



A Micro-Level Perspective on Joint Inspections: How Teamwork Shapes Decision Making

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INTRODUCTION

Inspectors have been studied as typical street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky 1980) who have individual discretion to make decisions in one-on-one interactions with inspectees. However, as other street-level bureaucrats, inspectors increasingly operate in teams and perform joint inspections to more effectively tackle the complexity of multi-problems and wicked issues in society (Rutz et al. 2017; Loyens 2019). These inspection teams are either (1) intra-organizational, consisting of inspectors from the same agency (Pires 2011; Loyens 2012), such as teams of Belgian labor inspectors who work together in difficult cases (Loyens 2012), or (2) inter-organizational, consisting of inspectors from different agencies who team up (Groeneveld and Van de Walle 2011; Hudson 2005a, b; Noordegraaf 2011), such as the Joint Inspectorate for Youth

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(JIY) in the Netherlands.¹ Despite this new reality, street-level bureaucracy studies on inspectors mainly hold an individual inspector perspective that does not take into account the role of team cooperation in decision making on the ground. This chapter argues that teamwork in joint inspections creates a dynamic that is different than the interaction in one-on-one inspector—inspectee encounters. In other words, teamwork has characteristics that seem to result in specific decision making outcomes, which could not have been generated by individual inspectors. The chapter will therefore look into the dynamics within both intra- and inter-organizational teams of inspectors, and how these dynamics shape decision making in joint inspections. Previous research shows that inspection work in teams can be beneficial to deal with complex societal problems (Pires 2011; Rutz et al. 2017), but at the same time entails many challenges. It can, for example, have unintended effects on decision making in terms of (un)responsiveness or (not) taking into account the complexity of particular cases (Hudson 2005a, b; Rutz et al. 2013). Given the limited scholarly attention to this topic, this chapter calls for more research to better understand how team cooperation shapes decision making in joint inspections on the ground, and how challenges can be dealt with.

This chapter will first discuss different types of team cooperation that have been identified in previous research on inspectors and other street-level bureaucrats, and proposes a typology of joint inspections. This typology is based on two dimensions, which respectively distinguish between, on the one hand, joint inspections conducted by intra- and inter-organizational teams, and on the other hand, joint inspections done by formal and informal teams. In addition, a further distinction is made between various types of formal discretion that teams involved in joint inspections have been granted. Inspiration for this typology is drawn from the broader literature on networks, which is emerging within public administration (Turrini et al. 2010; Isett et al. 2011; Lecy et al. 2014; Kapucu et al. 2017). The following part focuses on the question how team cooperation shapes decision making in joint inspections. This will be illustrated by empirical findings in the few published studies that are

¹The JIY is a multi-disciplinary cooperation between the Health Care Inspectorate, Inspectorate of Education, Inspectorate for Youth Care, Inspectorate for Safety and Justice, and Inspectorate of Social Affairs and Employment, and focuses on problems involving young people which are difficult to tackle by one organization or sector (such as child abuse, youth crime, and poverty among young people) (Rutz et al. 2017).

available on this topic. Based on these findings, the next part discusses the main challenges in joint inspections. The final part concludes the chapter and suggests a research agenda.

VARIOUS TYPES OF JOINT INSPECTIONS

As society becomes more and more complex, street-level bureaucrats increasingly experience the need to ‘look around’ (Rice 2017: 12) and learn from colleagues how to deal with multi-problem and wicked issues (van Bueren et al. 2003; Turrini et al. 2010). Street-level bureaucrats are also increasingly involved in collaborative initiatives. Within many agencies, teams are formed to deal with cases in a collective and holistic manner (Pires 2011). But also between agencies formal partnerships have been made to join forces (Sandfort 1999; McCallin 2001; Osborne 2010; Groeneveld and Van de Walle 2011; Noordegraaf 2011; Rutz et al. 2017). Such practices have fueled research on collaborative governance and networks in public administration (Turrini et al. 2010; Isett et al. 2011; Lecy et al. 2014; Kapucu et al. 2017). However, only a few of these studies have analyzed what happens within these networks at the micro-level (see, e.g., Lecy et al. 2014). Also in street-level bureaucracy research, in which frontline decision making is at the center, only recently a line of research has emerged on how teamwork shapes frontline work in general (e.g., Foldy and Buckley 2009; Nouwen et al. 2012; Bos et al. 2016; Loyens 2019) or inspection work in particular (see, e.g., Pires 2011; Rutz et al. 2017; Dederling and Sowada 2017; Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). Overall, how street-level bureaucrats work together in teams is an understudied topic in public administration (Nouwen et al. 2012; Dederling and Sowada 2017; Loyens 2019). There are only a few studies that focus on how team cooperation shapes inspection work on the ground. Before discussing the findings of these studies in the next part it is, however, important to bring some clarity to what is meant precisely by joint inspections in this chapter, and which types of joint inspections have already been identified in previous research.

This chapter proposes a typology of joint inspections (see Table 11.1) based on previous research (e.g., Isett et al. 2011; Rice 2017; Rutz et al. 2017). We particularly draw inspiration from the network literature, even though its focus is wider. A network can in a broad sense be defined as a ‘set of actors connected by a set of ties’ (Borgatti and Foster 2003:

Table 11.1 Eight types of joint inspections

	<i>Intra-organizational teams</i>	<i>Inter-organizational teams</i>
Formal teams	[1] Formal single agency joint inspections with <i>collective discretion</i> [2] Formal single agency joint inspections with <i>delegated discretion</i> [3] Formal single agency joint inspections with <i>individual discretion</i>	[5] Formal multi-agency joint inspections with <i>collective discretion</i> [6] Formal multi-agency joint inspections with <i>delegated discretion</i> [7] Formal multi-agency joint inspections with <i>individual discretion</i>
Informal teams	[4] Informal single agency joint inspections with <i>individual discretion</i>	[8] Informal multi-agency joint inspections with <i>individual discretion</i>

992). The concept ‘joint inspection’ that is used in this chapter is much narrower, being the cooperation of two or more inspectors (team) in the inspection of a specific site followed by one or more decisions. Our approach thus differs from that of Mordaunt (2000) who has categorized inspections according to their focus (e.g., whether a single agency or a range of service provisions are inspected), and not according to the actors (i.e., inspectors or agencies) doing the inspection. We do not include joint inspections in which multiple countries are involved (e.g., joint inspections of clinical trial sites as part of a WHO initiative in Maïga et al. 2009), given that such collaboration entails entirely different group dynamics than between inspectors who work together within the same region.

Building upon Rice’s (2017) typology of networks, we differentiate between intra-organizational and inter-organizational teams, respectively referring to teams of inspectors from a single agency [types 1–4], on the one hand, and (often more diverse and multi-disciplinary) teams of inspectors from different agencies, on the other [types 5–8]. In the second dimension, we distinguish between joint inspections that are formalized through protocols, (internal) regulations or policies, and those that have an informal character (Isett et al. 2011; Rutz et al. 2017). This distinction is based on network literature, in which the importance of both formal and informal relationships between actors is emphasized, although formal networks receive more scholarly attention (Isett et al. 2011; Loyens 2019). The relationship between actors in both types of joint inspections differs: while relationships in formal joint inspections have a legal basis, relationships in informal joint inspections

are formed through personal contact, have a voluntary character, and are based on trust and mutual understanding (Kapucu et al. 2017).

In addition to the two main dimensions, we further differentiate between different types of discretion that are formally granted to actors working together in joint inspections. Despite the important difference between ‘discretion as granted and as used’ (Hupe et al. 2015: 17), we only include the discretion as granted (i.e., formal discretion) in our typology, the main reason being that discretion as used (i.e., how inspectors perceive and use their formal discretion), can only be understood after thorough empirical research within joint inspection teams. Moreover, discretion as used can be differently understood by various team members and evolve over time, making it less useful to categorize joint inspections. In informal teams, cooperation is mostly voluntary and members keep their individual discretion [types 4 and 8]. This type of teamwork can be seen in Belgian multi-disciplinary team inspections (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). The situation is more complicated in joint inspections that are based on protocols or formal partnerships. Three ways in which formal discretion is granted were found in previous research. First, some inspection teams have collective discretion [types 1 and 5]. This is, for example, the case in the FGTS Operational Group in the Brazilian labor inspection (Pires 2011), the Dutch Joint Inspectorate for Youth (Rutz et al. 2017) and the Dutch multi-disciplinary ‘take-away team’. This team consists of ‘professionals from different agencies (including the tax authorities)’, and is installed ‘to combat organized crime and confiscate criminal assets’ (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018: 17). Second, some teams do not have formal collective discretion, but take decisions together and then delegate the administrative work to one inspector in the team. This is the case in Belgian inter-organizational anti-fraud teams in which five labor inspectorates work together in joint inspections.² This type of discretion will be referred to as delegated discretion [types 2 and 6]. Third, some interdisciplinary teams work together in joint inspections, while individual members focus on different types of offenses. Each team member then has individual discretion

²The five Belgian labor inspectorates organize monthly joint anti-fraud inspections (Loyens 2012). These inspection teams do not have collective discretion, but make decisions together and then divide the administrative work among each other. We refer to this practice as delegated discretion, because the team has no formal collective discretionary power and only one inspector in the team takes the case. Technically this team member can in her report deviate from the team decision, but this is not common in practice.

in dealing with the offense that her agency focuses on [types 3 and 7]. The Schiphol team in the Netherlands (Loyens 2019) is an example of this type of team collaboration. Based on the Schiphol protocol (2003), street-level bureaucrats from the Military Police, the child protection service and a youth care center (NIDOS) cooperate and share information to protect minors.

HOW TEAM COOPERATION SHAPES DECISION MAKING ON THE GROUND

The few studies on decision making in joint inspections have resulted in valuable insights on how inspection teams operate in practice. First, when inspectors collaborate in teams they are better equipped to effectively deal with complex cases, because teamwork encourages them to balance multiple interests, and to use each other's expertise and knowledge (Rutz et al. 2017; Pires 2011). This results in complex and balanced (combinations of) solutions for specific problems they are faced with. Second, studies find that joint inspection teams take responsive decisions (Rutz et al. 2017). On the one hand, this is because the problem is addressed from different angles and therefore various contextual aspects are taken into account. But on the other hand, working together is also 'eye opening', because inspectors start to see other regulatory options which they had not considered before (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). However, and third, this emphasis on responsiveness in joint inspections can also hamper consistency and perceived fairness of decisions. Inspection teams sometimes find strategies to find a workable balance between these principles (Dedering and Sowada 2017; Rutz et al. 2017). Fourth, working in teams may also enhance team learning (defined here as collective information processing and the development of shared mental models, based on Nouwen et al. 2012), that can indirectly influence decision making. In discussing these empirical results, we will show that some of these findings are still inconclusive or contradictory (see, e.g., Nouwen et al. 2012).

Dealing with Complexity by Balancing Multiple Perspectives

The main benefit of joint inspections seems to be that inspectors who work in teams are encouraged and supported to find a balance between multiple perspectives when dealing with complex cases, such as

multi-problem clients. Rutz and colleagues (2017) conducted a qualitative comparative study in England and the Netherlands, respectively in the Care Quality Commission and the Joint Inspectorate for Youth. Whereas at the Care Quality Commission, inspectors were granted individual discretion, but sometimes cooperated in an informal way, the teams in the Joint Inspectorate for Youth were granted collective discretion. The researchers found that inspection teams with collective discretion ‘engage colleagues, managers, and stakeholders to include other perspectives and knowledge, and to gain mandate and broaden their repertoire’ (Rutz et al. 2017: 91). This resulted in more balanced decision making because multiple perspectives on the problem were taken into account. This approach, in other words, ‘multiplies the number of angles from which to view the subject under scrutiny [and] facilitates the ability to make complex decisions, balancing rules, context, interests, and understanding of the subject’ (Rutz et al. 2017: 91).

Pires (2011) also found that teamwork in frontline organizations results in a higher ability to effectively deal with complex cases compared to individual inspections. In a natural experiment study, he compared decisions made by inspectors who were monitored and rewarded by means of individual performance targets (e.g., using a pay-for-performance compensation) with teams of inspectors who worked together on specific themes or problems (e.g., child labor or illegal subcontracting) and were monitored by means of reports they wrote on team progress and problem-solving abilities. The inspection teams were able to make more complex judgments in the long run, because they were sensitive to important contextual and sector-specific variables. They were also better at seeking ‘collaboration within and across organizations’ (Pires 2011: 61), because they acknowledged that as a team they could not handle complex problems without interactions with other departments or agencies. Interestingly, this cooperation often resulted in ‘some combination of legal, managerial, or technological solution for compliance problems’ (Pires 2011: 61).

Responsive Regulatory Decision Making

Previous studies found some evidence that joint inspections also increase responsiveness. This partly results from taking into account multiple perspectives on the problem, considering contextual elements, and adopting a holistic approach by looking at the case from different angles (as

described above). By involving colleagues and stakeholders from other agencies, inspectors' understanding of the case as a whole improves, which allows teams of inspectors to better adapt their decision to the particular situation. Rutz and colleagues (2017) found that in the Dutch Joint Inspectorate for Youth teams, which has collective discretion, the combined expertise, knowledge and competences of team members resulted in responsive regulatory decisions. Moreover, cooperation with others may result in inspectors seeing an alternative option to deal with a particular case that they did not see beforehand, and which is in their view a more adequate response to the problem. This was, for example, observed in an ethnographic study on ethical decision making by labor inspectors and police officers (Loyens 2012). Some labor inspectors in this study participated in regular joint inspections with the food inspection and the police. These were informal multi-agency joint inspections that focused on different types of offenses (e.g., concerning food safety, labor law, liquor permit, etc.). As is typical in such informal collaborative initiatives, all team members had individual discretion. Nevertheless, sometimes decisions by individual inspectors were being adapted to decisions made by other team members. For example, during a joint re-inspection in a swingers club, a labor inspector was more lenient for social fraud recidivism than was common within her agency, because the food inspector in her team was impressed with the client's efforts to improve food safety. While this decision was partly to 'maintain relationship' (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018: 18) with other team members, the labor inspector was also concerned that an overly strict approach would result in the client's resistance to comply with any regulation in the future. Increasing future voluntary compliance is indeed seen as an important goal of responsive regulation (Braithwaite et al. 2007; Feld and Frey 2007; Leviner 2008; Nielsen and Parker 2009; Braithwaite 2011).

However, empirical work by Pires (2011) shows mixed results concerning the beneficial effects of teamwork on responsive regulation. He conducted observations and interviews with inspectors of the FGTS Operational Group, which is part of the Brazilian Labor Inspection. Whereas, these inspection teams were very well equipped to make complex judgments which were beneficial in the long term, their decisions were in the short time less responsive to specific demands of clients. More particularly, they sometimes overlooked the immediate needs of workers, policymakers and politicians. Pires (2011: 62) therefore concludes (referring to Silbey 1981, 1984): 'Even though in the medium

to long term the work of groups is more likely to solve complex and relevant problems, in the short term, hazardous and illegal situations experienced by workers may remain unnoticed and unremediated'. This suggests that there sometimes is a tension between dealing with complexity and responsive decision making. Inspection teams are thus faced with the challenge to try to find a workable balance between long-term interventions and immediate responses to complaints. Hence, further empirical research is necessary to analyze how various types of joint inspections relate to responsive regulation, and how contextual elements in the involved inspection agencies and teams of inspectors influence this relationship.

Being Responsive and Consistent at the Same Time?

Whereas responsiveness is often considered an important condition to enhance legitimacy of regulatory agencies (Vigoda 2002; Mascini and van Wijk 2009; Pires 2011), (over)emphasizing responsive regulation may also have negative consequences in terms of consistency and fairness (Rutz et al. 2017). If team cooperation in joint inspections indeed results in more responsive regulatory decision making, then there is a risk of inconsistencies in decisions made in different joint inspections of the same team or decisions made by different inspection teams. The tension between responsiveness and consistency is clearly shown in a study among school inspection teams from Lower Saxony in Germany. Dederling and Sowada (2017) interviewed 28 school inspectors about the collective process of scoring schools, uncertainties they experience and resolving disagreements among school inspection teams. The researchers found a distinction between what they understand as 'sociological citizens' and 'strict rule enforcers'. While sociological citizens emphasize responsiveness, strict rule enforcers value consistency more, which according to Dederling and Sowada (2017) resembles the difference between state-agent and citizen-agent narratives (Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000). Within school inspection teams, individual inspectors sometimes prefer either of both enforcement styles, as illustrated in the criticism of one of the respondents on a responsive inspection style:

“At that moment when I let the situation determine whether I use the indicators in this way or that way, I enter shaky ground.” (Dederling and Sowada 2017: 16)

When different team members prefer different styles, working together is sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, the respondents mentioned that they had found different strategies to reach a unanimous assessment, being (1) the evaluative-positioning method, (2) the evaluative-thought-experimental method and (3) the descriptive-evaluative method (Dedering and Sowada 2017). In the evaluative-positioning method the proposed evaluation by one inspector is the starting point. Other inspectors in the team respond by approving the scoring or not, sometimes leading to a discussion or negotiation with the aim to end with a shared group evaluation. In the second strategy, the evaluative-thought-experimental method, inspectors ‘equally exchange the pros and cons of all assessment scores in question’ (Dedering and Sowada 2017: 18). By first trying to reach consensus on the criteria and indicators, an overall group evaluation is developed. Typical for this kind of evaluation is that ‘an inspector can simultaneously argue for a more positive or more negative evaluation [and thus] does not necessarily have to stick to one assessment which he or she then advocates’ (Dedering and Sowada 2017: 18). The descriptive-evaluative method emphasizes the distinction between a descriptive and an evaluative phase. By doing so the assessment is delayed, which makes discussion of facts without personal preferences easier, although it seems to be impossible to completely separate both phases in practice. Each of these strategies may result in a different relationship between consistency and responsiveness in particular cases. In the first strategy, the dominant impact of the initiating inspector’s style may result in one of both principles being emphasized more. The second and third strategy, however, seem to result in a more equal balance between both principles, because there is less impact of inspectors’ individual preferences. In the second strategy, the positioning of individual inspectors is only temporal, and in the third strategy it is delayed as long as possible.

In the Dutch Joint Inspectorate for Youth the tension between responsiveness and consistency was resolved in a similar way, particularly by emphasizing collective discretionary room. This refers to ‘organizing others’ involvement and a shared space to act flexibly’ (Rutz et al. 2017: 91). The authors argue that such collective discretion, on the one hand, enhances responsiveness by taking into account various perspectives and thereby actively using the expertise, knowledge and competences of team members (as described above). Consistency, on the other hand, is also enhanced because ‘by working collectively, inspectors develop a shared

perspective (Rutz et al. 2017: 91), because they share knowledge and expertise (Pires 2011; Tuijn et al. 2014). Both studies, however, raise the question whether seeking consensus and granting teams collective discretionary room necessarily result in such balanced decision making, and how possible negative consequences, such as groupthink (see also below), can be dealt with.

Team Learning

Some research on teamwork of street-level bureaucrats in general and inspectors in particular has focused on team learning. Fundamental to team learning are collective information processing and the development of shared mental models (Nouwen et al. 2012). The former refers to ‘sharing [information, knowledge and expertise], co-construction, constructive conflicts and team reflexivity’ (Nouwen et al. 2012: 2103). Based on these collective information processes, teams construct ‘shared mental model[s], which is the team member’s shared, organized understanding and mental representation of knowledge about key elements of the team’s task environment’ (Nouwen et al. 2012: 2103). We will not discuss empirical findings on each of these aspects in detail, because this chapter focuses on decision making on the ground. Nevertheless, the few studies on team learning in the field of inspection show that inspectors indeed learn from each other, and that this learning may at least indirectly influence decision making in joint inspections. These studies, for example, found that through learning inspection teams may develop ‘more effective ways of working’ (Rutz et al. 2017: 91) and may adopt a shared perspective or a ‘collective schema’ (Foldy and Buckley 2009: 24; based on Sandfort 1999) on the cases they deal with, which could increase consistent decision making.

Some caution is, however, necessary. Learning effects may also have other, unintended consequences. Not only can collective ideas and perspectives inhibit change (Foldy and Buckley 2009), they can also result in overly homogeneous groups that do not encourage critical reflection, do not allow divergent opinions, or that engage in groupthink (van Knippenberg et al. 2004). As explained by Nouwen and colleagues (2012: 2102) ‘[i]n teams that suffer groupthink, opinions that are divergent from the team culture, team identity, team norms and/or shared opinions, are considered dumb, stupid, wrong, abnormal or even aggressive’.

More research is needed to understand how inspection teams learn, how these learning processes influence decision making on the ground, and which measures can be taken to overcome the risks of groupthink and discarding critical reflection.

CHALLENGES IN JOINT INSPECTIONS

This part focuses on challenges that teamwork in the field of inspection brings about, particularly those that relate to micro-level decision making in joint inspections. We will discuss three specific challenges that have been addressed by several researchers. First, the social bonds between inspection teams may result in opportunistic tit-for-tat strategies that could lead to conflicts of interest, because inspectors want to maintain relationship with their colleagues (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). Second, whereas inspection teams are encouraged to take into account multiple perspectives, there is always a risk of oversimplification of the problem. When dealing with very complex and ambiguous problems that create uncertainty, inspection teams may indeed be encouraged to sidestep the complexity of particular cases (Rutz et al. 2013). Third, we will address the difficulty of various agencies with different or conflicting goals working together in joint inspections. Although there is hardly any research on this particular topic in the field of inspection, important lessons can be learned from studies in other domains, such as criminal justice and child care (Ansell and Gash 2008; Loyens 2019; Hudson 2005a).

Teamwork and Tit-for-Tat Strategies

Whereas being involved in teams can increase learning and commitment, as discussed above, the social bonds that are developed can also have negative consequences on decision making processes. Particularly teams that work together for a longer period of time, may during joint inspections feel pressured to sometimes do a favor for another team member—which is later returned—to maintain relationship (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). Such opportunistic tit-for-tat strategies were regularly observed in a Belgian doctoral study among inter-organizational teams of police officers and labor inspectors (Loyens 2012). Commonly, favors consisted of mutually sharing classified information or a labor inspector using her discretion to do an unannounced inspection in an establishment that is considered useful for an ongoing police investigation in exchange for

the police officer's assistance during that joint inspection (Loyens 2014). A detective explains in the following quote that this practice is formally against the law, but shows the benefit of teamwork for both parties:

“In theory, these men [labor inspectors] have a specific investigation for which they request the magistrate for a warrant and the police for assistance to protect them. That's the principle. And well, what do we sometimes consider? The reverse. We have a case, but we have no house search warrant. So we take advantage of them. They start an investigation. They ask for a warrant and they join us. [...] We only want their involvement to get the warrant so we can go inside, which is of course totally illegal. But it is with good reason, because we know something bad is going on, you know.” (Loyens 2014: 72)

Tit-for-tat strategies not only regularly result in this kind of rule breaking, but sometimes also in serious conflicts of interest, as shown in another case in the same study. During an inter-organizational joint inspection in the catering sector (which was a cooperation of the police, food inspection and labor inspection) serious social fraud and food safety violations were detected. Nevertheless, neither the labor inspector nor the food inspector filed a report because they did not want to offend the police officer who was acquainted with the owner and had himself suggested to inspect his new establishment (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). When discussing this decision a few weeks later in an interview with the labor inspector involved in this case, she explained that she had learned from this event that working together with the same team for a long period of time is not advisable, and that she would propose a rotation system for the next joint inspections (findings based on, but not reported in Loyens 2012).

Simplification of Complex Problems

As described above, complex cases can often be more effectively dealt with by teams of inspectors than by inspectors working alone, because in teams inspectors are encouraged to take multiple perspectives on the problem into account. Still, teamwork sometimes has the reverse effect and results in the simplification of complex problems. This risk seems to be particularly high when inspection teams are confronted with uncertainty and ambiguity. This is shown in a 20-month ethnographic study

on joint inspections by a partnership of five Dutch inspectorates to tackle the consequences of youth poverty (Rutz et al. 2013). The authors explain that '[i]nitially, the inspectors framed poverty as a multi-faceted risk problem for children that required an integrated answer' (Rutz et al. 2013: 376), and that inspectorates 'organized participative processes to involve various stakeholders and to collect a diverse range of experiences, opinions and ideas [that] generated a variety of options for improvement' (Rutz et al. 2013: 376). However, inspectors also experienced that these horizontal interactions with stakeholders conflicted with their strict regulatory role. They therefore tried to simplify the poverty problem so that implementable recommendations could be formulated, based on the idea that 'inspectors need to provide quick and simple solutions' (Rutz et al. 2013: 377). The authors conclude that the inspectors combined the strategy of 'accepting uncertainty' (because they frame youth poverty as a problem with multiple causes) and 'minimizing uncertainty' (to develop quick and simple solutions). However, because 'minimizing uncertainty' was more dominant (Rutz et al. 2013), their decision was based on an oversimplification of the problem.

Top-down implementation of integrated inspection frameworks could also result in oversimplification. Hudson (2005a, 2006) has studied the changes in England's child services inspection. In the context of the Children Act 2004 and the Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' (Chief Secretary to the Treasury 2003, cited in Hudson 2005a), various inspection agencies were encouraged to cooperate and develop an integrated inspection framework (IIF) for children's services, led by the school inspectorate Ofsted. The main goal was to conduct joint inspections that resulted in 'joint reviews on both quality of provision and how well agencies are working together' (Hudson 2005a: 513). Although these joint inspections were not yet conducted at the time of his study, Hudson (2005a) identifies several risks, such as the top-down operationalization of the outcomes that should be inspected (Hudson 2005a). He argues that this top-down process could result in reducing the central aims of the inspection to specific and easy to measure indicators and standards that do not capture the depth of the outcomes. Hudson (2005a: 521) explains that, for example, the outcome 'enjoying and achieving' is operationalized as 'school attendance and achievement', and the outcome 'making a positive contribution' is reduced to 'the avoidance of antisocial behaviour'. Such narrow operationalizations may encourage a 'checklist mentality'. Whereas the outcomes of this

policy have been analyzed in several studies (Barker 2008; Boodhoo 2010; Purcell et al. 2012), among which an analysis of 60 written inspection reports by Ofsted during the period 2009–2016 (Hood et al. 2018), no empirical research was found that focuses on micro-level decision making processes in these joint inspection teams. Thus, more research is needed to understand why and under which circumstances teamwork by inspectors from different agencies facilitates or thwarts dealing with complexity.

Dealing with Conflicting Goals

Another challenge in joint inspections, particularly when inspectors from various agencies work together, is dealing with different and conflicting goals. Whereas research on network collaboration has shown that having shared objectives can explain successful inter-agency collaboration (Ansell and Gash 2008), it is often very difficult for inter-organizational teams to embrace a shared goal in practice (Loyens 2019). This difficulty has, for example, been addressed in the context of the previously mentioned integrated inspection framework (IIF) for children’s services. Hudson (2005b) found that the different agencies that need to cooperate in the inspection of child care, have different aims and see a different role for themselves. Whereas Ofsted (i.e., the school inspectorate) has a more distanced inspection role of ‘going in, inspecting and withdrawing’, the Commission for Social Care and Inspection goes further and has adopted a ‘developmental and improvement role’ (Hudson 2005b: 248).

In line with the previous challenge, such role conflicts are sometimes responded to by encouraging inspectors to simplify the matter and only focus on one common aspect that is relevant for all involved agencies. This was the case in monthly joint anti-fraud inspections with team members of the five Belgian labor inspectorates (Loyens 2012). Whereas each of these five agencies has separate work-related inspection domains—such as work safety, labor wages or human trafficking—they share the mandate to inspect social fraud (i.e., non-registered or illegal work). This resulted in the tacit rule that inspectors always make a report to law enforcement when social fraud is detected in these joint inspections (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018). This narrow focus on social fraud sometimes created a role conflict among inspectors from the Inspection of Social Laws that also inspects whether employers pay their

employees correct wages. In individual inspections, these inspectors sometimes make a deal with employers, in which they agree to turn a blind eye to minor social fraud offenses if the employer pays due wages to her employees (Loyens 2012). By only focusing on social fraud in joint inspections, these inspectors thus see a missed opportunity to help employees who may be deprived by their employer.

When there is a power imbalance between the agencies involved in teamwork, the existence of conflicting goals can also result in a single goal of one of the agencies being overemphasized. While no specific examples of this mechanism were found in studies on joint inspections, it has been observed in other types of inter-organizational cooperation. For example, in the qualitative study on how semi-professionals in inter-organizational teamwork tackle criminal exploitation of minors (Bos et al. 2016; Loyens 2019), the conflicting interests between law enforcement officers and social care workers at ZSM³ led to social care interests being underemphasized. Minors who were caught stealing were, therefore, more often seen as little criminals who should be punished, than potential victims of adults who forced them to commit crime. The lack of personal contact and varying team composition were considered the most important factors that explained the difficulty to reconcile conflicting interests (Bos et al. 2016). On the other hand, the intensive personal contact between members of the 13Oceans collaboration, resulted in various goals being combined (Loyens 2019). 13Oceans was a collaborative project in Amsterdam between several law enforcement agencies (such as the police, the public prosecutor and the Repatriation and Departure Service), and different social care agencies, which focused on protecting Roma children that were exploited. Important in this collaboration was that the various actors acknowledged that they needed each other, e.g., social workers needed the police to identify minors and their caretakers, as well as to unfold the criminal network that exploited them, and the police needed social workers to gain the minors' trust and give them long-term care so they would not end

³ZSM is an abbreviation that literally refers to 'Zo Snel, Slim, Selectief, Simpel, Samen en Samenlevingsgericht Mogelijk' (hence the S refers to different nouns) or 'As fast, smart, simple, together and society oriented as possible'. It is a collaboration between chain partners like the public prosecutor, police, child protection service, victim assistance service and probation service to deal with criminal cases in a multi-disciplinary way (see <https://www.om.nl/@24445/factsheet-zsm>).

up in the network once more (Loyens 2019). Only after working together for months and gaining each other's trust by intensive personal contact, this reconciliation of goals was achieved (Bos et al. 2016). Still the project was not continued, which was partly due to the unsuccessful international cooperation, and probably also to the time-consuming nature of this type of inter-organizational teamwork.

CONCLUSION AND RESEARCH AGENDA

While inspectors are often seen as street-level bureaucrats who have individual discretion that they use in one-on-one encounters with inspectees (Lipsky 1980), inspectors in practice increasingly work together in joint inspections. More research is, therefore, needed to understand how joint inspections shape decision making on the ground. For this research, it is important to distinguish between various types of joint inspections. Based on previous studies about networks and teamwork (Isett et al. 2011; Pires 2011; Kapucu et al. 2017; Rice 2017; Rutz et al. 2017) a typology is proposed with eight different types of joint inspections. It shows that joint inspections are done by intra- or inter-organizational teams (dimension 1), and based on formal or informal relationships (dimension 2). The typology in addition takes into account the various types of discretion that are granted to teams (Hupe et al. 2015). In formal teams, discretion could be collective (i.e., granted to the team as a whole resulting in one decision, often taken in consensus), delegated (i.e., decisions are in practice taken by the team, but administrative work is delegated to one inspector in the team who could deviate from the team decision), or individual (i.e., each inspector takes decisions concerning the type of offenses that her agency is responsible for). In informal teams, each inspector formally has individual discretion.

Given the different relationships and social dynamics between team members in these eight types of joint inspections, different decision making outcomes could be expected. The limited evidence suggests that formal teams with collective discretion are, for example, very well equipped to take responsive regulatory decisions, because they are encouraged to combine expertise, knowledge and competences of the different team members (Rutz et al. 2017). However, when inspection teams focus on solving complex problems on the long term, their decision making may become less responsive to immediate problems of inspectees, as the study of Pires (2011) suggests. Moreover, in teams

with collective discretion, individual preferences in enforcement style may create a difficult tension between responsive and consistent decision making. Emphasizing the collective process, rather than the individual assessment of inspectors could then result in a legitimate and workable balance between both principles (Dederig and Sowada 2017). Such collective processes can over the long run even result in a collective schema that could increase consistent decision making (Foldy and Buckley 2014). This could, however, result in the creation of overly homogeneous teams with collective ideas that inhibit change, fail to encourage critical reflection and engage in groupthink (van Knippenberg et al. 2004). Previous research further suggests that in multi-disciplinary inter-organizational teams inspectors are faced with the challenge to reconcile conflicting goals. We found different examples in which conflicting goals could not be reconciled, but instead joint inspections were narrowed to quantitative and easy to measure indicators that do not capture the depth of the outcomes (Hudson 2005a) or to common priorities of the various agencies disregarding the complexity of the case (Loyens 2012). When cooperation in such inter-organizational teams is informal, opportunistic behavior and tit-for-that strategies are possible risks (Raaphorst and Loyens 2018).

While these findings provide some preliminary answers, the results are mixed and inconclusive. It is, for example, still unclear whether team cooperation increases responsiveness, or rather leads to strict enforcement and/or consistent decision making, and why sometimes a balance is found between responsiveness and consistency. Further, we do not yet understand the possible differences between intra- and inter-organizational teams in how they handle the tension between responsiveness and dealing with complexity. More research is also needed to understand why there is group think and opportunistic behavior in some teams, and not (or less) in other teams, and how the risk of peer pressure can be countered. To address these unanswered questions, it is important to use a comparative approach, in which inspection work in various modes of working is analyzed. Researchers could, for example, compare decision making by different teams in one organization, by individuals and teams of inspectors (see, e.g., Pires 2011), or by various inter-organizational teams in the same or different policy domains. Network ethnography (Berthod et al. 2017, 2018) or ‘following the policy or the people’ strategies (McCann and Ward 2012) would be valuable when using this comparative approach, because they enable the analysis

of micro-level processes within different types of joint inspections, that is needed to gain more understanding of how teamwork in the field of inspection shapes decision making on the ground.

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