment within the decision processes of SI.

Finally, this study started out as a comparative project which aimed at collecting data gathered from interviews done in both Norway and Sweden; however, such an endeavor ultimately turned out to be difficult to achieve. Consequently, the NOSI-project has (for now) concluded as a study of Norwegian state school inspection in public schools, thereby making use of Norway as the core example. Nevertheless, the project benefits from the theories, findings, and interpretations of Swedish SI studies, being a relatively well-developed area of research compared to the situation in the Norwegian context (see Chapter 2).

1.4 Outline of the extended abstract

This extended abstract is divided into six chapters, aiming to contextualize, exemplify, and discuss the overall NOSI-project. I have already furnished an overview of the study and positioned it internationally as well as nationally. Chapter 2 develops this positioning even further by presenting the state of the research field. In Chapter 3, I outline the theoretical vantage points, based on a framework building on two key fields of knowledge: new-institutional theory in relation to public policy and governing. Chapter 4 renders an overview of the methodology used to collect and analyze the project's data, and additionally elaborates on ethical considerations in the qualitative research carried out in this thesis. In Chapter 5, I summarize each of the three articles reported in this thesis, and finally, in Chapter 6, the overall study findings, its contributions, and its possible implications are discussed.

2. State of the field

This chapter renders an overview of the field of international research on school inspection (SI) by undertaking a critical review of the studies found in international journals. Twenty-five published journal articles are included in this review section, and predominantly derive from ranked research journals published between 2006 and 2015. I also review an anthology and a book covering this topic. In all, 27 peer-reviewed studies and volumes are included (see Table 1, Appendix). The list is not exhaustive, however, it covers a range of applications and theoretical-conceptual approaches to illuminating SI, as well as studies elucidating multiple national and comparative settings.

2.1 Literature search

Taken together, and viewed through the lenses of globalization and Europeanization, the literature review includes studies based on data at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels covering four geographical areas in Europe: German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), Scandinavia (Sweden), the U.K. (England, Scotland), and the Netherlands.[3] To ensure a wide breadth of studies under review, it is vital to incorporate more than one or two country cases (Webster & Watson, 2002, p. xv). Although interesting, areas such as Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Australia are excluded. All publications in this review were published either in English or German. Publications in Norwegian or Swedish are for various reasons excluded, one reason being that there hardly exists any studies on SI published in Norwegian, at least not published in ranked journals.

Finally, the articles were found using renowned search engines (for example, ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, Oria, Taylor & Francis Online), as well as through a close reading of existing research literature and discussions with peers in the research community during the NOSI-project period (2012-2016). Keywords used were, for example, "school inspection," "governing," and "governing by numbers." Moreover, I searched for combinations of certain terms, such as "impact + school + inspection," "effects + school + inspection," and "development + school + inspection" in the titles of journals published between 2006 and 2016. For instance, in JSTOR, I searched for the combination of "school + inspection +

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[3] The study by Ehren et al. (2015) includes data from the Czech Republic, thus extending beyond the boundaries of the four geographical areas covered in this thesis.

impact," which resulted in one publication (Ehren & Visscher, 2006). I continued to use ERIC, where the same combination of keywords resulted in five publications from the same period. As a second example, I searched in ERIC for peer-reviewed journal articles using the keywords "school inspection," which gave a result of 107 publications produced since 1997. As I only wanted to include peer-reviewed journal articles published during the last decade, the list was narrowed down to 70 articles published since 2007. I then checked for additional publications in 2006 in order to complete the search. Finally, I limited the articles to focus on studies of the four geographical areas outlined above.

Section 2.2 offers a brief outline of the research field. The review is divided into four additional subsections (2.3.1-2.3.4), each representing key perspectives in research on SI: a.) governing by inspection – national cases and comparative studies; b.) the impact of school inspection – effects and side effects; c.) school inspection as school improvement, evaluation, and performance; and d.) school inspection – governing through policy enactment. Finally, I identify gaps in the research field in Section 2.4. The 27 studies are systematized in Table 1 (Appendix 1).

2.2 School inspection as a growing field of research

England is by far the most researched national context. Following the replacement of HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectorate) in 1992, Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) was established in the aftermath of the Thatcher period. This key event took place as part of the Education (Schools) Act (Courtney, 2014; Education Act, 1992) which called for a strengthened and reorganized school inspectorate (Perryman, 2006; Ozga, Segerholm & Lawn, 2015). Criticized in both the media and critical research literature for its means and measures, Ofsted has undoubtedly been a key point of reference for later studies of SI in other national contexts.

SI in the U.K. involves only England and Wales since Scotland has developed its own inspectorate. Through the Scottish HMI, from 2011 under the new inspection framework and the current "Education Scotland" regime, SI has taken a different approach than Ofsted, and is based to a large extent on School Self Evaluation (SSE) and developmental modes of governing (Baxter, Grek & Segerholm, 2015; Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga, Segerholm & Lawn, 2015). As pointed out by Maroy (2015), SSE has long been highly promoted by the Scottish inspection services.

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In the German-speaking countries, many studies have viewed inspection from the perspectives of school effectiveness, evaluation, and performance traditions of research (Dedering, 2015; Dedering & Müller, 2011; Gärtner, Wurster & Pant, 2014; Husfeldt, 2011). Dedering (2015) views SI as a tool for developing and supporting schools individually. Gärtner et al.'s (2014) investigation studied how inspection in two federal states led to changes in school quality. Finally, Husfeldt's (2011) inquiry offers a review study of the possible impact of SI, highlighting the need for more longitudinal studies.

Dutch studies have not only looked at the Dutch inspectoral system(s) as such, but have to a large extent studied how school inspection in the Netherlands compares to other state systems of inspection. A much referred to Dutch application is Ehren and Vischer's (2006) theoretical and empirical study of the impact of school inspection in various national contexts.

State inspection in Sweden has in the last decade been closely studied (Hudson, 2011; Lindgren, 2015; Rönnberg, 2012; Rönnberg et al., 2013; Segerholm, 2009). Rönnberg et al. (2013) investigated how inspection serves as a way of governing educational entities through the keen eye of the media. Lindgren's study of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI) showed that the "back stage" of inspection reveals uncertainty amongst inspectors as to how to cope with their mandate (Lindgren, 2015). Other studies on the emergence of the SSI have addressed how the Swedish system has transformed over time through shifting political regimes without limiting its vigor or choice of scope and tools (Rönnberg, 2012).

As mentioned, the Norwegian example is hardly reported on in international, ranked journals, except in a few studies from Helgøy and Homme (2006) and Hatch (2013). These investigations offer highly interesting insights and are referred to in this thesis, but both encompass more policy tools than simply SI. They are therefore omitted due to being too general to be included in this review.

I have supplied a brief overview of the research on school inspection in the four geographical areas outlined above and will now identify and present four key perspectives in the following section (see Table 1, Appendix 1).

2.3 Key perspectives

The literature review aims at identifying key concepts that contribute to the research field (Webster & Watson, 2002). Through the search for, and close reading of, the texts, four main perspectives emerged: a.) governing by school inspection; b.) the impact of school inspection: possible effects and side effects; c.) school inspection as school improvement, performance, and evaluation; and d.) school inspection as policy enactment.

Rather than treating the studies in this review as mere national case studies or as multiple comparative studies of inspectoral regimes, each of the articles were systematized and allocated to one of four groupings of studies according to their approaches. I have labeled each of these studies as a "national case study," "comparative study," or "conceptual study," while acknowledging that several "hybrid" forms of studies exist and include more than one form (Table 1, Appendix 1). Such systematization was done in order to map the research area and to identify possible gaps in the studies on SI.

2.3.1 Governing by inspection: national cases and comparative case studies

This section looks closer at the concept of "governing by inspection" It includes two articles (Grek et al., 2013; Ozga, 2012) and two volumes (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Grek & Lindgren, 2015a). Here, I should mention that these scholars represent a common research foundation based on the "flow" of transnational ideas and data (Grek et al., 2013) in the form of globalization and Europeanization and the European Education Policy Space (EEPS).

The notion of "governing by inspection" (see Section 3.2.8) views inspection as a steering practice that is connected to transforming forms of governing widely based on networks and flows of knowledge and data across Europe (Grek et al., 2013, p. 486). Grek at al. (2013) conceptualize inspection as space for interaction on the global, national, and local levels, where intra-national and national inspection regimes are developed through co-operation and lending/borrowing ideas; for example, through the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) (Grek et al., 2013, p. 488). Nationally, the study looks at school inspection in Sweden, England, and Scotland. Drawing on interviews with "key system actors" on the international level, the analysis observes a movement from regulation to softer mediation in the three countries, implying that they draw unevenly on common SICI policy (see Section 2.4). Interestingly for the NOSI-project, the study shows that the Swedish

Schools Inspectorate attracts attention from new actors such as the Norwegian educational authorities, just as the SSI borrows ideas from its Scottish counterpart (Grek et al., 2013).

In the article by Ozga (2012), the concept of governing inspection through knowledge is exemplified by drawing on the overall idea of EEPS and making comparisons of the cases of England and Scotland (Ozga, 2012, p. 443). As Grek et al.'s study (2009) indicates, policy actors are now seen as brokers of knowledge, lodged between Europe and the national entities, within a web of policy networks (Ozga, 2012, p. 440). Ozga looks at how such a shift in governing practices occurs in education from nationally and institutionally based governing to governing through networks (Ozga, 2012, p. 442). Ozga (2012) concludes that there are differences in how England and Scotland adopt "governing through data" and transnational ideas of inspection; whereas England chooses data-driven approaches to inspection, Scotland relies on SSE as a key tool.

As one of two key volumes included in this review, Lawn and Grek (2012[4]) take a closer look at the concept of "Europeanizing education" (also see Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012). School inspection policy serves in our case as an example of how ideas of education policy travel across Europe (Lawn & Grek, 2012, pp. 135-149). SSE as a travelling policy is highlighted, thus attracting the interest of other inspectorates through SICI that wish to incorporate SSE. The article emphasizes the shift from hierarchical modes of governing through monitoring and reliance on data, to knowledge emerging from networks focusing on development and Europeanization (Lawn & Grek, 2012, p. 148). To sum up this section, I present some of the main findings in an edited volume by Grek and Lindgren (2015a[5]) by offering examples of country cases (England, Scotland, and Sweden) and comparative approaches, as well as by conceptualizing "governing by inspection."

Following the introduction (Grek & Lindgren, 2015b), the first two chapters cover the concepts of "governing at a distance" (Clarke, 2015) and the existence of a neo-liberal agenda in the European inspection policy (Ozga & Segerholm, 2015). Clarke (2015) lays out the agnostic and theoretical approach of "governing," particularly what he portrays as "governing at a distance" through processes and practices. Ozga & Segerholm (2015) focus on the

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[4] This review concerns Chapter 9 of the volume (Lawn & Grek, 2012)
[5] The edited volume by Grek and Lindgren (2015a) is, for the sake of simplification, shown as a single publication in Appendix 1, Table 1, but each chapter is handled separately in Section 2.3.1.

dismantling of the state and the rise of non-governmental actors and agencies engaged in the regulation of schools, for example.

Grek (2015) discusses the work of European inspectors through their interaction at SICI workshops and how inspectorates from the three country cases (England, Scotland, and Sweden) draw on a pool of ideas arising in these forums. Ozga, Segerholm, and Lawn (2015) summarize the history of inspectorates in the three countries as they are viewed as vital elements of their education systems.

Baxter, Grek, and Segerholm (2015) present a key element in this thesis regarding the shifting frameworks of inspection, in their case in England, Scotland, and Sweden, that are undergoing constant change due to shifting criteria. Drawing on Fourcade (2010), SI frameworks are withheld as an "infrastructure of rules." Shifts are explained as tensions between central and decentralized governments while acknowledging that the three countries have moved in different directions due to changing values placed on two key dimensions: "control" and "development" (Baxter et al., 2015, p. 91).

Lawn, Baxter, Grek, and Segerholm (2015) and Grek, Lindgren, and Clarke (2015) look closer at two traits of inspection systems: first, how local authorities undergo shifts through inspection processes, and second, how emotions play a vital role in the personal experiences of inspection among the "auditors" and the "auditees" (Power, 1997). The latter of the two chapters reviewed reports on three different, but equally interesting, emotional registers: Ofsted in England, which is characterized by anxiety and stress, HMIE Scotland, which is seen as a collaborative endeavor, and the Swedish SI which falls somewhere in the middle (Grek et al., 2015, p. 132).

Clarke and Lindgren (2015) discuss the vocabulary of SI by drawing on discourses found in key policy texts. They studied how SI is portrayed publically, which links to the subsequent chapter by Baxter and Rönnberg (2015) focusing on the role of the media (also see Hall, 2016; Rönnberg et al., 2013). Clarke & Lindgren (2015) point out that whereas in Sweden the word "equivalence" is a key term in inspection, the term "improvement" is central to Ofsted's activities. Baxter & Rönnberg (2015) conclude that all three inspectorates use the media to enhance how they are viewed by the public, but that this may arise through manipulatively directed strategies that may result in accusations of partisanship (Baxter & Rönnberg, 2015, p.

168). Finally, Grek & Lindgren (2015c, p. 181) point out that throughout Europe, the political discourse of inspection has evolved through the construction of neo-liberal narratives.

As outlined above, even if they do adapt their inspectoral policies according to national traditions and systems (Steiner-Khamsi, 2010), European countries have more or less drawn on the EEPS and ideas discussed within SICI. In the following section, I will critically review what many scholars have coined the "impact of school inspection," where they aim to identify SI's possible effects and side effects.

2.3.2 The impact of school inspection: possible effects and side effects[6]

A point of departure here is the study by Ehren and Visscher (2006), who are concerned with the possible impact of school inspection (SI), that aims to develop a conceptual theory for such studies. Ehren and Visscher (2006) convey a theory about the ambition of most inspectorate bodies which is understood as intending *"to realize school improvement."* Furthermore, they study the interaction between school leaders and inspectors (Matthews & Sammons[7], 2004, cited in Ehren & Visscher, 2006). First, they claim that responses to Ofsted inspections tend to be more focused and effective when funding is at stake or exposure is higher, and secondly, that unintended responses to inspections are a result of a lack of congruence between the school's goals and the goals of the inspectorate body (Matthews & Sammons, 2004, cited in Ehren & Visscher, 2006). In conclusion, they claim that the impact of SI depends, amongst other variables, on the staff's attitude towards change (Standaert[8], 2000, cited in Ehren & Visscher, 2006).

De Wolf and Janssens' conceptual article (2007) provides an overview of empirical studies on the possible effects and side effects of SI. They distinguish between two types of mechanisms; external evaluation through inspections and accountability mechanisms through the publication of quality assessment and performance indicators (de Wolf & Janssens, 2007). This review section of the thesis will concentrate on some of the side effects reported in their study, namely the "intended strategic behavior," such as "gaming" or "window dressing," and

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[6] Effects are in this thesis not understood in the causal sense, but in their extreme should be considered as the results of covariance between variables. It is not my intent here to discuss direct or indirect effects.

[7] The Ofsted report by Mathews and Sammons (2004) is not included in this review as it does not qualify according to the criteria laid out above (see Section 2.1).

[8] The ministry report by Standaert (2000) is not included in this review as it did not qualify according to the criteria set above (see Section 2.2). The report was later published in 2001 by Acco, ISBN 90-334-4792-4.

the "unintended strategic behavior," meaning a one-sided emphasis on the assessed elements or what may be coined "teaching to inspection" or "tunnel vision." Finally, the third form of unintended side effect is stress, especially that which is experienced by teachers and school leaders during inspection visits, and has also been pointed out by Brimblecombe, Ormston, and Shaw (1995), for example.

Gärtner et al. (2014) investigate the possible effects of school inspection on school improvement.[9] The study applies a control group design, which they argue differs from studies by, for example, de Wolf and Janssens (2007). Using survey data, it investigates the enactment phase of SI in two federal German states. The study concludes that no impact on changes in school quality can be linked to inspection, but may be legitimated through their contributions to accountability (Gärtner et al., 2014, p. 504).

Ehren et al.'s (2015) comparative study of the effects of SI across Europe investigates the inspection systems of six countries or regions: Austria (Styria), the Czech Republic, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Using institutional and governance theory, and based on survey data from more than 2,300 primary and secondary school principals, they analyze the various systems according to how much impact the inspection models have on school improvement. The researchers here argue that based on the analysis, it is reasonable to claim that three of the four types of inspection models studied exert an influence by setting (clear) expectations. At the same time, these models reduce the likelihood that school principals will use the feedback acquired from SI for further improvement. However, they do add that any improvement of educational quality must be based on the view that it is concerned with a change of culture rather than focused on the enactment of the inspection instrument itself.

In a follow-up study by Altrichter and Kemethofer (2015) that adds survey data collected from five Swiss cantons, the effects of SI on improvement are reported on by applying the concept of "accountability pressure." Accountability pressure is defined as pressure on individual schools to act in line with certain standards and to take action in order to improve school quality and effectiveness (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2015, p. 37). They wish to test whether increased pressure is experienced by schools based on the cycle of inspection which generally occurs every four or five years. Findings suggest that different degrees of pressure, exerted through accountability mechanisms, are felt by school principals. Secondly, the study

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[9] Since the study discusses both effects and school improvement, it could have been covered in Section 2.3.2, but I have chosen to place it here instead.

suggests that increased pressure leads to a greater focus on developmental modes in schools; for example, in low-stakes Austrian accountability systems, the pressure experienced is lower than it is in high-stakes settings, such as those in England.

To sum up, the research reviewed in Section 2.3.2 implies that SI may, to some extent, have an impact on schools, but this is not conclusive, such as discussed by Gärtner et al. (2014). Rather than looking at the possible effects, I suggest that it is more fruitful to consider the "window dressing," such as the indirect implications of inspection (de Wolf & Janssens, 2007).

2.3.3 School inspection: improvement, evaluation, and performance

This section has its starting point within the research tradition of school improvement and evaluation, where assessment of performance according to predefined benchmarks of "good schooling" is central (Ball, 1997; 2003). Two of Perryman's qualitative and critical studies of Ofsted inspection look at how emotions play a key role (Perryman, 2006, 2007) by drawing on Foucault's notions of disciplinary power, panoptic performativity, and "the uninterrupted examination" (Bentham, 1843; Foucault, 1987; Lyotard, 1984). The first study investigates how an inner-city comprehensive school reacts to continuous panoptic performativity over time under a regime of special measures, labeled by Ofsted as "failing" (Perryman, 2006, p. 147). A key finding in the study is that the case school's documentation and SSE, such as its action plans and handbooks, increasingly adopted the language of Ofsted (Perryman, 2006, p. 156). The study concludes that the school responded effectively to the inspectorate's monitoring; in other words, it "learned to perform according to norms dictated by the inspection regime" (Perryman, 2006, p. 158).

The second investigation (Perryman, 2007) looks at how teachers in secondary schools in England experience inspection within a culture of performativity and high-stakes accountability. In conclusion, the study shows how teachers experience both the loss of their sense of power and control over their situation, and secondly how they experience frustration, fear, anger, and dissatisfaction as a result of being under constant surveillance (Perryman, 2007).

Ehren and Visscher's (2008) study of the Dutch inspectorate inquires into how school inspection may lead to school improvement based on the characteristics of primary schools (for example, cultural aspects) and the style of feedback given by inspectors. The study is moreover based on a survey, observations, interview data, and policy documents. Responses to the survey[10] were compared with each inspector's style of inspection and each school's capacity for innovation. According to the study, all ten case schools improved after receiving feedback from inspectors following on-site visits and follow-up visits, in the case of underperformance. However, an important general conclusion is drawn by the study in that it is naïve to believe that inspection alone will lead to improvement in schools (Ehren & Visscher, 2008, p. 225).

Four studies on the German inspection systems[11] in this review see inspection through the conceptual lenses of school improvement, development, and evaluation (Dedering, 2015; Dedering & Müller, 2011; Gärtner, 2013; Husfeldt, 2011). In the study by Dedering and Müller (2011), the impact of the inspectoral system in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia was investigated using survey data from the responses of 468 school principals.[12] The study analyzed the possible effects that inspection may have on school improvement and development. As Dedering and Müller point out, there are multiple studies arguing that the (direct) "influence between school inspection and school development is rather marginal" (Dedering & Müller, 2011, p. 308). However, possible progress depends on the relationship between inspectors and the "inspectees," for example, as well as the feedback and inspectors' attitudes towards schools (see Ehren & Visscher, 2008). A main finding was that 84% of the respondents positively viewed SI as a means of initiating further school development. In conclusion, the study suggests that, as a result of inspection, the majority of the schools surveyed were engaged in developmental activities. However, the authors suggest that further longitudinal studies be undertaken in order to reaffirm school improvement through inspection.

Husfeldt's review study of the impact of SI in Europe, especially concerning school development and improvement, furnishes an overview of this line of SI research (Husfeldt, 2011). The study draws on Ehren and Visscher (2006) and Reezigt and Creemers (2005) by

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[10] The survey's response rate was 60% (Ehren & Visscher, 2008).
[11] Each of the 16 German federal states («Bundesländer») has its own educational system, including state supervision through inspection (Dedering & Müller, 2011, p. 303). They do share a basic structure based on a normative framework including quality criteria (Dedering, 2014).
[12] The response rate in this study was 78% (Dedering & Müller, 2011).

seeking to analyze possible "functions of school inspection"[13] ("Wirkungsmodelle"). The article concludes that a.) most case studies do not include longitudinal data, therefore the impact of external evaluation is barely highlighted, and b.) that there is need in further studies to employ heuristic modeling to furnish knowledge on the impact of inspection on the development of schools (Husfeldt, 2011).

Gärtner (2013) comparatively investigated the research field of studies on internal and external forms of evaluation and examined their impact on school development. The article points out that there exists no evidence of proving that inspection has a general effect on school development (Gärtner, 2013, p. 697). Referring to MacBeath (2008), School Self Evaluation (SSE) plays a key role in the evaluation of schools internationally, where they compile systematic information to evaluate their individual capacity (see Lawn & Grek, 2012). The article finally pinpoints some possible side effects of inspection, such as "window dressing" and the strategic usage of internal evaluation (Gärtner, 2013, p. 703).

Finally, Dedering (2015) investigates how schools manage with the results they receive following intervention. Based on a larger study and the theoretical framework outlined by Ehren and Visscher (2006), Dedering's quasi-longitudinal study draws on interview data as well as a survey conducted in one primary and three secondary case schools. The article highlights that the specific situation the school is in has an impact on whether the school in question adopts and uses the feedback from the inspectorate to improve the school's situation (Dedering, 2015, p. 172). The author concludes that the organizational structure of each school's developmental work is essential. In addition, there is an indication of varying degrees of readiness among schools with regard to the expectations placed upon them through intervention.

To sum up, as Ehren and Visscher (2006) and Dedering and Müller (2011) argue, there is little reason to believe that SI in itself leads to improvements or developments in schools; however, more longitudinal studies, such as those carried out by Dedering (2015), reveal that there are indications that this may occur to some extent.

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[13] My translation from the original German expression.

2.3.4 School inspection as policy enactment

In the final section of this review, I include research articles seeing inspection as policy enactment, consider how such monitoring activity is influenced by political contexts, and finally show how it influences governing at a local level.

Ofsted has actively played a vital role in the governing of both school governors and schools at the local level through a move towards "intelligent accountability" by using performance data combined with SSE as a central part of its inspectoral "toolkit" (Ozga, 2009). Drawing on Foucault (1987), for example, Wilkins (2014) conducts case studies examining the changing role of school governors. As highlighted in the article, the governors are themselves prone to control themselves through inspection (Wilkins, 2014), resulting in what Power (1994) called "control of control." Secondly, the study concluded that these changes in focus have resulted in the professionalization of governing bodies and led to regulation through discourses of accountability.

As Baxter (2014) points out, under Ofsted, SI has undergone changes. The study draws on the (then) forthcoming study by Baxter, Grek, and Segerholm (2015) investigating changes in the political agenda and policy framework for Ofsted in 2012. Adopting Clarke's theoretical framing of "performance paradoxes" (Clarke, 2008), the article analyzes English inspection frameworks and inspection reports as part of a case study approach. In conclusion, the study argues that due to shifting frameworks and fuzzy boundaries between regulation and developmental modes of governing, there is an ever-present danger of increasing the likelihood of compromising the system itself (Baxter, 2014, p. 35).

Using survey data and interviews carried out with school principals who had experienced an Ofsted inspection under the 2012 framework, Courtney (2014) critically reanalyzed the features of panoptic performativity in England. The study suggests a movement from panoptic surveillance to "post-panopticism," characterized by total visibility to all, full exposure of the subjects' failure to comply with demands, and ultimately adapting to the discourse of market and performance (Courtney, 2014, p. 7). In conclusion, the author points out that in such a system, power is no longer subtle, but is rather explicitly exercised.

German inspection systems have been investigated by several researchers, such as Sowada and Dedering (2014) and Bitan, Haep, and Steins (2015). Based on their analysis of qualitative interviews with school inspectors, Sowada and Dedering (2014) look especially at

how inspectors carry out their discretionary work. The study shows how inspectors utilize the leeway available to them in their decision-making within a rigid system of normative quality standards (Sowada & Dedering, 2014, p. 131). Secondly, Bitan et al. (2015) studied school inspection from school principals' points of view. In their qualitative study, 50 principals were interviewed and special attention was paid to how the respondents viewed negative and positive feedback following inspection. Most respondents' attitudes were characterized on a scale from neutral to positive; positivity towards inspection was determined based on how feedback was given by the inspectors to schools, and secondly whether the feedback was characterized by providing a supportive learning climate or not (Bitan et al., 2015, p. 436).

Drawing on the concepts of "hollowing out" and "filling in" (see, for example, Pierre & Peters, 2005, cited in Rönnberg, 2011), Rönnberg (2011) studied how the Swedish state has reconfigured its strategy of control through strengthening the state's grip on private and public schools via an increase in inspection while simultaneously stimulating the free flow of neo-liberal market mechanisms. The study implies that, on the one hand, the state opened up free choice and marketization, and, on the other hand, it tightened the reigns through harsher controls (Rönnberg, 2011, pp. 698-699). In a related study, scholars looked at how policy is portrayed in public texts produced by the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SSI) and the National Agency for Education (NAE) in the periods of 2003-2008 and 2008-2010 (Lindgren et al., 2012). The study focused on four dichotomies: equivalence and elite, development and control, soft and hard techniques, and finally, expertise and evidence. The study concluded that during this period, there was a movement away from "soft and friendly approaches, to stepping up state control through assessment and increased inspection" (Lindgren et al., 2012, p. 582). In another article by Rönnberg (2014), these findings were confirmed by investigating political party motives during 2001-2008 and concluding that there was political consensus to increase the amount of control over the education sector, where inspection was seen as key to this process.

Finally, in two other studies on the SSI carried out by Lindgren (2015) and Rönnberg et al. (2013), the latter inquired how local newspapers portray school inspection reports, while the former promotes an opening up of the "black box of Swedish school inspection." Lindgren's study (2015) is based on the case studies of four schools in two municipalities and Goffman's usage of the terms "front stage" and "back stage" (Goffman, 1959, cited in Lindgren, 2015). The article visualizes, through internal and external material (for example, official inspection

reports), how inspectors contrastingly base their judgments depending on if they are in the "back stage" or "front stage" mode of inspection. In conclusion, Lindgren reports that the front stage gains legitimacy from an evidence-based line of reasoning, while back stage inspection is predicated upon adaption, creativity, and professional judgment (Lindgren, 2015, p. 73).

Finally, Rönnberg et al.'s (2013) study of local newspapers aims to show how the media functions in the audit society (Power, 1997). Two findings are highlighted in this review; first, that the study found examples of the intertwining of inspection and media coverage, and secondly, that critical debate in the media on the role of the SI is lacking (Rönnberg et al., 2013, pp. 193-194).

2.4 Identifying gaps in the research field

This literature review has offered an overview of the field of research on SI in four European settings by focusing on empirical single-country case studies, comparative studies, and conceptual studies. As initially discussed, there are overlaps which imply that there are several "hybrid forms" of studies, for example, covering both comparative and conceptual approaches. All 27 studies were finally summarized and synthesized in order to highlight the contributions of each to the field (see Table 1, Appendix 1).

Based on the literature review presented in this chapter, I have identified the relevant gaps in the current research available on SI in the European setting. In the period reviewed (1996-2015), I was unable to find any research that explicitly addresses how processes surrounding school inspection can be analyzed through new-institutional and organizational theory. Thus, I argue that such an approach is necessary in order to understand how school inspectors conceive their role as regulators of the law, how they interact with SI policy, and finally how these actors collaborate both inter- and intra-institutionally. In addition, there are hardly any previous articles during this period addressing the Norwegian example. Chapter 3 will outline the theoretical framework employed in this study.

Finally, there seems to be one main overarching discourse emerging from this literature review regarding the challenge for late-modern societies to balance *compliance control* and *evaluation*, on the one hand, and *development*, on the other. This point will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

3. Theory

The NOSI-project engages with a conceptual apparatus consisting of two interconnected theoretical lenses: governing and new-institutionalism. These are employed in order to conceptualize school inspection (SI) as the ways in which public schools are governed by certain sets of tools. These toolsets adapt to new expectations as well as new policy initiatives from the central state and beyond. Drawing on a new-institutional framework of understanding, I emphasize governing on the macro-level in order to illuminate models of social action on the organizational and meso-level. By using political science and sociological theory within the frame of educational research, I show the how dynamics of governing and school inspection policies lead to shifts at the systems level in organizations.

3.1 Theoretical positioning

Through a range of governing modes and the use of tools, for example, legal statutes and School Self Evaluation (SSE), policy actors, such as school inspectors, aim to shape the actions of individuals and institutions. In many state educational policy contexts, an increased emphasis on performative control and panoptic monitoring is persistent through judgment according to educational standards (Ball, 2003; Perryman, 2007). Such performative approaches to governing are based on "a mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition, and change – based on rewards and sanctions" (Ball, 2003, p. 216). The threat of punitive sanctions resulting from the lack of legal compliance or low scores on quality indicators serves as a relevant example in the case of state school inspection (Bemelmans-Videc, Rist & Vedung, 2007).

The NOSI-project is first premised on the overarching theoretical assumption of systems, or models, of public administration which overlap both within and across a complex web of formal and institutional boundaries (Olsen, 2005; Maroy, 2012). These overlapping systems imply that policy actors are interacting on the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels, such as between hierarchical governmental entities on central and regional institutional levels, or between regional, municipal, and local school levels.

Through interactions across institutions, these actors enact state policy, thus formally or informally constructing the social reality in which they are a part (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Braun, Maguire & Ball, 2010; Weick, 1979). As argued in previous studies of institutional

reform, inter-organizational relationships are taking on new forms (Pierre & Peters, 2005). In the Scandinavian welfare state, such reforms have had to take into account a strong degree of local autonomy and self-government, implying that there is a dialogue between public officials on different hierarchical levels (Pierre & Peters, 2005).

The NOSI-project secondly assumes viewing systems in transition, seen through SI policy and practice, which over time adjust to shifting national and supranational expectations, thereby resulting in new mixtures of policy tools. In such mixtures, inspection of schools and school authorities rely increasingly on combinations of tools, including School Self Evaluation (SSE) and the use of fixed templates, as well as traditional, regulative tools such as legal statutes (Ozga, 2009).

Nevertheless, through such transformation, for the actors involved SI implies a challenging balance between control and support that is not solely regulated through legislation itself. This is especially persistent when "auditors" have to take into account new policy initiatives that are more performative and assessment-focused than those that were previously used. Such a mixture implies new modes of governing which contribute to the forming and reforming of inspection policy, including both "soft" and "hard" forms of governing (Hudson, 2011; Skedsmo, 2009).

In the following theoretical grounding of this thesis, there, are as, mentioned two main lenses used: 1) *governing* and 2) *new-institutionalism*. I first illuminate the main research problem through (traditional) institutional theories with a focus on models and systems, as well as modes of coordination (governance, governing). Then, I take on a more organizational point of departure, drawing on new-institutional theory (institutionalization, organizational processes). Section 3.2 will give an overview of the concept of *bureaucracy*, drawing on Weber and his ideas of rationality (Weber, 1968, 1971, 1978), Olsen's redefinition of bureaucracy (2005), and Maroy's notion that society is moving towards a post-bureaucratic state (Maroy, 2012). Second, the *"Evaluative State"* will be highlighted (Neave, 1988). Then, how *policy tools* regulate society is outlined by drawing on Hood (1983, 2007). The fourth step is to attempt to define the concept of *governing* itself (Kooiman, 1993).

The second key lens, *new-institutionalism* (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991), will draw on the theoretical-analytical ideas of *institutions, institutionalization* and *constructivism*, where Scott's (2014) conceptual ideas on organizations and institutions will serve as a major point of

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reference. New-institutionalism builds on the idea of combining theories and concepts, thus providing for traditional sociological explanations as well as late-modern orientations where knowledge contributes to constructing the world which one studies (Hagen & Gudmundsen, 2011). Thus, in this project I examine school inspection in the light of different models and theories by unpacking the dynamics of forming and reforming policy across contexts.

3.2 Governing

3.2.1 Bureaucracy in government

The following theoretical discussion will be based on models of public administration and modes of governing, mainly provided by the work of Weber (1968, 1971, 1978), Olsen (2005), and Maroy (2012), and seen from a sociological and political science point of view.

Rather than describing separate, closed, and homogenous systems, this thesis understands governing within a heterogeneous public sector where policy actors enact as well as interact with another within bureaucratic institutional contexts, thus developing the organizational bricolage of which they form a part (Draelants & Maroy, 2007). For this reason, such processes cannot be isolated through formal rationality based on legitimized rules (Weber, 1968, 1971). As Olsen (2005) argues; "[…] there was a potential tension between elected officials, bureaucrats and citizens and the causal chain from a command to actual compliance could be long and uncertain" (Olsen, 2005, p. 6). Thus, decision-making in institutions is in this thesis seen through both formal rationality as well as value-based action.

3.2.2 Bureaucracy and rationality

In institutional-organizational research, the Weberian bureaucratic state in general, and public servants, such as school inspectors, more specifically, base their decisions upon the formal-rational enactment of legal statutes and regulations (Brunsson & Olsen, 1998; Kjær, 2004; Olsen, 2005; Weber, 1968). However, such an interpretation is in itself inadequate to fully understand the work of officials. German social scientist and historian Max Weber (1864-1929) did not convey a thought of linear decision-making based on formal legislation alone, but also derived it from certain norms and values within public institutions.

Weber addressed human behavior and social action by seeing rationality as a way of interpreting, for example, the driving forces of purposive decision-making (Weber, 1968). In an ideal, institutional, and Weberian world (in a theoretical sense), public officials will base their decisions upon the logic of formal rationality. At first glance, it may seem that Weber, in describing this bureaucracy, is a pure, formal rationalist who does not adhere to theories of actors constructing the worlds in which they exist, such as in the case of Berger and Luckmann (1967). His ideas of public officials as formal, rational actors must, however, be perceived as ideal typical models established within a particular historical and political context: 19th-century Europe during a time of political upheaval. Thus, Weber's standpoint is that humans act upon meaningful motives, norms, and orientations based upon their own frames of reference (Tucker, 1965).

One of Weber's main concerns in his theory of social action was to combine "interpretive understanding" *(Verstehen*[14]) with the more "causal explanation of the course/effects of human action" (Parsons, 1965). Secondly, and more central to this thesis, Weber acknowledged the existence of multiple forms of rationality, including *Zweckrationalität*, which mostly concerns goal-instrumental action, and *Wertrationalität*, which is axiological and value-belief oriented, along with other forms of rationality focusing mostly on the essential upholding of social and institutional structures (Kalberg, 1980; Scott 2014; Weber, 1968, pp. 24-26).[15]

Viewing decision-making as merely rational and instrumental is thus hardly sufficient to fully understand how, for example, SI processes take place, since such processes may also be interpreted as value-guided through social interaction and policy enactment. Through combining micro- and macro-perspectives, I rather balance the concept of ideal typical institutional models as being rule-governed with the value-oriented rationality of "homo sociologicus" (Draelants & Maroy, 2007). This is linked to how institutional actors individually and collectively perceive, define, and construct the social systems in which they exist.

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[14] See Chapter 4 for further discussion on Weber's concept of "Verstehen."

[15] It is possible to distinguish between the three separate meanings that Weber gives to rationality; *rationalism, rationalization* and *rationality* (Swindler, 1973). Weber himself was not always clear upon the distinction in his writings (Kalberg, 1980). This thesis examines the third meaning: *rationality*.

3.2.3 Redefining bureaucracy

Public institutions and civil servants play a key role in enacting state policy initiatives (Weick, 1979). This entails seeing institutions not as stagnant entities that are merely prone to rational choice and national traditions, but also as being exposed to new policy influences and processes deriving from both the transnational and national levels. An example here is the growth of multifaceted neo-liberal reforms in government starting in the 1980s, coined New Public Management (NPM), which spread globally (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Olsen (2005) argues that bureaucracy is not the only way to organize public administration, but it represents part of "a repertoire of overlapping, supplementary, and competing forms coexisting in contemporary societies, but so are market-organization and network-organization" (Olsen, 2005, p. 26). In another application, Kjær (2004) also discusses a policy context in which bureaucratic hierarchies, neo-liberal markets, and network-based cooperation coexist.

This thesis supports a similar stance, that we are currently moving towards a post-Weberian society in which a bricolage of overlapping modes of governing and governing regimes have clear influences upon how decision-making among public officials on the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels occurs (Draelants & Maroy, 2007; Maroy, 2012; Olsen, 2005).

3.2.4 Moving towards the post-bureaucratic state?

Several scholars have addressed the movement towards a post-bureaucratic or neo-Weberian state (Maroy; 2012; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). This thesis observes a similarity in the two approaches deriving from the idea that even if late-modern society is still influenced by the formal-rational and bureaucratic-professional ideals of Weber, the mixture of governing modes varies between states (Hall & Sivesind, 2015; Maroy, 2012). Maroy (2012) argues that we are currently living in a society that is moving towards the post-bureaucratic stage. One of the major traits of this development is the increase in transnational policy convergences, for example, where decentralization and a greater focus on external intervention is a trend, even though other scholars hold that national traditions tend to prevail (Maroy, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012).

The final major point made by Maroy (2012) is with regard to the emergence of two transnational models of governing in post-bureaucratic societies that is based on the exchange

of policy tools: "the quasi-market" and "the Evaluative State" (Neave, 1988). In the quasi-market, free choice in, for example, education is central, as are networks of policy actors and professionals that increase their influence over society.

Finally, representing a different approach to understanding late-modern society is the idea of "the neo-Weberian state" (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) discuss several models of interpreting the changes in how states deal with new expectations. In sum, the model of the neo-Weberian state bases its theoretical rationale on two core claims; the modernization of the traditional state apparatus through professionalization and efficiency, and secondly, the authority exercised through a hierarchy of objective civil servants (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). This stance is in contrast to more network-based ways of governing, thus it is separate from the movement towards the post-Weberian state. Hence, to summarize, this thesis takes on the ideal typical models discussed by Maroy (2012) and Olsen (2005) by supporting the idea that there are mixtures of governing modes wherein the configurations adjust according to national traditions and supranational influences.

3.2.5 "The Evaluative State"

Neave (1988, 1998) discusses the rise of the "Evaluative State" in higher education whereby input-control through the law and compliance with national policy regulations is replaced with output-control, while institutional freedom is simultaneously granted (Neave, 1988). The evaluative approach that had emerged in the 1980s had previously been characterized by instrumental control through performance indicators and quality standards (Neave, 1998).

In recent decades there has been a movement towards New Public Management (NPM)-inspired strategies. Deriving from the private sector, NPM was adopted to suit the public sector by embracing neo-liberal ideals and benchmarks, such as through quality assessment and evaluation (QAE) standards (Helgøy & Homme, 2016; Hood, 1991; Møller, 2016b; Ozga & Segerholm, 2015; Skedsmo, 2009). In these regimes, ideas such as the privatization of public services have been widely promoted, leading to a new language that is now used in the educational sector supporting, for example, free schools and the strengthening of policy toolsets such as inspection. However, such a system has implied the deregulation of the educational market, which is to some extent detached from direct state control, thus resulting in the "hollowing out of the state" (Ozga & Segerholm, 2015; Rhodes, 1994).

Since the 1980s, the process of "hollowing out" the state has occurred; consequently, this has led to the "return of the state" through "filling in" the gaps since the state had seemingly lost full control of its previous status as the supreme, governmental power (Hudson, 2010; Rhodes, 1994, 1996; Rönnberg, 2011, 2012). Based on studies of the public sector in the U.K., Rhodes (1994) observed a movement characterized by the privatization of the public sector, Europeanization, and the growth of the EU's role in the British government, along with an increase in governing using NPM ideals. These changes, Rhodes argues, have led to a fragmentation of public services, where authorities on the local level have paired up with private providers and consultants (Gunter, Hall & Mills, 2014; Rhodes, 1994). However, this thesis argues that states in Norway and Sweden have now reinstated their status through applying new mixtures of policy tools, thus tightening their grip on the educational sector (Hudson, 2007, 2010; Rönnberg, 2011, 2012).

Through the return of the state, its evaluative role has thus been strengthened with implications for modes of governing by administering a range of policy tools. Even if the mixtures of the toolboxes have been renewed, states must still adapt to transnational and national expectations (Hood, 1983; Hudson, 2007; Rönnberg, 2011). These tools, in this thesis administered through the inspectoral process, will be further discussed in the following section.

3.2.6 Policy tools

As shown in Chapter 2, scholars have observed shifts in the frameworks and criteria in three European countries (Baxter et al., 2015). To recap one of the main concepts in this thesis, a certain mixture of tools is applied in order to collect information, assess the entity under scrutiny, and finally report on the inspection findings. Eventually, these entities have then to comply with the demands put forth in the inspection reports in order to avoid legal, financial, or punitive action. The mixture of tools applied through state school inspection in each country will, however, vary even if it they draw on common ideas through processes of Europeanization (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga et al., 2011a; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010).

This thesis draws on Hood's studies of government[16] where he discusses how government controls society through the use of various tools taken from the "toolshed" (Hood, 1983). Hood views government as a toolkit shaping the lives of its citizens through "applying a set of

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[16] Even if Hood (1983) refers to institutional bodies as government, he sees institutional processes as governing.

administrative tools, to suit a variety of purposes" (Hood, 1983, p. 2). He further describes what can be distinguished between "detectors" used to collect information and "effectors" that government uses in order to influence society (Hood, 1983). Finally, one of the many tools used by government to acquire information on a given entity is inspection (or interrogation), where individuals or an institution (the many) are required through the law (or forced) to submit information to the enforcer (the few) (Hood, 1983; Foucault, 1987).

Helgøy and Homme's comparative study of policy tools in Norway, Sweden, and England serves as a theoretical and empirical point of reference in Norwegian educational policy studies (Helgøy & Homme, 2006). They conclude that in Norway there has been some reluctance to adopting a market-based steering of education, relying more on traditional values, due to inconsistency in the choice of tools. By contrast, in the Swedish context, the choice of policy tools has been more in line with market-oriented approaches, such as through liberal, free school choice incentives (Helgøy & Homme, 2006).

Drawing on Hood's concept of tools (1983), in the NOSI-project I study how state educational authorities attempt to govern the educational sector through applying a certain mixture of tools aiming at both control and support, through, for example, the use of surveillance, on-site inspection, and SSE. In the next section, this thesis will outline *governing* in relation to governance and government, before moving on to mapping the concept of institutionalism which is related to processes in organizations aimed specifically at the enactment of policy, and seen through processes of institutionalization (Scott, 2014; Weick, 1979; Zucker, 1977).

3.2.7 Governing

Multi-level systems concerning the central state, regional, and local educational authorities, as well as actors in individual schools, are of key importance in this study. As a theoretical cornerstone, governing will be discussed in relation to concepts which describe how state authorities attempt to steer,[17] either directly or indirectly, institutions, actors, and activities through the use of policy tools (Hood, 1983; Kooiman, 1993). Kooiman's distinctions between *governing* and *governance* serve as a starting point in this section (Kooiman, 1993). Governance refers to "discursive patterns from the governing activities of these actors"

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[17] The term "governing" is often referred to as "steering" in the literature (see, for example, Kooiman, 1993). These terms will be used interchangeably in this thesis, as in Article III.

(Kooiman, 1993, p. 2). Moreover, governing is defined as activities purposively initiated by government actors on a central, regional, or local level in an attempt to "guide, steer, control, or manage societies" (Kooiman, 1993, p. 2). *Governing* is in this thesis defined as *how an active state aims to (directly or indirectly) hierarchically steer processes at subordinate levels in institutions, such as through inspection*. Thus, governing, or active steering, is central to our understanding of how the state, through its use of a mixture of policy tools, is geared towards influencing institutions and its actors in a certain direction (Hood, 1983).

A broad institutional definition refers to governance as "the setting of rules, the application of rules, and the enforcement of rules" (Kjær, 2004, p. 10). Kjær, however, lands on a definition of governance as "referring to the setting and management of political rules of the game, a search of control, steering and accountability" (Kjær, 2004, p. 11).

In two other interesting applications of the concept of governing, "governing by feedback" is discussed by drawing on the ideas of Foucault (Foucault, 1987; Simons, 2014a, 2014b). By using feedback as a way of governing, it is possible for the state to "adjust future conduct through past performance" (Simons, 2014a, p. 10).

Finally, Ozga, Segerholm, and Simola (2011c) look at how data, such as test scores, are used by government to surveille the performance of European schools through "the governance turn." The concept of "governing by numbers" implies a state which increasingly uses knowledge and data to compare and govern schools according to national and international benchmarks (Ozga, 2009; Simola et al., 2011). Ball (2015) has even suggested that this reflects a tyrannical state obsessed with numbers and tightening its grip on its subordinates through control.

In Section 3.3, I will present the second main theoretical lens used in the overall framework: new-institutionalism (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2014; Zucker, 1977). This will then be linked to the discussion on governing outlined above, furnishing an overall conceptual framework which will be further discussed in Chapter 6. As initially mentioned in this chapter, I draw on a new-institutional framework in which I emphasize governing on the macro-level in order to illuminate models of social action on the organizational and meso-level.

3.3 New-institutionalism

The concepts of institutions and institutionalized organizations are central in the NOSI-project's aim to discuss how knowledge is produced among policy actors within certain fixed, but also changing, organizational frameworks. This section investigates how actors within institutions individually and collectively contribute to organizing their everyday work within the overarching concept of institutional pillars as conveyed by Scott (2014). Through such processes, organizations become institutionalized (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). These and other concepts will be presented by adding the theoretical perspectives of Weick (1979, 2001, 2009 a, b) and Zucker (1977, 1987), for example, with the former focusing on enactment in organizations and the latter on institutionalization[18]. First, the concept of social-constructivism will be outlined by drawing on the perspectives of Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Czarniawska (2008).

As a point of departure, Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue in "The Social Construction of Reality," that social interaction enables social reality, thus leading to institutionalization in organizations (see also Scott, 2014). Czarniawska (2008) stresses that through a constructivist lens, one should focus on collective, not individual, processes. Taking on a performative approach to understanding organizations (as opposed to ostensive), such that which is proposed by Czarniawska (2008), in combination with institutionalism, it appears that actors are constantly constructing "an organization through their actions and their interpretations of what they themselves and others are doing" (Czarniawska, 2008, p. 7). Finally, Esmark, Laustsen, and Andersen (2005) define constructivism as seeing reality simply as a socially constructed phenomenon through a range of theoretical concepts.

Institutions are difficult to define and their definitions depend on the theoretical, epistemological, and ontological points of departure. Weber (1968) did not explicitly discuss the idea of an institution, however, he showed an interest in how cultural rules defined social structures as well as governed social action (Scott, 2014, pp. 14-15). His key ideas of rationality, already covered in this chapter, are central to our understanding of the behavior of actors within institutions.

In order to close in on a possible definition of what characterizes an institution, Jepperson (1991) offers the following explanation: "Institution represents a social order or pattern that

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[18] Weick's two other key elements, organizing and sense-making, will not be covered in this thesis.

has attained a certain state or property; institutionalization denotes the process of such attainment" (Jepperson, 1991, p. 145, cited in Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Scott (2014) views institutions as comprising "regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements, that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott, 2014, p. 56). Scott's (2014) definition of institutions guides the overall theoretical framework of the NOSI-project.

Early conceptions of the daily work of bureaucrats (Weber, 1968) were modified by early institutionalists such as Parsons (1951, 1965) and Selznick (1957). Berger and Luckmann (1967), who argue that knowledge is a human construction through interaction, stress the importance of production of shared belief systems, as opposed to Parsons (1951) who, in his later theoretical work in the 1950s, focused more on formal(-ized) rules and norms. New-institutionalists such as DiMaggio and Powell and (1983) and Meyer and Rowan (1977) viewed decision-making as collective actions made within institutional and organizational frameworks.

In "Institutions and organizations – ideas, interests, and identities," Scott (2014) presents three institutional pillars: the regulative, the normative, and the cultural-cognitive. Building on his own previous conceptual work (Scott, 1987a), Scott's framework (2014) contributes to our understanding of how institutions undergo change and how institutional actors contribute to these evolving processes.

Through the regulative pillar, institutions regulate, thus attempting through for example formalized rules and regulations to "influence future behavior" through coerciveness and sanctions (Scott, 2014, p. 59). From a governing perspective, this would be seen as "governing the future, by assessing past performance" (Simons, 2014b). Secondly, through the normative pillar, individual or collective values and norms, which are either formally or informally constructed, may in a theoretical sense define how things in organizations can or should be done (Scott, 2014). Finally, the cultural-cognitive pillar illuminates how "shared conceptions constitute the nature of social reality and create the frames through which meaning is made" (Scott, 2014, p. 67). This threefold theoretical framework adds to the understanding of how institutionalized organizations, such as County Governors' Offices, undergo change and adapt to new expectations.

A new-institutional point of departure in this thesis entails understanding how policy actors, for example in the enactment of state school inspection policy, socially interact to resolve common issues. This will be discussed through examples of theoretical work by institutionalists such as Boxenbaum and Pedersen (2009). Within the Scandinavian institutional tradition of research, a large part of the work focuses on contemplating processes of social construction (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003). The theoretical framework of this thesis and its findings should thus be interpreted through the concepts of loose coupling and institutionalization (Boxenbaum & Pedersen, 2009; Brunsson & Olsen, 1993; Weick, 1976).

Drawing on the traditions of Scandinavian institutionalism through Weick (1976) and Boxenbaum and Pedersen (2009), institutions are in this thesis viewed as "loosely coupled." Generally speaking, loose coupling looks at the extent to which institutional actors have the capacity to couple or decouple organizational characteristics, "either unintentionally or as they feel fit in a particular situation" (Weick, 2001, cited in Boxenbaum & Pedersen, 2009, p. 189). The work of Weick (1976; 1979, 2001, 2005a, b) is central to our understanding of how loose coupling takes place in organizations.

Moreover, as Scott (2014) points out, Meyer and Rowan (1977) state that even if institutions formally respond to institutional pressure by the incorporation of formal structures and rules, actors' informal behaviors are decoupled from these boundaries (Scott, 2014). Meyer and Rowan express it in this manner; "institutional rules may have effects on organizational structures," but they add that "a sharp distinction should be made between the formal structure of an organization, and its actual day-to-day activities" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 341). Finally, actors relate to prescribed formalized rules, but are prone to informally utilize the organizational leeway which lies within these boundaries.

Another discussion that is central to institutionalism is the question of the processes of diffusion and convergence (see Chapters 1 and 6 as well). In this regard, DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) focus was on three contrasting dimensions of diffusion in institutions, which they labeled "isomorphism": coercive, normative, and mimetic (Scott, 2014). Such processes may be viewed as changes related to institutional diffusion as opposed to convergence (Bleiklie, 2001; Scott, 2014). This is linked to the question of either maintaining or diffusing the existing institutions to which they are attached.

A more fruitful approach to explain how these institutions may evolve is to view change as convergence, meaning change that reinforces already-existing patterns in the organization (Scott, 2014, p. 158). Following this line of argument, such reinforcement might be a case of what Selznick (1957, cited in Scott, 2014, p. 146) calls "thick institutionalization" that is characterized by intensifying perceptions of purposiveness and the commitment of the actors within to unifying objectives, in this case school inspectors. Moreover, Selznick (1957) sees institutionalization as "something that happens to an organization over time" (Selznick, 1957, cited in Scott, 2014, p. 24).

Through organizational processes over time, individuals enact policies comprising the regulative elements of institutions (Scott, 2014). Such enactment, as Czarniawska points out, places more focus on the processes than institutional structures, and on the process of organizing as opposed to the organizations in and of themselves (Czarniawska, 2008). Weick's concept of enactment implies actors taking part "in the process of making ideas, structures, and visions real by acting upon them and the outcome of these processes; (resulting in) an enacted environment" (Czarniawska, 2005, p. 271; Weick, 1976, 1979, 2008b).

This thesis examines not only processes of enactment on the micro-level, but in the intersection between organizations at the meso-level. In addition, these "operants" actively take part in the organizations in which they operate: "the typical referent in most discussions of enactment tends to be small; the dyad, the group, the double interact, the conversation etc." (Weick, 2009a, p. 199). Weick's work has helped open up the concept of institutions, wherein the actor takes action through acts of, for example, selection and adjustments over time; and through this, social behaviors at the systems level can be understood (Jennings & Greenwood, 2003, p. 195).

The work of Zucker (1977, 1987) might solve the challenge brought forth above by paying specific attention to the processes of institutionalization (Scott, 1987b). Zucker (1977) held that institutionalization is "the process by which individual actors transmit what is socially defined as real and, at the same time, the meaning of an act can be defined as a more or less taken-for-granted part of social reality" (p. 728, cited in Scott, 1987b). Finally, Zucker identifies the three defining principles of institutionalized organizations: a) institutional elements emerge from small groups; b) processes and formalized structures in organizations are both highly institutionalized and a source of new institutionalization; and c) processes of

institutionalization increase stability through the creation of new routines (Zucker, 1987, p. 447).

3.4 Pulling it all together

Until now, the empirical world of Norwegian school inspection (SI) was relatively unexplored. Therefore, the NOSI-project opens up this "black box" through its studies of inspection policy and inspectoral practice as they are conceptualized by education policy studies focusing on processes of governing, by drawing on new-institutional theories of how key actors enact these initiatives through the dynamics of forming and reforming SI policy (Latour, 1987; Lindgren, 2015; Maroy, 2012; Olsen, 2005; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). This is achieved by exploring the field both through the use of theoretical lenses and the eyes of the policy actors involved. In order to pursue the overall research problem and answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1, I have thus employed a multilevel, theoretical approach to governing within and across institutions, by drawing on two main prisms: the literature on governing (macro-level) and new-institutionalist theory (meso-level). Positioned within an international research context, and seeing public administration as multifaceted and complex, the study draws on a pragmatic-epistemological approach to understanding how actors act upon state SI policy both inter- and intra-institutionally (Hagen & Gudmundsen, 2011).

In this chapter, I argue that I "pull it all together" by viewing new-institutionalism as intersecting control-based governing through legal compliance and top-down, performative incentives on the one side, and more supportive approaches through organizations and networks of policy actors on the other, from a bottom-up perspective. The actors on the institutional level have to constantly define and redefine policy through enacting state initiatives and employing new sets of policy tools within strict protocols on the one side, and exerting their professional leeway on the other. As policy providers, policy actors are therefore involved in creating important premises for how models and systems are formed and reformed on a local and national basis. These challenges are often resolved through their discretion and translation of the demands outlined in legal statutes and regulations, which are further addressed in the LEX-EL project (see Appendix 10).

4. Methodology and data

In order to get closer to understanding state school inspection, a range of several research methods were combined in the NOSI-project. Taking a multiple-methods approach to the phenomenon in question, I illuminate different key aspects of inspection using the data that I collected and selected which is centered on three institutional fields: the central/state level (policy documents and legal statutes), the regional/county level (interviews at County Governors' Offices), and the local/school level (observation of inspectors, school principals, and teachers).

4.1 Research design

Designing a research project is challenging since the process is not linear, but is constantly evolving. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) state; "research design should be a reflective process operation through every stage of the project" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, cited in Maxwell, 1996, p. 2).

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the NOSI-project is situated within the larger LEX-EL project[19] and has benefited from participating in project meetings, collaborative discussions, and being part of the research environment. At the same time, and significantly enough, the NOSI-project is distinctive in its conceptual and methodological approach, as well as in its selection of data and research methods. The NOSI-project was conducted through the critical analysis of three separate sets of data which were respectively disseminated and reported on through three research papers published in high-ranking journals (Articles I, II, and III).

The dataset consists of 23 legal statutes and policy documents, interviews with nine key policy actors, and on-site field observations of 13 meetings accompanied by policy documents (see Table 4.1). These three forms of data and how there are employed will be explained further in Sections 4.4-4-6. In the NOSI-project, collection and analysis of the first and latter sets of data were done separately from the LEX-EL study in order to extract data specifically concerning state school inspection. In addition to these 23 documents, changes made to

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[19] LEX-EL (Legal Standards and Professional Judgment in Educational Leadership). The project is funded by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and is designed to disentangle the complexity of legal standards and school leaders' professional judgment. See Appendix 10 for an overview of the LEX-EL project.

Norwegian school inspection handbooks since 2008 are summarized in Table 2 (Appendix 2) and used to review existing frameworks from a retrospective viewpoint.

In Table 4.1 below, the three articles included in the thesis are summarized, presenting their titles, research questions, focal points, data, and main findings.[20]

Table 4.1 Overview of articles, research questions, data, and main findings

Articles	Research questions	Focus and data	Main findings
I. State school inspection in Norway and Sweden (2002-2012): A reconfiguration of governing modes?	RQ1 How can the current school inspection policy in Norway be described in view of the parallel changes made in Sweden? RQ2 How do the inspection policies of these countries combine different modes of governing?	Comparative analysis of 23 legal statutes and policy documents in Norway and Sweden (2002-2012). *Policy documents*	Different governing modes indirectly define how school inspection is carried out in Norway and Sweden. In Norway, governing has focused on legal and pragmatic approaches to inspection, while Sweden has emphasized professional and expert-defined modes in addition to regulation.
II. Examining school inspectors and education directors within the organisation of school inspection policy: Perceptions and views	RQ1 How is the role of the County Governors' Offices (CGOs), as it is perceived by school inspectors and education directors, changing due to new organizational processes initiated by the new framework for school inspection policy (2014-2017)? RQ2 How do the school inspectors and their leaders contribute to the processes of shaping new expectations towards future inspection practice, as a parameter alongside individual and collective beliefs, values, and norms?	Case studies of three CGOs, examining the perceptions and expectations of three educational directors and six school inspectors. *Interviews*	The CGOs are characterized by informal meeting places and deliberation between actors, as well as formal institutional structures and procedures. There are clear expectations both internally as well as externally, and trust is an important trait of the relationships between school inspectors and education directors. There is profound change in how the CGOs collaborate externally. The role of the inspectors is changing from a focus on compliance to intervention, support, and QAE.
III. "Governing by templates" through new modes of school inspection in Norway	RQ1 How does inspection, through the use of templates, steer the formative assessment routines of compulsory schools?	Single case study in Norway based on observation data of 13 meetings, observing piloting and enactment of new inspection handbook. *Observation and policy documents*	A shift was observed in the governing tools from the use of legal compliance to an increased use of School Self Evaluation (SSE) in order to obtain information. Standardized templates steer to a great extent how school inspection is carried out. Inspection of schools is more targeted at controlling the formative assessment routines of schools.

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[20] See Chapter 5 for summaries of each of the three articles reported in this thesis.

There is a need to briefly outline how the NOSI-project relates to the larger LEX-EL study. Development of the analytical-theoretical model and the analysis of the policy documents were done in collaboration with my supervisor, and the analysis was thereafter reported in Article I. Secondly, the interview data was collected collaboratively by the LEX-EL team over a period of one year (2013-2014), in three different counties. In all, the LEX-EL project group conducted interviews with more than 50 informants. Out of the total, six out of the nine interviews used in the NOSI-project, were conducted by me and two other researchers, and three others were conducted by additional researchers in the LEX-EL team. Interviews were completed over one year, from 2013 to 2014. Thus, I was given access to a wider range of interview material. From the total interview material, I selected the interviews with the nine officers and directors at the CGO level who were responsible for carrying out the inspection of the schools in their respective three counties. These were selected because they were specifically concerned with inspection, whereas the interviews at the municipal level were more general and extended beyond my point of focus. Finally, observations and analysis of 13 meetings in three separate school/municipalities were carried out by me alone.

The initial strategy in the NOSI-project was to conduct a comparative study of school inspection policies and practices in Norway and Sweden. Alongside the work on the comparative policy analysis phase of the study and the processes leading up to the Norwegian interview study on CGO officials, letters of intention were e-mailed to school principals at six upper-secondary schools in two major Swedish cities. However, for unknown reasons, none of the potential informants responded to the initiative, thus the study's next step had to be reconsidered. In order to gather additional data, this highlighted the need to formulate a new approach to the study in the form of an observation of Norwegian school inspectors in the field.

To summarize, the NOSI-project was first based on a theoretical-conceptual and comparative analysis of legal statutes as well as policy documents, such as White Papers, inspection guidelines and Supreme Audit reports in Norway and Sweden. Secondly, through interviews with CGO inspectors and directors in Norway, I examined how these policy actors perceive school inspections as a means of controlling and supporting schools. Third, based on first-hand data from observation and shadowing school inspectors in the field as well as case-specific inspection reports, I explored the current transformation of the new inspection regime

in Norway in a case study of one of the three CGOs in the second article. The outputs of the NOSI-project were finally disseminated in three research articles (Articles I, II, and III).

Subsequently, this chapter presents an overview of the NOSI-project by specifically outlining the methodological aspects and choices employed, as well as by discussing the question of credibility. I finally discuss the ethical aspects of conducting qualitative research. Sections 4.4-4.6 outline the three qualitative sub-studies in the NOSI-project, based on an analysis of policy documents, interview data, and observation data. First, however, I will elaborate on how institutional texts may be understood as well as interpreted.

4.2 Understanding institutional texts

The NOSI-project is characterized as policy scholarship seeking to contribute to critical policy studies by using governing literature and new-institutional theory to understand and explain how policy is formed and enacted by key actors, in this case as it applies to state school inspection. To understand school inspection on multiple levels of government in the two countries, I first position the project methodologically using the work of Weber (1968, 1922/1978). In his major volume, *Economy and Society* (1922/1978), Weber clearly distinguished between *explaining* social action (*"zu erklären"*) and *understanding* it (*"zu verstehen"*) (Hollis, 1994, p. 147). In addition, I draw upon new-institutional theory in order to facilitate an interpretive orientation of the interview data. Understanding how actors, such as Norwegian school inspectors in the field, perceived their role as enactors of state policy was of importance to the overall study and was only considered feasible through a qualitative approach drawing on an analysis of the written data, interview data, and field observations.

Specifically, institutional texts include inspection reports that are based on an interpretation of the demands set forth in laws and regulations (Smith, 2006). As an example of the empirical observation data analyzed in the NOSI-project, a body of knowledge emerges through hierarchical and horizontal interactions between key actors, such as school inspectors and a school principal, wherein a preliminary inspection report is presented. My task was to unravel how these reports were conveyed by the actors under observation, and understand how these actors utilize them in their interactions and production of knowledge.

Finally, it is a crucial part of this thesis to interpret and thus understand the data and institutional texts at hand, represented through close analysis of policy documents, interview

data, and observation data. I draw on an interpretive approach to understanding policy texts, which has gained interest in recent literature on policy studies in social science research (Béland & Cox, 2011). More specifically, to recapitulate, understanding how state school inspection policies and legal statutes are expressed, how inspectoral practice as governing tools are perceived by key policy actors, and how these actors also shape policy by their projections and expectations, has been an overarching goal throughout the NOSI-project.

4.3 Interpreting institutional texts

In the NOSI-project, a wide range of policy documents and legal statutes were closely read, interpreted, and analyzed in collaboration with my co-author and supervisor (see Appendix 8). These documents were accessed mainly through searching official websites on the central governmental level, and were critically read in order to understand how state school inspection is conveyed in Norway and Sweden. A theoretical-conceptual model was developed and documents were compared across the two countries to find similarities and differences that were analyzed using the model. How these texts were analyzed is further outlined in Section 4.4 and exemplified in Article I.

Through empirical studies, patterns of data arising in between structures and actors may be viewed in the context in which they exist, such as in an institutional sense. From a researcher's point of view, the interpretation of these institutional texts (Smith, 2006) is central in internal and external organizational processes. Such texts may also be legal statutes or regulations, upon which public servants base their decisions either from a Weberian, instrumental point of view (*Zweckrationalität*), or from an axiological, value-laden stance *(Wertrationalität)* based more upon an interpretive understanding of social interaction. Moreover, these texts not only form the institutional boundaries of the spaces in which they operate, but also represent the foreground of the contextual entity which may be closely examined by the qualitative researcher.

Social-constructivism sees "social reality as a human construction, which is created through social interaction" over time, leading to institutionalization (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Scott, 1987a, p. 114). Moreover, from a constructivist viewpoint, institutions are understood as socially constructed entities in which individuals act, thus collectively shaping the micro-societies in which they carry out their everyday tasks (Braun et al., 2010; Weick, 1979; Scott, 2014). Through applying a social-constructivist approach to analyzing institutional texts such

as inspection handbooks and templates, this implies seeing social reality as a relationship between possibilities and limits on the one hand, and reflective subjects on the other (Esmark et al., 2005, p. 10; Smith, 2006). Finally, texts are viewed as emerging through the interaction and deliberation between individuals within certain institutional boundaries. As already presented in Chapter 1 in this thesis, and in accordance with the overall research problem, school inspection policy is formed and reformed by the actors that interact across contexts. Finally, these texts, and the intra- and inter-institutional interactions on the policy actor level from which they emerge, are thus to be understood a key methodological point of departure in this thesis.

4.4 Analysis of institutional texts

During the initial phase of the NOSI-project, and when preparing for the interview study, it was relevant to inquire into central steering documents, legal statutes, and regulations concerning school inspection policy. Research carried out through document analysis may be done by locating, collecting, interpreting, and analyzing information, thereby enabling researchers to draw certain conclusions (Fitzgerald, 2012). Their relevance derives from the aim to investigate how school inspection was highlighted at the macro-policy level in order to detect commonalities and differences between two Scandinavian countries: Norway and Sweden. In the area of education, these two countries are considered to have much in common. Thus, based on international studies on 'traveling' school inspection policies, it was relevant to inquire as to how much they had in common on the macro-policy level (Lawn & Grek, 2012).

Through a comparative document analysis of 23 key policy documents and legal statutes concerning state school inspection during 2002-2012, a particular focus was given to how school inspection during the study period adheres to professional-bureaucratic control as a mode of governing and/or details national expectations through a performance audit, by potentially intervening in school practices (Article I). The large selection of 23 documents was uploaded into the software package NVivo 10 for analysis (see, for example, Appendix 6). A complete list of the policy documents, legal statutes, official webpages, and reports analyzed are supplied in Appendix 8.

Methodologically, the analysis drew on both historical methods (Kjeldstadli, 1999) and sociological, comparative methods (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011). By combining the strengths of

two different methodological approaches, it was possible to develop a theoretical-analytical model (see Figure 1, Article I) which enabled a cross-national comparison of key documents. This model formed 'the backbone' of the analysis and guided the interpretation of the documents.

Secondly, by a close reading and rereading of the 23 documents in question, four main sub-categories, or "modes of governing" arose (Maroy, 2012). These were 1.) purposive/legal; 2.) purposive/professional; 3.) evaluative/expert-defined; and 4.) evaluative/pragmatic (see Table 1, Article I). Through the use of these four analytical categories it was up to me as a researcher to code and then compare inspection policies across countries. In all, 830 references in the 23 documents were categorized according to the three sub-categories, which enabled an in-depth analysis of the texts, including a quantified content analysis (see Tables 2, 3 and 4, Article I; also see Appendix 6 for an example of the coding process). A summary of Article I and a discussion of the findings in this study are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

4.5 Interviews

Based on purposive sampling and the results of a survey (see Appendix 9), the LEX-EL project group conducted qualitative case studies in three Norwegian counties (counties North, West, and East). This section concerns the interview study undertaken as part of the NOSI-project.

It can be argued that qualitative interview research is a craft learned through the process of conducting interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Based on the questions and collected data in the initial survey outlined in Section 4.3, two common interview guides were discussed and developed by the LEX-EL project group; one for interviews with school leaders and staff on the municipal level, and the second for interviews with representatives from the County Governors' Offices (CGOs) responsible for the inspection of schools on the county and local levels. The second interview guide was employed in the NOSI-project, and a semi-open method was chosen (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Finally, the interview guide addressed five areas: i) the aim of state inspections; ii) steering and organizing state inspections; iii) inspection process and methods; iv) assessment of background documentation and inspectors' and directors' competency; and v) inspection and organizational development (see Appendix 5).

The study draws on nine interviews, focusing on the CGO level. The project examines the perceptions and expectations of three educational directors and six school inspectors in three CGOs,[21] all are trained lawyers or educators, through interviews and the reading of key policy documents. In Table 4.2 below, an overview of the informants and cases are presented. All informants are anonymous, as are those in the observation data shown in Table 4.2, below.

Table 4.2 Informants, cases, and interview data

Informant/Case	CGO "East"	CGO "North"	CGO "West"
Director	*Paul* (CGOEDE) Director Educator 7 years' experience at CGO	*Ruth* (CGONDDE) Deputy director Economist and educator 6 years' experience at CGO	*Harald* (CGOWDE) Director Educator 3 years' experience at CGO
Inspector 1	*Eva* (CGOEL) Lawyer 8 years' experience at CGO	*Jens* (CGONL) Lawyer 7 years' experience at CGO	*Christian* (CGOWL) Lawyer 5 years' experience at CGO
Inspector 2	*Patricia* (CGOEE) Educator 3 years' experience at CGO	*Heidi* (CGONE) Educator 5 years' experience at CGO	*Sophie* (CGOWE) Educator 8 years' experience at CGO

In all of the interviews except one,[22] two researchers were present. One researcher took notes during the interviews while the other led the interview process. Prior to the fieldwork, the common interview guide was thoroughly discussed within the group, as well as with the reference groups. Data collection is a time-consuming process and necessitates the use of substantial resources. Through hiring a highly qualified and trained research assistant, the NOSI-project could compile high-quality transcripts of all interview data.

Interviews in this study were uploaded by me into NVivo 10 for analysis, enabling a cross-case analysis of the data (see, for example, Appendix 7). Based on a theoretical approach and drawing on institutional and organizational theory, I developed an analytical model where two

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[21] There are a total of 17 County Governors' Offices (CGO) in Norway, since Oslo and Akershus counties, as well as Aust- and Vest-Agder counties, are combined and both have common County Governors' Offices ("Fylkesmannsembeter").

[22] One of the informants in the "East" was not able to be present during the initial round of interviews, so a new interview was rescheduled and conducted shortly thereafter.

main perspectives were employed; a.) expectations and institutional change; and b.) enactment and institutionalization.

4.6 Observation

One of the three counties included in the interview study was purposefully selected in order to acquire observation data from school inspectors in the field, which had not been previously reported upon in the Norwegian example. I contacted the selected county educational director's office by e-mail, and I was then again granted access to "County East" and to the schools by their respective principals. This granted me the possibility to closely observe the ongoing piloting and enactment of the 2013 inspection handbook (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013).

As Achinstein (1968) pointed out, observations are influenced by the observer's knowledge and intentions (Achinstein, 1968). Through intervening in public institutions, such as schools and County Governors' Offices (CGOs), I had to be aware that my observations would be influenced by both my previous knowledge of the phenomenon in question, as well as the danger that I would report on what I wanted to observe. This would possibly leave out small, but important, details. Gaining the acceptance and trust of both the inspectors and the "inspectees" was of key importance; however, I was careful not to intervene or comment upon what took place during the meetings I observed.

The positioning and point of view chosen by the researcher is also vital, and I was clear that as an observer I would strive to take a non-participatory role in order to distance myself from what I was observing (Grønmo, 2004). I choose to define the observations as semi-structured, rather than non-participatory, since to some extent I became both an observer as well as an actor. I was influenced by the notion of using a shadowing technique since I followed my "subjects" out in the field and recorded what took place during the meetings between the inspectors and the "inspectees" (Czarniawska, 2007). Drawing on McDonald (2005), shadowing is defined by Gill (2011) as allowing "a researcher to closely follow a member of an organization over an extended period of time" (McDonald, 2005, cited in Gill, 2011, p. 116). Shadowing does not necessarily have to be resource intensive. As McDonald points out, "Shadowing can be done over consecutive or non-consecutive days for anything from a single day or shift up to a whole month" (2005, p. 456). Thus, through shadowing inspection teams in three schools, I had a unique advantage when it came to reporting on how the 2013

inspection handbook was enacted within and between institutions. Data was collected in 2013 and 2014.

Data collection through observation served as one of several methods to study the interaction between actors in institutions and organizations and to determine how they form and reform state school inspection policy. The observation study is thus a single case investigation of CGO "East" The data was collected between the spring of 2013 and the fall of 2014, where inspectors first piloted the recently enacted inspection handbook (Norwegian Directorate of Teaching and Training, 2013). This was done through shadowing one of the inspection teams interviewed in the study outlined in the preceding section. Additionally, the informants in the study furnished pre-inspection documents, preliminary inspection reports, as well as final inspection reports, for example. Drawing on an institutional perspective already outlined, these documents added to the overall understanding of the study and its context.[23] The documentation was read after the observations in order to obtain a clear overview of the whole situation. I observed pre-meetings taking place in each of the three schools, in which the CGO inspectors presented the aim, legal mandate, and focus points of the inspection. Secondly, I observed the inspectors enacting the inspection handbook (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2013), and finally I observed the post-meetings where the preliminary reports were presented. Figure 4.1 below illustrates the steps of the inspection process that I observed.

	Pre-meeting	Inspection	Post-meeting
The Directorate	Aims, legal mandate and focus point	Handbook	Consequences (?)
County Governors' Offices	What are we looking for?	How do we collect our data?	How do we give the good/bad news through feedback?
Local school authority/school principal	What is the state of the schools we are responsible for?	What is the state of the school under scrutiny?	How do we utilize results of the inspection reports?

Figure 4.1 State school inspection process in Norway (2014-2017)

No audio files of the conversations were recorded, which I acknowledge may be limiting to the overall study. However, all of the 13 meetings observed were carefully documented through verbatim (live) notes that were written directly on my laptop computer. Table 4.3 shows each of the 13 points of observation included in the NOSI-project that were collected

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[23] These documents are not listed in Appendix 8 since the content would jeopardize the anonymity of the schools under intervention, as well as the CGO's case.

during all six visits to the three separate compulsory schools (two visits to each school). The two points of observation (8 and 13) selected in the study were chosen in order to visualize two key steps in the inspectoral process.

Table 4.3 Observation data

Municipalities/schools	Inspection process	Participants	Points of observation	Documents
Municipality/school A Primary school	Piloting/enactment phase	Inspection team A School principal Department heads Teachers Observer	1. Opening meeting 2. Interview with principal 3. Group interview with department heads 4. Group interview with teachers 5. Closing meeting	-Inspection handbook -Pre-inspection documents -Self-evaluation (SSE) forms -Preliminary inspection report (PR) -Power Point presentation of PR -Final inspection report
Municipality/school B Lower-secondary school	Enactment phase	Inspection team B School principal Teachers Observer	6. Opening meeting 7. Interview with principal 8. Group interview with English teachers 9. Closing meeting	-Inspection handbook -Pre-inspection documents -Self-evaluation (SSE) forms -Preliminary inspection report (PR) -Power Point presentation of PR -Final inspection report
Municipality/school C Primary school	Enactment phase	Inspection team C School principal Teachers Observer Educational Director	10. Opening meeting 11. Interview with principal 12. Group interview with teachers 13. Closing meeting	-Inspection handbook -Pre-inspection documents -Self-evaluation (SSE) forms -Preliminary inspection report (PR) -Power Point presentation of PR -Final inspection report

4.7 Credibility in qualitative research

In order to evaluate both quantitative and qualitative research, there are several key questions that researchers should ask themselves when assessing any scientific report (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006, cited in Silverman, 2011, p. 355):

1. How important are the topics and topics to the research field?
2. What is the contribution to the research field?
3. How rigorous is the methodological approach in the study?
4. How rigorous and explicit is the conceptual approach in the study?
5. How clear is the writing and argumentation made in the study?

Bearing these general points in mind, I will here set out some of the more particular aspects of validity and generalization in qualitative research, as Silverman (2011) states: "We should not assume that techniques used in quantitative research are the only way of establishing the validity of findings from qualitative or field research" (p. 383). Referring to Lincoln and Guba (1985), Creswell & Clark (2011) argue that there is more focus on validity than reliability in qualitative research in order to determine to which extent the research presented is trustworthy, accurate, and credible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 211).

There are several ways of assessing the credibility of the choice of methodological approaches or conceptual applications based on the findings claimed by researchers. This section will focus on four strategies: communicative and competence validation (Grønmo, 2004), Maxwell's typology of validity (Maxwell, 1996), purposive sampling (Silverman, 2011), and analytical generalization (Yin, 2013). Thus, the following two sections will discuss the two main aspects of credibility: validity and generalization.

A question which arises when assessing any research report is how valid are the findings? In case studies there exist several challenges in evaluating validity since there are usually a limited number of cases studied (Yin, 2013, p. 321). Nevertheless, there are several methods which may be used in order to get closer to assessing validity in a limited number of qualitative case studies, such as that which is presented in this thesis.

One possible method is group validation, or what Grønmo (2004) and Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) describe as "communicative validity." A clear advantage of collaborating in a project group is the possibility of engaging in discussions concerning the choice of research methods, calibration of instruments, such as interview guides, and the interpretation of collected data and possible findings. As Grønmo puts it, "communicative validation builds on a dialogue between the researcher and others in relation to how well the materials (and measures) 'fit' with the overall research questions" (Grønmo, 2004, p. 235). Throughout the NOSI-project, ongoing discussions between fellow researchers and external collaborators took place, such as those with an international advisory panel of senior researchers and a national panel of practitioners. In addition, the data and findings were presented in several PhD courses and at international conferences throughout the NOSI-project period.

A second form of validity discussed by Grønmo (2004) is "competency validity," referring to the researcher's or group of researchers' formal and practical competency for collecting data within the scope of study. Competency may be expressed through the experience, prerequisites, and qualifications of the researchers, and if data collection has been conducted in a competent manner, then there is reason to believe that the findings are sound (Grønmo, 2004, p. 234).

Maxwell (1996) discusses several threats to validity, two of which will be discussed here: researcher bias and reactivity. The first threat – researcher bias – refers to "understanding how a particular researcher's values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study, and avoiding the negative consequences" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 108). Since most of the researchers involved in the data collection process and discussion and interpretation of findings did have previous knowledge and experience from the field as practitioners, we had to take these aspects in account when drawing our conclusions. For this reason, when conducting interviews, more than one researcher was present.

Secondly, the threat of reactivity implies the extent to which researchers influence the setting or individuals studied, which may be impossible to completely avoid (Maxwell, 1996, p. 90). It was therefore vital that prior to and during the data collection, the intervention of the researchers was limited in order to not influence the phenomena studied, especially since qualitative, in-depth studies involve some researcher-subject interaction.

A way of strengthening validity, according to Grønmo (2004), is to include field notes when conducting qualitative interviews, which was done throughout the data collection process. These notes were discussed and compared to interview data and observation data, and added to the richness of the data, as suggested by Maxwell (1996). Richness of data is, according to Maxwell (1996) a goal in order to ensure variety and detail. A final checkpoint for ensuring validity is, according to Grønmo (2004) and Creswell and Clark (2011), actor validation or member-checking. For example, this can be done by letting informants read and validate interview and observation transcripts. This strategy was considered, but was opted against; rather, I presented data transcriptions in various settings in which my peers and senior researchers commented upon the data selection and the coding of the data.

As presented previously in this chapter, purposive (or purposeful) sampling of the county and municipal cases was applied based on national statistics and geographical distribution (SSB;

KOSTRA). Purposive sampling makes researchers think critically about why the population we are considering is interesting, and then we sample our case(s) accordingly (Silverman, 2011, p. 388). Possibly a more accurate definition of purposive sampling is supplied by Creswell and Clark (2011) who state that it "… means that researchers intentionally select participants who have experiences the central phenomenon […] being explored in the study" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 173). The goal of the NOSI-project was not to draw general conclusions based on this purposeful sample, but rather to get an in-depth understanding of a few cases and informants.

Another form of non-statistical generalization which is more fruitful to discuss here is what Yin describes as an "analytical generalization" (Yin, 2013; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). Analytical generalization does not look at the relation between sample and population, which would not be plausible in our qualitative case study; rather, such a generalization looks at how one may extract ideas on the abstract level from a set of cases in the original study to apply to new situations to contribute to theory building (Yin, 2013, p. 325). Here, I would be careful to not analytically generalize from the cases in the study and apply it analytical and theoretically to other similar cases in other settings. However cautious, I would argue that through applying theoretical-conceptual models to empirical data that is mainly rooted in institutional theory and literature on governing, I have offered a conceptual apparatus which will contribute to future studies of state school inspection.

4.8 Ethical considerations

As in all research involving humans, the researcher needs to be attentive to ethical issues as well as the manner in which the research is carried out (Fowler, 2009, p. 163). Ethical questions may arise in regards to informing respondents, consent, anonymity, and data access/usage, and are some of the major areas which will be discussed in the following sections. A range of ethical principles and practices were observed, such as respect for persons, justice, informed consent, and fair selection of subjects (Ragin & Amoroso, 2011, p. 87; NESH, 2006).

A requirement for all research projects concerning sensitive information is to register the project with the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD). There are rigid rules and guidelines for processing personal data which must be abided (NSD, 2012). The project

received authorization from NSD prior to contacting potential informants and municipalities and schools based on purposive sampling (see Appendices 3 and 4).

The LEX-EL study, of which the NOSI-project forms a part, includes several reference groups consisting of practitioners, representatives from trade unions, and senior, international researchers. These reference groups act in many ways as "critical friends" by attending meetings and commenting on project outlines, pilot surveys, and paper presentations throughout the research process. Even if the clear positive aspects of using reference groups outweigh the possible negative effects, one must always ask if there are any ethical risks by including them in the process. In the end, it is a question of mutual trust across the whole research "community" in which a common understanding of the "playing rules" is discussed, accepted, and known to all participants.

One of the basic premises of research involving human subjects is to inform respondents about what they are signing up for, as well as protect them from the risk of unwanted and adverse results (Fowler, 2009, pp. 164-165). An initial letter of intent was mailed to all possible respondents in the five counties in question, explaining the background of the NOSI-project, how the data will be secured and used, and finally stating that they could at any time withdraw their participation (see Appendix 4). The need for researchers to gain participants' informed consent to join a research project arises from the fundamental democratic rights to freedom and self-determination, including the right to choose whether to participate (Busher & James, 2012, p. 94).

As we have seen, there are several ethical issues which must be addressed when undertaking a research project of this nature. Moreover, cooperating in a large project does imply the need to establish a common, ethical basis upon which the research can be constructed. The success of a learning community, such as a research group, depends on developing mutual, collaborative, and interpersonal relationships between group members in order to achieve common goals (Busher & James, 2012, p. 92).

Altogether, I have in this chapter offered an outline of the methodological approach taken in the NOSI-project, and shown how utilizing several research methods can contribute to our understanding of a social phenomenon: state school inspection.

5. Summaries of articles

In Sections 5.1-5.3, I will briefly summarize the three articles reported on in the NOSI-project. I will concentrate on the main findings and discussions presented in each of the articles, which will be further discussed in Chapter 6, since the general theoretical and methodological approaches have already been outlined in Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis.

5.1 Article I

Hall, J. B., & Sivesind, K. (2015). State school inspection policy in Norway and Sweden (2002–2012): A reconfiguration of governing modes? *Journal of Education Policy*, *30*(3), 429–458.

The first article in this thesis is a comparative and conceptual study of policy documents and legal statutes in Norway and Sweden published between 2002 and 2012 (Article I). During this period, the school inspection regimes of both countries underwent multiple changes, and were thus interesting to investigate. Consequently, as a first step in the NOSI-project, it was vital to the overall understanding of the field to perform a qualitative analysis of legal statutes, White Papers, official reports (Green Papers), official websites, annual state inspection reports, and other relevant public documents concerning school inspection in both countries throughout this period. First, school inspection policy and regulation in Norway is compared to parallel changes occurring in Sweden. Secondly, the article analyzes how the inspection policies of these two countries combine the different forms of "governing modes" outlined above. Specifically, we uncover how state school inspections are expressed in policies in both countries, through an analysis of the policy documents and legal statutes that regulate and govern these processes. Theoretically, a particular focus is placed on how state school inspection adheres to professional-bureaucratic control as a mode of governing, and/or details national expectations through performance-based evaluation.

The data included in the study are 23 policy documents and legal statutes, using NVivo 10 to facilitate the qualitative analysis of this large amount of text. In all, 830 references in these documents were identified and were categorized according to four governing modes that we developed into a theoretical-analytical model: 1.) purposive/legal; 2.) purposive/professional;

3.) evaluative/expert-defined; and 4.) evaluative/pragmatic. Additionally, each of the policy documents and legal statutes were quantified by summarizing the frequencies of each of the governing modes represented in the separate documents (see Appendix 6).

The main findings in the study are twofold. First, the article demonstrates that even if the cases of public administration seem to be somewhat homogenous from the outside, there is substantial evidence of major differences in the inspection policies of these two countries which can be explored by comparative analysis. Thus, different governing modes indirectly define how school inspection is carried out in Norway and Sweden. Secondly, the article shows that in Norway, governing has until recently focused on legal and pragmatic approaches to inspection, while in the Swedish case, emphasis in the same period is on professional and expert-defined modes in addition to regulation.

5.2 Article II

Hall, J. B. (2016). Examining school inspectors and educational directors within the organisation of school inspection policy: Perceptions and views. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* (online), 1–15.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2015.1120234

The methods and data included in the second part of the NOSI-project were case studies of three County Governors' Offices (CGOs "North", "West," and "East") using semi-structured interviews with nine officials on the meso-level; three educational directors and six school inspectors (Article II). Theoretically, the article is grounded in an approach adhering to the organizational elements of institutions, analyzing how the inspectors and their leaders perceive their evolving roles and newly emerging, as well as "old," expectations.

Data was uploaded into NVivo 10 for analysis, which was done in accordance with the theoretical framework. Bearing the findings of the first sub-study in mind (Article I), I initially investigated how the role of the CGOs, as it was perceived by school inspectors and their leaders, is changing due to new organizational processes deriving from the new state school inspection handbook (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013). Secondly, I looked at how the inspectors and their leaders contribute to the shaping of new

expectations towards future inspectoral practice, in addition to individual beliefs, norms, and values.

Based on the data at hand, the main findings in this study were first that the CGOs are characterized by informal as well as formal meeting places. The former was identified by deliberation, the latter by formal structures and institutional boundaries. Secondly, there exist clear internal as well as external expectations at the CGO level, and trust seems to be of the utmost importance in the professional interaction between inspectors and their leaders, the directors. Third, there is a clear change in how the CGOs collaborate externally, especially with their superiors in the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Finally, the study shows that the role of state school inspection in Norway is shifting from merely compliance-based control towards a system focusing more on evaluation and support, which the inspectors articulate is both challenging while also highly gratifying.

5.3 Article III

Hall, J. B. (in review). "Governing by templates" through new modes of school inspection in Norway. *Journal of Educational Change*.

The third article, Article III, is a single case study in Norway of the County Governors' Office (CGO) "East." This is a follow up on one of the three CGOs and adds to the already-collected data in Article II. Here, I looked at how the current inspection handbook (Norwegian Directorate of Teaching and Education, 2013) is being enacted in the field. The main focus in this study is on how school inspectors and their leaders on the regional level understand the ongoing changes in the CGOs' role and mandate that was currently changing over a two-year period, shifting away from the "old regime" of emphasis on legal compliance, toward a new system based on support and advice in addition to traditional control aspects, such as those outlined in Section 5.2.

In the Norwegian context, I had the unique opportunity to shadow state inspection teams in the field and observe how they enacted and carried out inspections of three public primary and lower-secondary schools in the central-eastern part of Norway. The aim of the article was to examine how inspection, through the use of fixed templates supplied by the Norwegian

Directorate for Education and Training (2013), contributes to steering the formative routines of compulsory schools.

The data included in the study were observations of piloting of the (then) new inspection handbook, collected during the spring of 2013. Secondly, I observed school inspection processes in the field during the fall of 2014. In all, I observed 13 meetings at three different schools between school inspectors and school principals and teachers, and I made a written record of all that was said. Additionally, the study was supported by pre- and post-inspection documentation, such as letters of notification of upcoming inspections at the three schools, School Self Evaluation (SSE) reports, preliminary inspection reports, as well as final inspection reports. Power Point presentations used during the pre- and post-inspection meetings were also made available. The documentation was considered after observation was completed in order to give me, as a researcher, a better overall understanding of the inspection processes to which I was witness.

Based on the data, the main findings in the study were threefold. First, I observed a shift in the use of governing tools away from their use as mere legal compliance measures, to witness an increased use of SSE to obtain information used in the assessment of the schools inspected. Secondly, standardized templates to a great extent steer how school inspection is carried out. Finally, inspections of schools are now more targeted at controlling the formative assessment routines of schools, which may signal an approach closer to individual classrooms and subject matters. Through such control, individual teachers are scrutinized to determine whether the expectations and demands set out in the Education Act (1998) and Regulation (Regulation Pertaining to the Education Act, 2006) are fulfilled.

6. Discussion and concluding remarks

In this thesis, state school inspection (SI) has been viewed through the lens of institutional theory in order to explore the formation and reformation of SI policy, and it has furthermore been seen as a set of policy tools used by state authorities to govern the practices of primary and secondary schools. Taking into account these viewpoints, I consider the use of such toolsets as expressions of a common quest to comply with legal and pedagogical standards, reflecting what may be considered examples of "good schooling" (Hood, 1983, 2007; Ball, 1997). At the same time, there are indications that we are currently moving towards a post-bureaucratic society where new and more complex modes of governing are prevailing (Maroy, 2012; Olsen, 2005). Through reading the data at hand, as well as reviewing the existing key literature on school inspection in a European context, I see these developments as expressions of globalization and Europeanization, while also acknowledging the countries' different approaches due to their individual national traditions (Ozga, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010).

The overall research problem for the NOSI-project was: How are governing tools and modes formed and reformed across contexts of school inspection policy?

The NOSI-project is reported on in three research articles, either published or under review in major educational journals. In Article I, I studied the development of ideas and principles at the national levels in Norway and Sweden as partly influenced by processes of Europeanization and globalization. Article II looked more closely at the perceptions and expectations related to the use of policy tools across regional contexts in Norway. Finally, in Article III, I investigated the enactment of these policy tools situated within the interplay between Norwegian municipalities and schools.

In addition to the overall research problem, there were in all three overarching research questions which guided the NOSI-project: 1) What characterizes shifts in state school inspection policy in Norway compared to Sweden during the period 2002-2012?, 2) How do perceptions and expectations of key actors contribute to shifts in school inspection policy across contexts?, and 3) What is the role of policy tools for enacting school inspection policy across contexts?

These three questions will be discussed in the following Sections 6.1-6.3, interpreted across findings in all three articles. The consequent sections will moreover examine the empirical and theoretical-conceptual contributions this thesis claims to offer, in addition to outlining the implications of the study overall. Concluding remarks will be presented under the heading "Learning tools of the trade," which refers to both the theoretical framework and my own experiences as a researcher.

6.1 Shifts in state inspection policies, but with varying trajectories

In this thesis, school inspection has been viewed as a set of tools aimed at governing, for example through controlling, evaluating, guiding, or supporting school districts and schools in a quest to comply with legal and pedagogical standards of "good schooling" (Hood, 1983, 2007; Ball, 1997). Influenced by the common pool of ideas and processes of Europeanization, nation states have nevertheless developed their own configurations of inspectoral "toolboxes" reflecting their national traditions and the transnational flow of ideas (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012).

The NOSI-project first attempted to inquire into how key policy documents and legal statutes portray state school inspection policy in Norway and Sweden in the 2000s. By developing and employing a theoretical-analytical model based on four ideal modes of governing influenced by Olsen (2005) and Maroy (2012), I was able to analyze and categorize 23 policy documents and legal statutes pertaining to state school inspection (Article I). The following discussion will center on the differences in how these documents portray this phenomenon, and how this PhD study is able to show empirically how the two case countries have chosen different paths towards the institutionalization of school inspection due to the processes of Europeanization as well as their individual national traditions (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010).

State school inspection, understood as expressing modes of governing within the field of education, can be seen as deriving from processes and decisions within institutions, and thus institutional texts are considered expressions of ongoing discourse in the political sphere (Ricoeur & Thompson, 1981). Through such processes of interaction and decision-making, the individual and collective norms and beliefs of the actors are expressed in the texts (Scott, 2014). In the next step, these are to be interpreted both by the central and regional government levels that consequently enact them in their further policy making processes, as

well as by the tools employed to govern subordinate entities, such as local school authorities and individual schools. Moreover, through the enactment of policy and legal statutes, space emerges for deliberation among policy actors, such as that which is shown in Articles II and III. These movements are further facilitated through processes of institutionalization, where institutional texts continuously develop through social action and expectations from above and as well from within the organizations themselves. Finally, through such interactions, new constructs of the institutional texts are reframed and result in the creation of policy documents aimed at the practical level to address such procedures and introduce new handbooks for carrying out state school inspection (Article III).

Viewed through the findings of the first article, I argue that despite sharing similar and common political, educational, and historical traditions, Sweden and Norway have largely chosen different paths and have thus developed relatively different systems. In addition, and as shown previously in this thesis with reference to international studies, through processes of globalization, Europeanization, policy-borrowing, and lending, the two Nordic countries seem to have drawn from a common pool of ideas, however they have chosen different solutions to resolving their common challenges (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2010).

During the historical period that was analyzed (2002-2012), the Swedish state school inspection policy has developed into a system characterized by professionally inclined and expert-defined modes of governing, to a large extent not only controlling the level of legal compliance but also assessing the quality and performance of individual schools through a wide and sophisticated range of governing tools. This tendency was fueled through the establishment of the Swedish School Inspectorate (SSI) in 2008, which when compared to the system in Norway is highly centralized and professionalized. As pointed out by researchers such as Rönnberg (2012, 2014) and Lindgren (2015), this event marked a clear shift in policy and practice, where the central state (through the new SSI) tightened its grip on local school authorities and schools. This has resulted in a boost in its power and role as the enforcer of policy and legal and centralized educational standards.

Norway, on the other hand, has chosen a different trajectory of public administration during the same period, as evidence by state school inspection policy and practice (Pierre & Peters, 2005; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Even though it was influenced by ideas taken from the Swedish and Scottish inspectoral regimes, Norway has nevertheless still maintained a system whereby regional County Governor's Offices (CGOs) oversee compliance according to the

legal standards set forth in the Education Act (1998) and the Regulation Pertaining to the Education Act (2006). Moreover, not only does Norwegian SI policy during this period emphasize legal compliance, but also to a large extent reflects a pragmatic approach to governing through inspection, and more recently "governing through templates."

Since 2012, the inspection frameworks of both Norway and Sweden have been further developed; Norway's is represented through the new handbook for state school inspection (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013), and Sweden's is demonstrated through a continued strengthening of the SSI. These shifts in framework will be further discussed in Section 6.3, following a discussion of the overall implications of the study. First, however, I will look at how key policy actors perceive shifts in policy and practice, which represents a change when compared to the period leading up to 2012, which is analyzed in Article I.

6.2 Key actors' perceptions and enactment of shifts in policy and practice

In the Norwegian case, White Paper 20 (2012-2013) "On the Right Track: Quality and Diversity in Comprehensive Schools[24]" calls for a change in the scope and content of state school inspection, where support and guidance was to be included in addition to compliance control (Gunnulfsen & Hall, 2015). This major shift represents a new trajectory in inspectoral policy in Norway, and will be further discussed in Section 6.3. This section will instead concentrate on how state school authorities' key actors in Norway perceive these changes in the scope and configuration of governing tools across levels and fields, as well as contexts.

Regular state school inspection was established in Norway in 2006 and has undergone several stages of development (see Appendix 2, Table 2). In the study by Sivesind and Bachmann (2011), interviews with County Governors' Officers (CGO) and document analysis were conducted. The analysis showed that CGO inspectors to a large extent based their judgments on both pedagogical and legal discretion, but not on advising local school authorities on how they could improve their quality of education (Sivesind & Bachmann, 2011). However, that was under the previous regime in 2008, focusing on a revision-based inspection of schools and only controlling administrative routines and procedures. This framework of system-

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[24] White Paper 20 (2012-2013) is not included in the analysis in Article I as it was published in 2013 and therefore falls outside of the period analyzed.

revision is summarized in Appendix 2, Table 2, under the heading "Inspection cycle 1", showing a non-guidance approach that is predominantly based on the control of written material and plans on the municipal level.

Bearing these findings and the points made in Section 6.1 in mind, I will now elaborate on how Norwegian CGO inspectors, based on the data at hand, perceive their role as enforcers of the law, in addition to taking on new tasks of offering advice and support to public schools, thus enacting centrally initiated policy. But first, at this point changes in the inspection framework should be briefly repeated. In 2013, a new preliminary handbook and one final handbook were introduced (see Appendix 2, Table 2, Inspection cycles 3 and 4). The new, final handbook represents a new framework and focus that is aimed at both controlling and supporting schools where assessing student outcomes are monitored (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013). This new framework will be elaborated upon in Section 6.3, but it does set the stage for discussing the new role of CGO inspectors from the perspective of the inspectors.

As pointed out in Article II, CGO inspectors on the regional level in Norway express satisfaction in executing their professional roles and feel more welcome than previously during the course of on-site inspections. Through the recent inspection handbook (Inspection cycle 4) and new signals put forth in White Paper 20 (2012-2013), inspectors must now offer advice and support to schools and school authorities that are targeted. Even if the analysis shows that they experience greater satisfaction in their profession, the job is demanding, partially due to tensions which arise when performing legal and pedagogical discretion. The framework guides, according to the findings in Article III, how inspections are carried out and to a large extent steers any leeway that they may encounter in the decision-making process. Finally, an analysis of the data shows how the inspectors and their leaders, the educational directors, are to a greater extent collaborating intra- as well as inter-institutionally in further developing and enacting renewed SI policy.

In the Norwegian example, studies of shifts in policy and practice in this thesis in general, and especially in Article II, indicate that there are likely ongoing tensions between the two key aspects in any inspectoral system; the (difficult) balance between control and development. As shown in the investigation of the English, Scottish, and Swedish inspectoral frameworks, the dichotomy of "control versus development" is central to understanding European inspection at the systems level, which is in turn challenging for the actors involved

(Baxter et al., 2015). Furthermore, as pointed out in Article III, the divergent roles of those playing the roles of "law enforcer and controller" one the one hand and "evaluator" on the other, implies a constant shift between divergent considerations and expectations in organizational institutions. Additionally, maneuvering through these expectations implies that public institutions have to undergo shifts, which may take time to settle, if they do at all. As argued in Article III, there are underlying expectations and tensions found in the preliminary and final reports presented by the CGO inspectors. This may imply that even if the schools, school leaders, and teachers under scrutiny are invited to take part in the feedback process, their input may lose their significance once the final reports are published on the CGO websites.

As part of the current inspection protocol, school principals and teachers are now subject to evaluation of their formative assessment routines (Article III). Through such intervention, these actors are subject to interview sessions and self-evaluation (SSE). These rounds of questioning are based on surveys distributed to students in the quest to acquire additional information on the overall picture of how well the school in question functions as an interpreter of legal standards, for example (Government Act, 1998; Regulation, 2006), and the national curriculum (The Knowledge Promotion, 2006). The following section will debate some of the main characteristics in the recent inspection framework (Inspection cycle 4), and relate this to ongoing shifts in Sweden. Section 6.4 will subsequently converge around the contributions of this thesis, relating to theoretical, methodological and empirical additions to filling in some of the blind spots in "the black box of Norwegian school inspection" (Latour, 1987; Lindgren, 2015).

6.3 Policy tools for enacting school inspection policy across contexts

Not only in Norway do key actors experience shifts in state-initiated toolsets and inspection frameworks that are to be enacted in the field. These frameworks may be defined as an infrastructure of rules, regulating to the inspectors' practice through dictating how information should be collected, as well as regulating relations between the "auditors" and the "auditees" (Baxter et al., 2015; Fourcade, 2010; Power, 1997). Moreover, I argue that these frameworks are both expressions of new expectations from policy-makers as to what role inspection should play in governing the future of schooling, and are also to be viewed as

normatively steering how the inspection process itself should ideally be carried out. However, since linear decision-making based on means-end rationality is not sufficient to understand the inspectoral process, inspections of schools should instead be seen through the logic of value-based rational choice and deliberation. Finally, these are to be understood both as results of individual and collective "give and take" processes taking place both intra- as well as inter-institutionally across regional contexts, as well as levels and fields (Articles II and III).

As discussed in Section 6.2 in this thesis, White Paper 20 (2012-2013) sets the stage for changes in Norway by prescribing new expectations from the policy level as to how regular state school inspections should be executed. Not only should inspection now look at legal compliancy, but should also include a performative-based assessment of the practice of individual schools reaching all the way down to the classroom level. Even so, as we have seen, classroom observations are not included as part of the inspection process.

The recent handbook for state school inspection in Norway (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013), discussed above, implies a widening of the inspectoral toolkit, including new forms of collecting data used to assess individual schools. The toolkit now not only contains a handbook which normatively states how the inspection of schools (and kindergartens) should be carried out, but also includes templates that can be used in two ways; first, to facilitate the inspection process, and second, to strictly steer the process according to set protocols. As part of the new framework, these templates are furthermore readily available on the Directorate's webpage (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016a), and schools are strongly encouraged to use them in their systematic quality assessment and evaluation (QAE) strategies. This suggest a new way of governing schools through the "governing by templates" that will be further discussed in Section 6.4.

Appendix 2 (Table 2) exemplifies how the developments in Norwegian inspection handbooks from 2008 to 2013 have been shifting in focus and tools, from a compliance-based system-audit in 2008, up to more performance-based forms of evaluation that were introduced in 2013 (Inspection cycle 4). As argued in Article III, such a widening of the inspectoral toolkit, where School Self Evaluation (SSE), normative templates, student surveys and other strategies for collecting information are included, means that Norwegian policy-makers on the central and regional levels have been influenced by their other European counterparts. In the quest to solve common problems in education, Norway and Sweden have chosen different

courses, but, as suggested in Article I, there may be some signs that the two countries are possibly moving closer together on the policy level (Steiner-Khamsi & Waldow, 2012; Hall & Sivesind, 2015; Hall, 2016; Hall, in review).

As demonstrated in Article II, school inspectors are currently adapting to their new role as policy actors, not only are they the controllers of legal standards, but they are becoming increasingly engaged in evaluating how well schools are upholding the formative assessment routines of individual students. This new area of concern is first linked to the learning outcomes of each student, and secondly based on the demands put forth in the Education Act (1998) and the Regulation Pertaining to the Education Act (2006). As part of the Directorate's emphasis on the Assessment for Learning (AFL) that is thoroughly communicated online (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2016b), there are seemingly links between these legal standards, the state school inspection framework, and central, pedagogical priorities. This new role of assessing both legal requirements and pedagogical aspects presupposes an even closer extent of intra-institutional collaboration between trained educators and lawyers, such as that which is pointed out in Section 6.2.

According to changes in Swedish SI policy during the 2000s, the framework has been subject to clear shifts both in focus and criteria, which accelerated in 2003 with the reintroduction of the school inspectorate and culminated in the establishment of a highly professionalized SSI in 2008 (Baxter et al., 2015; Grek et al., 2015; Lindgren, 2015; Rönnberg, 2014). With the new Education Act (2010:1100) that took effect in 2011, inspections could from then on lead to punitive action, such as fines and in severe cases of non-compliance, result in school closures (Baxter et al., 2015). As we can see, there have been major changes in the frameworks in both countries, including an uptake in the number of inspections carried out throughout the 2000s. This has occurred in spite of clear shifts in the party-political coalition regimes in the welfare states of Norway and Sweden (Rönnberg, 2014; Hall & Sivesind, 2015; Hall, 2016; Hall, in review). Thus, there is reason to argue that the development of neo-liberal and traditional-legal mixtures of governing tools continues rather undisturbed by political transformations.

6.4 Contributions

Drawing on the discussion above and based on the overarching research questions which have guided the study, I will outline three areas in which the NOSI-project has contributed to the

field of school inspection studies. I will do so by looking across the findings in the three articles, and drawing upon the theoretical perspectives of governing and institutionalism and arguing that the NOSI-project contributes to the research field in several ways.

6.4.1 Theoretical and conceptual contributions

By adopting the theoretical vantage points outlined in Chapter 3, I argue that this thesis offers certain contributions to school inspection studies. First, I have employed new-institutional theory in order to analyze how County Governors' Officers (CGOs) on the regional level respond to state inspection policies and the legal standards put forth in the Education Act (1998) and the Regulation Pertaining to the Education Act (2006). Through such an application, I provided insights into how CGO officers and their leaders interact both intra-institutionally as well as inter-institutionally in the struggle to adapt to new expectations and new governing roles. Within relatively strict institutional frameworks, such an approach shows how the actors perceive their ability to navigate through the bricolage of structures, facilitated through collective and individual norms and values (Draelants & Maroy, 2007; Scott, 2014; Weick, 1979). Finally, through such an approach, I have shown how school inspectors function as institutional "agents" and "entrepreneurs," thus contributing to articulating future expectations and policy development (Hardy & Maguire, 2008; Scott, 2014).

Secondly, the NOSI-project provides new knowledge of policy actors in the field, supported by key policy documents, through an introduction of the analytical concept of "governing by templates" (Article III). Governing by templates, in relation to, for example, "governing by numbers," "governing by data," or "governing by feedback" (see, for example, Ozga, 2009; Grek & Lindgren, 2015; Simons, 2014b), contributes an additional lens for understanding how policy actors in institutional organizations, such as CGOs, are steered, and in the next step how the steering concept functions to regulate the entities they are required to both control and consequently evaluate – public schools. Through the employment of such centrally-initiated handbooks, protocols and standardized rubrics, which the CGOs have contributed to developing, they are governing through inspection by template. Finally, as the analysis shows, such forms of governing also imply that the "auditors" are themselves controlled from above by their superiors in the Directorate for Education and Training.

Finally, in addition to the two contributions outlined above, I have also developed a certain definition of *governing*, which is directly linked to the mixture of policy tools employed by school inspectoral authorities in their surveillance of schools and local school authorities. These conceptualizations may provide a starting point for additional elaboration, conceptualization, and study and may possibly be used to denote an important distinction between the terms that are not often explicitly focused in studies of school inspection.

6.4.2 Methodological contributions

This thesis employed several methods to illuminate various aspects of school inspection, seen from a policy as well as an actor-centered point of view. By choosing a range of methodological approaches, it was possible to highlight several aspects of state school inspection. Choosing one form of data collection would possibly have resulted in a more one-dimensional picture of school inspection. Thus, by combining different methods, I was able to add to the richness of the data presented in the analyses, with one study building upon the insights of the previous.

In the first article, we combined historical and institutional theory, where we presented four main "modes of governing," which adds to the understanding of how different configurations of modes change over time; in this case during the period 2002-2012. By developing such a methodological approach, I could thus comparatively analyze large "chunks" of information concerning state school inspection in the two Scandinavian countries. The analysis was done both by looking at expressions in institutional texts, such as White Papers and legal statutes, and by adding a quantitative dimension by including the frequencies of the four main categories of governing modes (see Tables 1–4, Article I).

The second and third articles used several applied methodological approaches, such as semi-structured interviews and the shadowing of County Governors' Offices (CGOs), both in their formal, institutional settings, as well as in the field when conducting an inspection of public schools. By using these methods, I was able to acquire first-hand empirical data on a system experiencing change, where the current inspection handbook (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2013) could be for the first time reported on scientifically. I would argue that the combination of these two methods has, in the Norwegian example, offered an important contribution. This may also be of analytical value beyond the national setting at hand. Internationally, access to and the possibility of actually following school inspectors in

the field is a method which may be difficult to employ, particularly in more high-stakes settings, such as in England.

Finally, by drawing on new-institutional and constructivist influenced strategies of conceptual analysis (Béland & Cox, 2011; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Esmark et al., 2005; Scott, 2014) outlined in Chapters 1, 3 and 4, I have conveyed ways of interpreting how the work of policy actors, such as school inspectors, may be analyzed. The combinations of these theoretical and conceptual approaches, along with the breadth of empirical materials included serve as examples of how institutional theory and research methods can together enlighten the field of school inspection research.

6.4.3 Empirical contributions

By alternating between different empirical materials (documents, interviews, and observations), I was able to reflect upon changing policy systems, which, as previously mentioned, gave me the unique opportunity to empirically report on how policy and practice respectively project and conceive state school inspection. Thus, the empirical contributions to the field are here argued to be threefold; first through comparative policy analysis, and secondly indirectly through the perceptions and views of key actors on the county level in Norway based on qualitative interviews. Finally, I was also able to observe ongoing piloting and employment of the current state inspection handbook, which in an international context is to my knowledge a unique opportunity to see "policy in the making" (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2013).

As a point of departure, the study first showed how a theoretical-analytical categorization of documents could highlight inspection seen through policy and legal statutes in Norway and Sweden. Thus, I argue that Article I adds to the field by comparatively demonstrating how these two countries have chosen two different configurations of governing modes; the first is predominantly legal and pragmatically inclined, the latter is more expert-defined and professionally defined in addition to safeguarding the legal aspects of state school inspection. This shows that the policy and legislation in the two countries, despite being influenced by the European Educational Policy Space (EEPS), portray different trajectories during the period 2002-2012 (Lawn & Grek, 2012; Ozga, 2012, Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Secondly, I argue that the study adds to the field by offering the "first empirical insights" (Dedering & Müller, 2011) into a Norwegian system of state school inspection in transition. Such a shifting system is reported on in Articles II and III. Until now, this has been a highly underreported area that has previously been mostly focused on older regimes of inspection that were largely based on system revisions (Bachmann & Sivesind, 2011; Hatch, 2013; Helgøy & Homme, 2006; Helgøy & Serigstad, 2004; Sivesind, 2009).

Thus, through the theoretical and methodological approach outlined in Sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2, I have argued that Articles II and III in sum capture the current changes in how Norwegian CGO inspectors and their leaders contemplate their regulatory roles, and which set of governing tools are employed as part of the inspectoral process. These changes are to seen in relation to the findings in Article I, which altogether offer a picture of state school inspection in Norway from the policy and policy actors' perspectives, in light of other studies addressing Swedish inspection policy and practice (see, for example, Carlbaum et al., 2014; Lindgren, 2015; Rönnberg, 2011, 2014; Rönnberg et al., 2013).

6.5 Possible implications

Before moving on to my concluding remarks in this extended abstract, I will address what can be learned from the NOSI-study, and which implications this may have for researchers and practitioners. More specifically, I hope that the study may enable policy actors on the macro-, meso-, and possibly micro-levels, such as school inspectors and school leaders, as well as the research community, to better understand how the role of the state school inspection policy is formed and reformed, and how this affects schools and local education authorities.

The NOSI-project results suggest that we are currently moving towards post-bureaucratic modes of governing in state school inspection in Norway, where not only formal-legal governing modes are eminent, but also mixtures of tools characterized by networks of actors and evaluative modes are persistent (Maroy, 2012; Olsen, 2005). For the research community, this opens up the possibility for further studies on how internationalization and the mechanisms of "borrowing and lending" as well as convergence may influence how states in general and the Scandinavian countries in particular, adapt to new expectations on the policy level. In the next stage, this project has clear implications for how practitioners on central, regional, and local levels engage with new policy initiatives and how they are subsequently subject to new mixtures of governing tools employed to control the educational sector.

However, the situation in Norway has yet to be settled, and the new inspection handbook will be used until 2017 (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013). It is not possible to predict what will come next, but one cannot rule out further processes of Europeanization, where the two countries might close in on each other. One would thus believe that shifts in the political leadership on the central governmental level would lead to new ideas for how inspection should be carried out, and which areas of interest should be targeted. It seems, however, that until now, the political leadership in both countries is conclusive in its priorities; state school inspection is to continue as the central means of controlling and evaluating institutions, increasing in cycle, and taking on new mixtures of tools.

In Norway, the inspectoral toolbox is characterized by a shift from legality to evaluation (Article III). In the mixture of tools, School Self Evaluation (SSE) and templates are increasingly used to collect and systematize information. However, since CGO authorities lack, to a large extent, the means to invoke punitive action against schools, their movement towards more non-punitive, actor-based ways of interaction cannot be ruled out. Thus, supporting schools in improving their systems may turn out to be more rewarding than merely pointing out their legal deficiencies. From studying the preliminary as well as the final reports of schools inspected in Article III, there were signs of not only highlighting the negative aspects of the schools' performances, but also including positive observations in the report summaries. As stated in White Paper 20 (2012-2013), there are indications of a shift towards more pragmatic modes of governing, however, this was not conclusively seen in the qualitative data at hand in this PhD study.

Finally, while this has not been a study of the possible effects and side effects of school inspection, it nevertheless shows that inspection does have a bearing on the governing of schools and local school authorities. In sum, it may be fair to argue that the studies reviewed in Chapter 2 are inconclusive. However, some studies agree that inspection may have an influence on what takes place in schools before, during, and after the inspection process. At best, there are studies suggesting that school inspection may have an impact on schools and school leadership, at least indirectly speaking. I suggest that inspection processes seem to lead to insecurity among teachers and school leaders with regard to the actions and perceptions of the state and its inspection policy, which in the long run leads to changes in organizational culture and institutional structures. However, one question remains that has not been solved

through this study: is a lasting impact observable? This is only possible to ascertain by longitudinal studies, such as that which was suggested by Dedering and Müller (2011). This would, however, in the Norwegian example imply another, and far more resource-intensive approach than the one employed in the NOSI-project (see Section 6.6).

6.6 Concluding remarks: Learning the tools of the trade

In working on this doctoral thesis, one of the main challenges encountered by me as a researcher has been observing and reporting on a moving target in the form of state school inspections (SI). As shown in the preceding chapters, since current SI policies and practices are internationally undergoing major shifts in both foci and configurations, studying SI policies and practices has not been a simple task due to the changing combinations of governing tools in Norway and Sweden. This applied to not only viewing these tools as a theoretical concept, but also learning the tools of the trade and becoming an educational researcher.

One of the major tasks to overcome, but which was also one that gave me much pleasure, has been the move transition from a practitioner's point of view to a researcher's point of view, which was even more challenging than initially anticipated. However, I would claim that through working with this thesis I have made certain contributions to the field of SI studies in general, and in the Norwegian context specifically. Since SI in Norway is still unsettled and in a state of continual change, we do not know exactly what the policy space will look like in the near future (Ball, 1993; Bowe et al., 1992). Therefore, the results may have turned out differently if one had investigated state school inspection after the system had settled down both institutionally as well as on the policy actor level. Studying a system in change thus has its advantages, but also its challenges, since reporting on the moving target may become moot once the system has (possibly) stabilized. Nevertheless, I wish to emphasize that through publishing my work on school inspection, as well as by presenting my work in various for a, I hope to have both contributed to and also opened up the research space for further studies on this phenomenon. This applies not only to for further critical policy studies on the Norwegian or Scandinavian contexts, but also in those areas that are still conceptually and empirically under-researched by, for example, drawing on new-institutional theory.

Ideas for further studies on school inspection are several. A point of departure for future studies would be a comparative focus, by studying school inspection at the local and regional

levels in Norway and Sweden. For instance, this could be achieved through interviews with school principals on the municipal or regional level in Sweden, as well as with key officials at the regional offices of the Swedish School Inspection (SSI). This data could be compared with data already collected and presented in the NOSI-study. A second possibility (of several) could be to conduct a survey among school principals in both countries in collaboration with fellow Swedish researchers in order to further compare the perceptions and expectations of leaders concerning state school inspection across contexts.

Through a critical analysis of educational reform, the researcher is able to look past the mere functions and possible impacts of policy initiatives in order to see how shifts in policy may influence the lives of policy actors as well as practitioners on the meso- and micro-levels of educational institutions. In the end, my sincere wish is that this thesis and the findings reported in its articles will provide valuable input into how researchers and practitioners, teachers, school leaders, and policy-makers view state school inspection, along with input that can be used to critically discuss and reflect on these views.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table 1. Concept matrix (Webster & Watson, 2002)

Studies	Governing by inspection			The impact of school inspection: possible effects and side effects			School inspection as school improvement, evaluation and performance			School inspection as governing and policy enactment			Funding[25]
	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	
Lawn & Grek (2012)	x	x	x										ESRC[26]
Ozga (2012)		x	x										ESRC/EU[27]
Grek et al. (2013)		x	x										ESRC/VR[28]
Grek & Lindgren (2015a)	x	x	x										ESRC/VR
Ehren & Visscher (2006)						x[29]							n.a.[30]
de Wolf & Janssens (2007)						x[31]							n.a.
Gärtner et al. (2014)				x									n.a.
Ehren et al. (2015)					x								EU/LLL[32]
Altrichter & Kemethofer (2015)				x	x								EU/SMS[33]
Perryman (2006)							x		x				n.a.
Perryman (2007)							x		x				n.a.

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[25] According to information supplied in each publication.

[26] Economic and Social Research Council (U.K.)

[27] European Commission Framework Programme (E.U.)

[28] Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council)

[29] Ehren and Visscher's study (2006) includes a literature review of possible effects and side effects of inspection.

[30] No information of external funding supplied.

[31] de Wolf and Janssens' article (2007) includes a literature review of possible effects and side effects of inspection.

[32] Lifelong Learning Program (E.U.)

[33] Stiftung Mercator Schweiz (Switzerland)

Studies	Governing by inspection			The impact of school inspection: possible effects and side effects			School inspection as school improvement, evaluation and performance			School inspection as governing and policy enactment			Funding
	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	
Ehren & Vischer (2007)							x		x				n.a.

<div align="center">(Table 1 cont.)</div>

Studies	Governing by inspection			The impact of school inspection: possible effects and side effects			School inspection as school improvement, evaluation and performance			School inspection as governing and policy enactment			Funding
	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	National case study	Comparative study	Conceptual study	
Gärtner (2013)								x					n.a.
Dedering & Müller (2011)							x						n.a.
Husfeldt (2011)								x[34]	x				n.a.
Dedering (2015)							x						BMBF[35]
Baxter (2014)										x		x	n.a.
Wilkins (2014)										x			ESRC
Courtney (2015)										x		x	ESRC
Rönnberg (2011)										x			VR/UU
Rönnberg (2012)										x			VR/UU
Lindgren et al. (2012)										x		x	VR
Rönnberg et al. (2013)										x			VR/UU[36]
Rönnberg (2014)										x			VR/UU
Lindgren (2015)										x		x	VR/UU
Sowada & Dedering (2014)										x			NKM[37]/BMBF
Bitan et al. (2015)										x			n.a.

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[34] Husfeldt's study (2011) includes a review of research on the possible impact of inspection, linked to school improvement and development.
[35] Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany)
[36] Umeå University (Sweden)
[37] Niedersächsisches Kultusministerium (Germany)

Appendix 2: Table 2. Overview of Norwegian inspection handbooks (2008-2013)

	Inspection cycle 1	Inspection cycle 2	Inspection cycle 3	Inspection cycle 4
	2008 *Procedures for County Governors' Offices inspection in compliance with the Education Act and The Private School Act - Regular State Inspection 2008[1]. (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2007)*	2010a *Instructions for regular state inspection 2010/2011 Theme: Students' psycho-social environment[2] (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2010)*	2013a *Inspection in the educational Sector – A handbook in inspection methods (Version 1.1.) (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013c)*	2013b *Methods for inspection – a handbook of inspection methods in compliance with the Pre-school Act and the Education Act (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013b)*
Length	37 pages (plus list of definitions, four pages)	29 pages (plus preliminary report, eight pages)	35 pages	>130 pages
Rationale • Compliance/performance	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance	Compliance/performance (compliance emphasized)
Aim and scope • Compliance with • Education Act statutes • Deviation • Risk management • Minimum standards • Quality control and evaluation	- Satisfactory system for assessing compliance with requirements of the Education Act (and regulations), thus ensuring students' outcome(adaptive education) and e.g. special needs education (§13-10) - Deviation - Risk management - Minimum standards -Non-evaluative	- Students' psycho-social environment (§9a) - Deviation - Risk management - Minimum standards - Non-evaluative	- General coverage with compliance with in requirements in the Education Act - Legal offenses -Risk management - Some evaluative and developmental aspects - Includes templates for checklists and reports	- Student learning outcome (2014-2017) -Legal offenses - Risk management - Evaluative and developmental aspects - Website includes multiple templates for checklists, reports etc.
Organization • Methods • Guidance • Resources	- System revision, focussing on school owner's responsibilities -Non-guidance approach -Written documentation, checklists, interviews with (formal) key actors and pre-/post-meetings	- Increased focus on written routines of individual schools and on school leaders and staff, in addition to school owners -Non-guidance approach - Written documents, checklists, interviews with a wide range of key actors (leadership, staff, health services, student/parent representatives) and pre-/post-meetings	- Cooperation and communication with other external (local/central) key actors, in addition to individual schools and school owners - Non-guidance approach (?) - Written documents and checklists - Increased use of interviews with a wide range of key actors (leadership, staff, health services, student/parent representatives) and pre-/post-meetings. Detailed protocols for using interview method. - Publically accessible reports and data (e.g. KOSTRA) -Observation and inspection of school activities	- Cooperation and communication across levels vital - Guidance coupled with control aspects -Self-evaluation vital - Written documents and checklists - Wide range of interviews and pre-/post meetings - Detailed protocols for using interview method. - Publically accessible reports and data (e.g. KOSTRA) - Legal discretion (school level) widely discussed
Evaluation and implications • Online publication • Follow-up visits • Local 'policy learning'	- Online publication of reports - Follow-up by school owner and written report to County Governors' office - Informal 'collective' learning	- Online publication of reports - Follow-up by school owner and written report to County Governors' office. -Informal 'collective' learning	- Online publication of reports - Follow-up by school owner and written report to County Governors' office - Opening for follow-up visits within limits (risk calculation) -Knowledge building and learning	- Pilot studies of use in five counties (2013) - Online publication of reports - On-site follow up visits by inspectorate supplemented by written reports to County Governors'' Office - Knowledge building and collective learning emphasised

[1] Including attachment No. 5 – Definitions
[2] Including preliminary report for inspection conducted Fall 2010/Spring 2011

Appendix 3: Approval for research (NSD)

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Jorunn Møller
Institutt for lærerutdanning og skoleforskning
Universitetet i Oslo
Postboks 1099 Blindern
0317 OSLO

Vår dato: 23.10.2012   Vår ref:31869 / 3 / LMR   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 18.10.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

31869	*Legal Standards and Professional Judgment in Educational Leadership. LEX-EL*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Jorunn Møller*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.
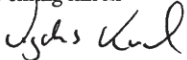
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.07.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Vigdis Namtvedt Kvalheim

Linn-Merethe Rød

Linn-Merethe Rød tlf: 55 58 89 11
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal det innhentes muntlig samtykke basert på muntlig og skriftlig informasjon om prosjektet og behandling av personopplysninger. Personvernombudet finner informasjonsskrivet tilfredsstillende utformet i henhold til personopplysningslovens vilkår.

Questback er databehandler for prosjektet. Personvernombudet forutsetter at det foreligger en databehandleravtale mellom Questback. og Universitetet i Oslo for den behandling av data som finner sted, jf. personopplysningsloven § 15. For råd om hva databehandleravtalen bør inneholde, se Datatilsynets veileder på denne siden: http://datatilsynet.no/verktoy-skjema/Skjema-maler/Databehandleravtale---mal/

Prosjektet skal avsluttes 31.07.2016 og innsamlede opplysninger skal da anonymiseres og lydopptak slettes. Anonymisering innebærer at e-postadresser/logger/koblingsnøkkel slettes, og at indirekte personidentifiserende opplysninger (sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. sted, yrke, alder, kjønn) fjernes eller grovkategoriseres slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes i materialet.

Appendix 4: Information letter (CGO Directors) (author's translation from Norwegian)

To Director of Education xx

County Governors' Office xx

Attachment 3
Date: August 15, 2013
Your ref: xx
Our ref.: xx

Request to participate in interview study

The Research Council of Norway has supported the project titled «Legal Standards and Professional Judgment in Educational Leadership". Project leader is Professor Jorunn Møller, University of Oslo. In the project, researchers from the Faculty of Education collaborate with colleagues from the Faculty of Law.

The project aims to enquire into how leaders on different levels in education interpret and enforce some key legal statues in The Education Act. The legal standards in focus are students' right to special needs education (§5-1), adaptive education (§1-3), and a good psychosocial environment conducive to learning (§9-1). Additionally, we wish to illuminate the employment of regular, state school inspection.

In the project we have already conducted a survey among all school principals in five counties. Now we wish to perform in-depth studies in order to shed light on the aims of the project, and we have planned to collect data from six compulsory schools, four upper-secondary schools and key personnel in the County Governors' Offices. We hope you are willing to participate in this study on the importance of legal statutes and regulations in schools, as well as the process of regular, state school inspection. We therefore request to make arrangements to conduct interviews in the section where you are leader. This includes an individual interview with you as Director of Education, and two individual interviews with personnel (one lawyer and one with pedagogical background) who have been responsible for carrying out regular, state school inspection. Each interview will last approximately 70 minutes. We will contact you again on a later occasion by phone or e-mail to make exact arrangements concerning time and place.

The Association of School Leaders, Union of Education Norway and KS ("Kommunenes Sentralforbund") have all agreed to support this study, since it targets important themes within the role of being school leader. It is our goal that results of this research will contribute to the simplification of the system, as well as contribute to professional development and

improvement of demanding and complex working conditions for school leaders. For more information about the project, please see our web page;
http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/forskning/prosjekter/legalstandardsedu/index.html

All information collected during this study will be handled confidentially. Interview notes will be stored separately on an encrypted computer. The data material will be anonymized at the end of the project period, July 31, 2016, by not including direct or identifying information, and furthermore name of workplace and position removed, and audiotaping will be deleted.

The project group consists of Professor Jorunn Møller (project leader), Professor Berit Karseth, Associate Professor Eli Ottesen, Associate Professor Kirsten Sivesind, post.doc. Guri Skedsmo, Professor Kristian Andenæs, Professor Kirsten Sandberg, post.doc. Helga Aune, Professor Emer. Henning Jakhelln, PhD-candidate Trond W. Welstad, and PhD-Candidate Jeffrey Hall.

It is voluntary to participate, and even if you agree to, you may at any time retract without reason. The project is submitted to Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). If you request more information about the study, please contact Professor Jorunn Møller by e-mail: jorunn.moller@ils.uio.no or by phone: (office) 22857618/ (mobile) 95901843.

 Best regards,

Jorunn Møller

(project leader)

Appendix 5: Interview guide (CGO officers) (author's translation from Norwegian)

<u>Background information:</u>

* Formal education
* Previous positions
* Experience at County Governors' Office (CGO)

<u>Purpose of regular, state school inspection (SI):</u>

* What do you consider most important with SI?
* How would you describe changes in the mandate of regular, state school inspection during the time you have been with the CGO?
* Which areas have been central, and what is emphasized within the following areas
  - o Special needs education
  - o Learning environment
  - o Regulation/pedagogical organization
  - o Instruction/learning outcomes
* How would you describe SI in light of;
  - o Quality systems?
  - o New governing expectations?
  - o Legal and pedagogical issues?

<u>Organization of SI:</u>

* How would you describe division of labor between The Ministry of Education and Research, The Directorate and the CGO?
* How are the inspection teams organized in regards to background and expertise?
* Who do you collaborate with?
* Which documents and knowledge resources are utilized in the planning and organizing of SI?

<u>The SI process (procedures and methods):</u>

* Selection of municipalities
* How is SI carried out (operationalization of legal statutes/regulations, notification of inspection, collection of information, timeline)
* Employment (notification, pre-meeting, interviews, verifications, on-site-inspection, post-meeting)
* Analyses and evaluations (investigations, checklists/templates, standards)
* How are decisions negotiated (within the team, and with your leaders)
* How are decisions assured and authorized?

Assessment with background in collected documentation (interviews, documents, meetings, observation):

* To which extent have the formalized procedures been helpful?
* How do you exchange experience and professional assessments?
* Which challenges have you met?
* Give some examples of simple/difficult decisions, and possible sources of conflict.
* Which expertise is necessary?
* Which source of professional development has been fruitful for you? Why?
* How is professional judgment and professionality employed in a job such as this?
* How satisfied are you with the horizontal steering of SI? (by superiors)

How SI and formal complaint cases contribute (in general terms) to leadership and development on the local level (school level/local school authority level)

* How is the role of the local school authority defined, in regards to the CGO and the individual schools?
* How do reports and feedback to schools contribute to the development of schools' practice and routines?
* How can SI contribute to the development of the CGO's procedures and routines for inspection of schools?
* How can SI contribute to collective learning processes (policy learning)?
* How are schools and local school authorities challenged towards development and change of practice?

Appendix 6: Example of policy analysis (NVivo; Government acts and regulations)

SFS_2010_800_Skollag_Section_26 - Coding by Node

SFS_2011_556_Förordning_med_Instruktioner - Coding by Node

Education_Act_Norway_30_September_2010_Section14_1 - Coding by Node
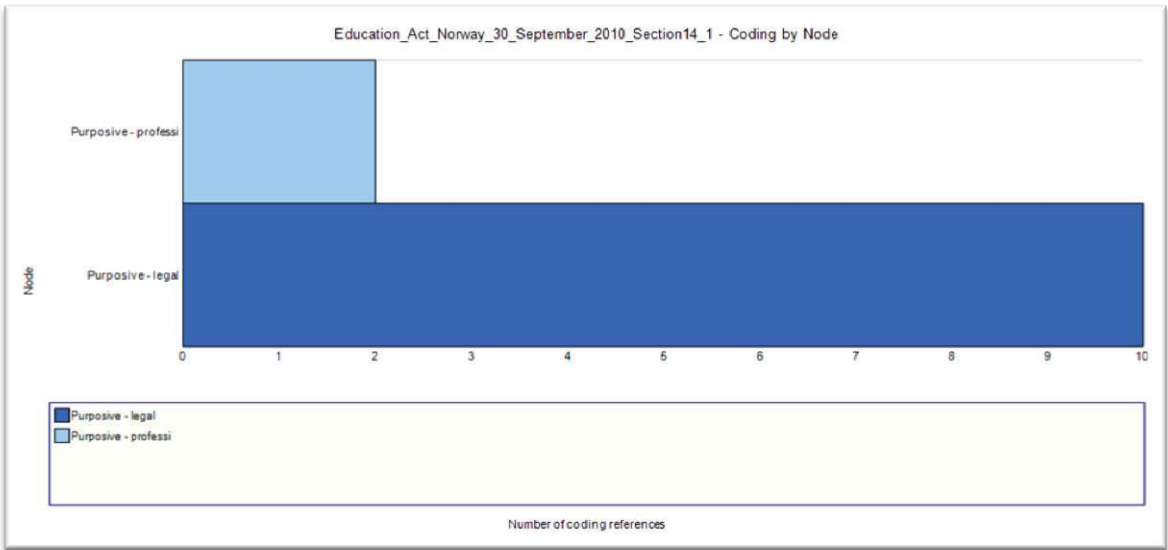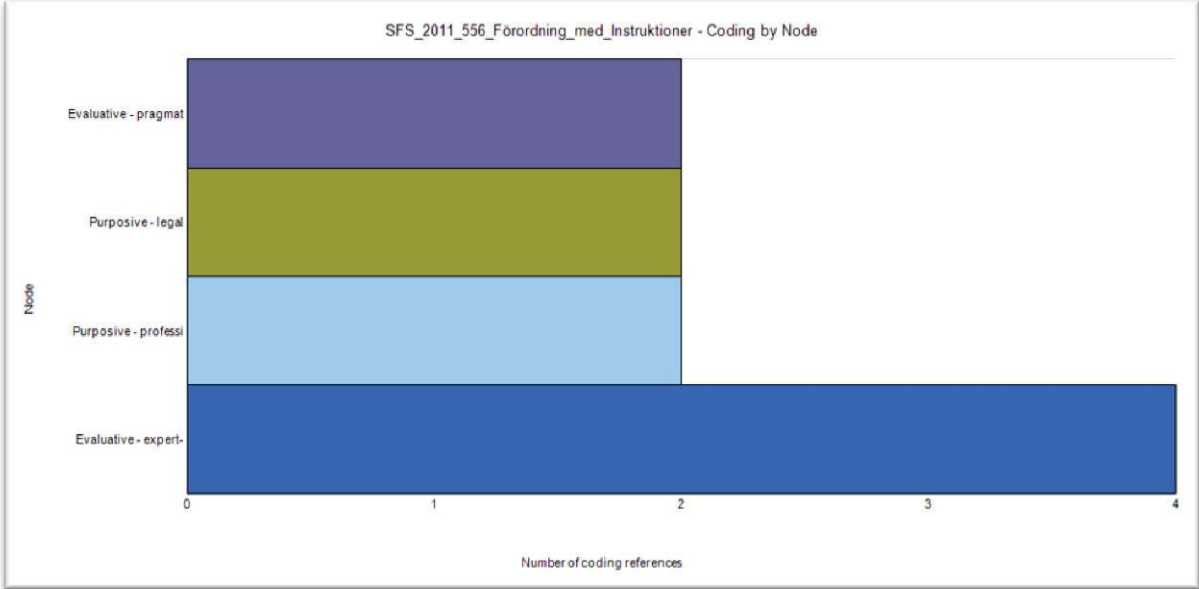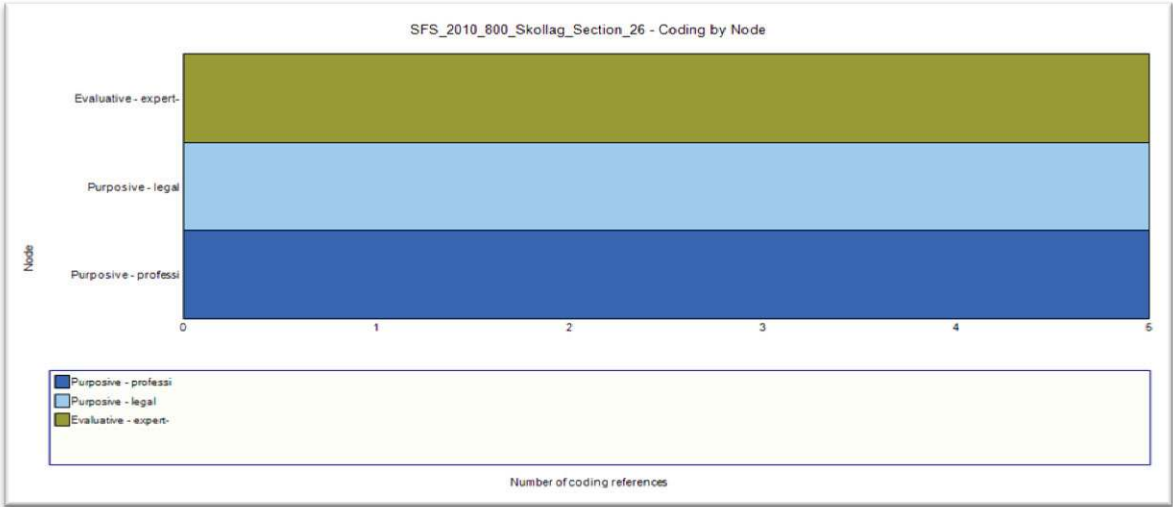
Appendix 7: Example of analysis from interview data (NVivo; Interview CGO "North")

Appendix 8: List of government acts, policy documents, public reports, and webpages

Government Act. 1985. Previous. Skollag (Svensk forfatningssamling 1985:1100) [The Education Act. SFS 1985:1100]. [In Swedish]. Stockholm.

Government Act (1992). Education (School) Act (1992). The United Kingdom. Retrieved from http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/38/contents/enacted

Government Act (1998). Act Relating to Primary and Secondary Education. (Opplæringsloven): Oslo.

Government Act (2010). Skollag (Svensk forfatningssamling 2010:1100 [SFS 2010:800]. [In Swedish]. Stockholm.

Government Bill (2008). Regeringens proposition 2007/08: 50. Nya skolemyndigheter [New school authorities]. [In Swedish]). Stockholm: Ministry of Education and Research.

Government Regulation (2006). Forskrift til opplæringsloven FOR-2006-06-23-724 [Regulation pertaining to the Education Act, 1998]. [In Norwegian]. Oslo: The Ministry of Education and Research.

Government Regulation (2008). Förordning (2008:613) med instruktion för Statens skolinspektion [Regulation 2008:613 With instructions for the state school inspectorate]. [In Swedish]. Stockholm: Riksdagen.

Government Regulation (2011). Förordning (2011:556) Med instruktion för Statens skolinspektion [Regulation 2011:556 with instructions for the state school inspectorate]. [In Swedish]. Stockholm: Riksdagen.

Hanssen, G. S., L. A. Heløe, and J. E. Klausen (2004a). NIBR Report 2004:4. The County Governor's Audit of the Municipal Sector [In Norwegian]. Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR): Oslo.

Hanssen, G. S., L. A. Heløe, and J. E. Klausen (2004b). NIBR Report 2004:7. The Dialogue between Regional and Local Authorities [In Norwegian]. Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR): Oslo.

The Ministry of Education (2007a). Tydeligt och öppent – Förslag til et stärkt skolinspektion [SOU 2007:101. Open and Transparent – Reinforcing School Inspection] [In Swedish]. Stockholm: Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education (2007b). Tre nya skolmyndigheter [SOU 2007:79. Three New National Agencies for Education] [In Swedish]. Stockholm: Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education (2008). Bildandet av Statens skolinspektion [Parliamentary Committee Directive 2008:3. Establishment of a State School Inspectorate] [In Swedish]. Stockholm: The Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education and Research (2008). Kvalitet i skolen [White Paper No. 31 (2007–2008). Quality in Schools] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: Ministry of Education and Research.

The Ministry of Education and Research (2009). The New Education Law – For Knowledge, Free Choice and Security. DS 2009:25. Stockholm: The Ministry of Education and Research.

The Ministry of Education and Research (2013). På rett vei – Kvalitet og mangfold i fellesskolen [White Paper No. 20 (2012–2013). On the Right Track: Quality and Diversity in Comprehensive School.] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: The Ministry of Education and Research.

The Ministry of Justice (2002). Statlig tilsyn – Granskning på medborgarans uppdrag [SOU 2002:14. State Audit – Investigation on Behalf of the Citizens] [In Swedish]. Stockholm: Ministry of Justice.

The Ministry of Labor and Administration (2003a). Om statlige tilsyn [White Paper No. 17 (2002–2003). On State Audit] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: Ministry of Labor and Administration.

The Ministry of Labor and Administration (2003b). Makt og demokrati [Official Report NOU 2003:19. Power and Democracy. Final report from the Power and Democracy project][In Norwegian]. Oslo: The Ministry of Labor and Administration.

The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (2004). Statlig tilsyn med kommunesektoren [Official Report NOU 2004:17. State Audit of the Municipal Sector] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

The National Agency for Education (NAE) (2005). Inspection for Improvement – A Brochure about the National Agency for Education's Educational Inspectorate [In Swedish]. Stockholm: NAE.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR) (2012). Felles nasjonalt tilsyn 2010–2011 [National Inspection Report 2010–2011] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: UDIR.

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (UDIR) (2013). Metodehåndbok for tilsyn – en håndbok i metode for tilsyn etter barnehageloven og opplæringsloven [Methods for inspection – a handbook of inspection methods in compliance with the Pre-school Act and the Education Act]. Oslo: The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. Retrieved from http://www.udir.no/Regelverk/Tilsyn/Metode-for-tilsyn/

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2016a) Tilsyn [Inspection]. http://www.udir.no/Regelverk/regelverk/tilsyn/

The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2016b). *Vurdering for læring* [Assessment for læring]. http://www.udir.no/Vurdering-for-laring/

The Office of the Auditor General (2006a). Riksrevisjonens undersøkelse av opplæringen i grunnskolen [Doc. No. 3:10, The Auditor General Office's Audit of primary and Secondary Education (2005–2006)] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: The Office of the Auditor General.

The Office of the Auditor General (2006b). Rapport: Opplæringen i grunnskolen. Vedlegg til Dok. no. 3:10. (2005–2006) [Report: Compulsory Education. Attachment to Doc. No. 3:10. (2005–2006)] [In Norwegian]. Oslo: The Office of the Auditor General.

The Office of the Auditor General. [Official Web Page]. https://www.riksrevisjonen.no/en/Pages/Homepage.aspx

The Swedish National Audit Office (2011). Lika betyg, lika kunskap? En uppföljning av statens styrning mot en likvärdig betygssättning i grundskolan [Official Report RiR 2011:23. Equal Grades, Equal Knowledge – A Follow-up of State Steering towards More equal Student Assessment in Primary and Lower Secondary Schools]. [In Swedish]. Stockholm: The Swedish National Audit Office.

The Swedish National Audit Office (2013). Statens tillsyn över skola– bidrar den till förbättrade kunskapsresultat? [Official Report RiR 2013:16. State Supervision of Schools – Contributing to Improved Learning Outcomes?] [In Swedish]. Stockholm: The Swedish National Audit Office.

The Swedish National Audit Office. [Official Web Page]. http://www.riksrevisionen.se/en/Start/

The Swedish School Inspectorate (2012). Statens skolinspektion. En skola med tiltro lyfter alleelever [National Inspection Report] [In Swedish]. Stockholm: The Swedish School Inspectorate. Dnr. 40-2012:2991

Appendix 9: Sample of data and selection of cases

Following mapping of central, Norwegian policy documents, legal documents and regulations concerning for example students' right to a sufficient psycho-social environment[38], the first major step for the LEX-EL group, which the NOSI-project is linked to, was to conduct a survey among school principals in five out of 19 Norwegian counties. These five counties were geographically spread in order to cover as many regions as possible; Northern Norway, the West coast, etc. The survey was administered to all principals in upper-secondary schools in these five counties (N = 239). In all, 137 principals completed the survey, which gave a response rate slightly above 58 % (Møller & Sivesind, in press).

The aim of the survey was to map how principals in lower secondary and upper secondary schools interpret, deliberate and make professional decisions related to students' legal rights. The online survey included the following themes; *background information (personal and municipal), school leadership, school leaders as a legal "interpreters", legal procedures, governance/governing, and state school inspections.*

Results from the data in the survey study, not included in the NOSI-project as such, formed a base for qualitative, in-depth case studies on the county and municipal levels. Three counties were reduced from the original five in the survey, geographically spread throughout the country; counties "North", "West" and "East". Finally, from these three counties, five case municipalities were purposively sampled (Silverman, 2011) based on open municipal register data (KOSTRA[39]) as well as national register data from Statistics Norway (SSB[40]). The sample was based on indicators such as spending costs per student, percentage of students receiving special needs education and student/teacher ratio. To ensure anonymity, small municipalities were not included in the NOSI-project, thus only midsized municipalities with similar KOSTRA data characteristics were included in the database.

Since the survey data was not directly utilized in the NOSI-project, the results of the quantitative analysis are not discussed in this thesis. However, it seems vital to the overall credibility of the NOSI-project to convey that the sampled counties and municipalities were carefully selected, using purposive sampling and statistics.

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[38] §9a-1 in The Education Act (Government Act, 1998).
[39] KOSTRA (Key figures on municipal activities) https://www.ssb.no/en/offentlig-sektor/kostra
[40] SSB (Statistics Norway) http://www.ssb.no/en/

Appendix 10: The LEX-EL project in brief

The project group is cross-disciplinary and involves scholars from the Faculty of Educational Sciences and the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo. It is organized by the Department of Teacher Education and School Research, and funded by the Research Council of Norway (RCN).

The objective of the LEX-EL project is to describe how school leaders on different levels in education interpret and enforce the law in interaction with others. The project also focuses on the significance in which legal standards are addressed through national inspection. Emphasis is on students' individual right to special needs education, a good psycho-social learning environment and the schools' duty to provide adaptive education for all.

Mapping of key documents linked to the focus area of the study shows that multiple policy documents and guidance material have been developed, and that the number of such documents published on the web is increasing. Central government has thus bestowed upon themselves a key interpreting role. A consequence is that school leaders utilize these secondary sources instead of conferring the law directly. The project group has also conducted an analysis of legal principles and standards as well as what the right to education implies. Additionally, the concept of norms has been addressed and analyzed since normative steering of behavior is an important characteristic of schools.

An online survey among principals in primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools in five counties and four municipalities (strategically sampled) was conducted in 2013 (n = 239). The aim was to map school principals' knowledge of sec. 1-3, 5-1 and ch. 9a in The Education Act (1998), how they conceived these regulations as well as how they work with legal issues in schools. The analysis shows that many principals perceive the act's requirement to ensure adaptive education as unclear. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that many respondents welcome a more discretionary approach since this allows principals greater leeway in making legal decisions. More than 50% of the respondents wish to divide students into aptitude groups, in order to ensure better adaptive education, but a majority means that this is not permitted within the limits of the law. Moreover, a large majority agree that national school inspections are an important corrective for schools, and most believe that The Pupil Survey has led to more focus on the psycho-social environment. The survey is now

followed up with interviews in three counties. Results of the survey are reported in a forthcoming article (Møller & Sivesind, in press).

As a PhD candidate, I conducted a comparative analysis of 23 key documents concerning how national inspection of municipalities and schools is carried out in Norway and Sweden. The first analysis is reported in one article with co-author Kirsten Sivesind, and one single-authored book chapter in a forthcoming anthology (Hall & Sivesind, 2015; Hall, in press).

Qualitative, individual/group interviews in three counties ("fylker") with more than 50 municipal educational CEOs, school principals, teachers, County Governors' Officers and County Educational Directors were conducted by the project group in 2013-2014. Analysis of the interview material is reported on in several research articles and in a forthcoming anthology (Hall, 2016; Møller & Ottesen, in press; Ottesen & Møller, 2016).

Finally, observations of school inspection were conducted by me as a sole researcher in three separate compulsory schools in three municipalities. Analysis of the observation data is reported on in one research article (Hall, in review).

Project leader of the LEX-EL project is Professor Jorunn Møller at The Department of Teacher Education and School Research, University of Oslo.

Project web page for more information on publications, news, and forthcoming publications: http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/english/research/projects/legalstandardsedu/

Part II Articles I, II, and III

Errata

Hall, Jeffrey Brooks (2016). *State School Inspection: The Norwegian Example.* PhD-dissertation, University of Oslo.

Page III, 1st paragraph, line 4: 'the main aim the', changed to 'the main aim'.

Page VI, 2nd paragraph: Have added following sentence to Acknowledgements; 'Thank you Florian for being such a wonderful host during my research stay at at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin''.

Page 1, footnote 2: 'Professor Jorunn Møller in the Department', changed to 'Professor Jorunn Møller at the Department'.

Page 39, 1st paragraph, line 2: 'the analytical- theoretical model', changed to 'the analytical-theoretical model'.

Page 39, 1st paragraph, line 3: 'Development of the analytical-theoretical model and the analysis of the policy documents was done', changed to 'Development of the analytical-theoretical model and the analysis of the policy documents were done'.

Pages 41-42, 4th paragraph, last line: 'institutional texts like', changed to 'institutional texts such as'.

Page 46, 1st paragraph, line 2: 'Data was collected in 2012 and 2013', changed to 'Data was collected in 2013 and 2014'.

Page 72 in References: Berger, P. & Luckmann, T. (1967) has been changed to include hanging indention

Page 73 in References: Cresswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2011), 2 nd is changed to 2nd

Page 84 in Appendices: Numeral 25 in footnote 25 has been changed from Calibri font to Times New Roman.