CHAPTER 4

The Birth of the OECD's Education Policy Area

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Education at the Château de la Muette: From a Peripheral to a Policy Issue

In 1961 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) replaced the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), which had been established to coordinate the European Recovery Plan under the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe (Bürgi, this volume). In Paris, at the headquarters of the OECD, the Château de la Muette, the organization was envisaged as the economic counterpart of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Education was initially a peripheral issue area within OECD. It was seen as an issue at the interface of scientific, technological, and economic development. Therefore, it was placed under the authority of the Committee for Scientific and Technical Personnel (CSTP), which in turn was located within the Directorate for Scientific Affairs. This understanding of education as 'science education' probably explains why activities in education were not fully appreciated at the Château de la Muette (Eide 1990).

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Fig. 4.1 CERI Seminar at the Chateau de la Breviere, "Crisis in Higher Education—The Students' Role in the Academic Community" (09–13/04/1969) (copyright: ©OECD)

Papadopoulos (1994: 12), in his narrative reflections on the OECD and its own work in education, put it very well: 'integrating education into the central objectives and mainstream activities of the Organisation was, in fact, never an easy task'.

In 1964, only three years after the creation of the OECD, these difficulties were already visible when the Council instituted the Review of the Operational Activities of the Organisation. The main goal of the review was to reduce the growing costs of operational activities that were formerly financed by the United States (US), but which had become a burden on the day-to-day budget of the OECD (Papadopoulos 1994). The Council imposed drastic changes on the work of the CSTP, within which the few educational activities were being developed (Elfert this volume).

Despite these adversities, the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) began its operations in 1968. This sui generis body, which challenged the existing organizational architecture, was created only a few years after the aforementioned drastic cuts were made. CERI's work focused on exploring new educational issues. Its Governing Board (GB-CERI) reported to the Secretary-General, rather than to the CSTP

or any other policy committee on which member countries were represented. In the aftermath of CERI's creation, an education policy committee (EDC) was instituted. It was the birth of the OECD's education policy area.

In the years that followed these changes, the OECD became the 'central forum for educational policy co-ordination among advanced capitalist countries' and 'the main multilateral provider of cross-national educational statistics and research in the North' (Mundy 1998: 448). Notwithstanding the lack of an official mandate for education, the OECD became the most central factor in the worldwide diffusion of educational norms (Jakobi 2009), and a key global player, whose role in educational global governance deserves close attention (e.g. Henry et al. 2001; Kallo 2006; Mundy 2007; Mahon and McBride 2008; Martens and Jakobi 2010; Sellar and Lingard 2013; Addey 2017).

How did education move from a peripheral position in the OECD to become the focus of a specialized autonomous center and a policy committee? How did the OECD emerge so quickly as a policy actor in education? In answering these questions, first, this chapter posits that the OECD was envisaged from the onset as a global organization—to use today's vernacular—and thus as a policy actor. As Ougaard (2010: 36) asserts: 'a global perspective has been inherent in the organization's mandate right from its creation'. Thus, the dimension of actor has been constitutive of the OECD since the onset. In other words, the OECD could soon and quickly emerge as a global policy actor in education because the organization's institutional nature enabled it to do so.

Second, the chapter argues that the creation of CERI triggered a major dynamic process within the OECD, through which a fundamental policy change occurred within the organization: the OECD *officially* started to work on issues of education policy. The study draws inspiration from Peter Hall's (1993) theory of policy changes, to explain how the change triggered by CERI's creation was different from other changes that subsequently occurred within the OECD's education sector. While the latter were undoubtedly important, they followed the OECD's internal pattern of policy in matters of education. Yet, the initial change triggered by the creation of CERI completely changed OECD's internal policy in matters of education, meaning that the OECD became endowed with authority in education; organizational agency in the field of education was established.

This chapter proceeds by introducing the conceptual and empirical framework of the study. It then provides a brief historical excursion into

what differentiates the OECD from its predecessor, the OEEC (1948–1961). This excursion is helpful to understand how the OECD was envisioned from its inception as a global intergovernmental organization (IGO), and so as a policy actor. It continues by describing the official establishment of education as a policy area within the OECD. It analyzes the tensions against which that change took shape, the main actors behind it, their concerns and strategies, and shifts in the locus of organizational authority. It closes by summing up the main ideas and exploring the implications of this contribution to present understandings about the OECD's historical development and role in education.

Exploring Policy Changes Within the OECD Through the Lenses of Internal Documents

As Jakobi (2009) has convincingly showed, the study of global politics might be effectively conceptualized with tools applied in domestic politics. This study draws inspiration from Hall's work on policy changes (1993) to demonstrate that the creation of CERI triggered fundamental changes within the OECD, which resulted in its official involvement in education policy. According to Hall, three orders of change can be distinguished analytically. First-order or incremental changes are the most common and represent small adjustments, which preserve the instruments and goals of the policy. Second-order changes are those that change the instruments but the goals behind the policy remain the same. These two types of change preserve continuity in the policy pattern, whereas third-order changes represent discontinuity and are to be understood as radical or fundamental changes.

In systematizing the elements characteristic of processes that culminate into third-order changes, as presented by Hall (1993), four features appear as fundamental for this study. First, a change in paradigm might either induce or be provoked by organizational changes, as ideas and organizations are more often than not designed to reflect each other. Second, there is a disjunctive process that is triggered by events that deviate from the normal or expected routine. Third, the process progressively involves more or other actors and mechanisms of influence, implying a shift in the locus of authority. Fourth, therefore, the process is channeled by tensions and contestation; policy changes as a result of actors' interactions, rather than of any single-minded action. These four features are clearly discernible

in the process triggered by the creation of CERI, which culminated in the establishment of education as an official policy area within the OECD, as seen by the setting of the EDC.

Besides this book, only a few analytical efforts (e.g. Morgan 2009; Bürgi 2017; Centeno 2017; Ydesen and Grek 2019) have been made to understand the emergence and development of educational activities within the OECD itself by analyzing and making a systematic use of primary sources, such as internal documents. This chapter adds to this effort by zooming into the organizational, conceptual, and policy changes behind the birth of the OECD's education policy area, and by exploring a particular set of sources that have been little studied thus far.

The main corpus for analysis comprises unpublished internal OECD documents, which were written or considered within the working scope of the CSTP, the EDC, and the GB-CERI from ca. 1961 to 1971. The population of documents is divided into four groups (Centeno 2017; the original OECD codes are kept for the sake of accuracy; full references are provided at the end of the chapter): meeting minutes, programmatic and synthesis documents, working documents, and associated documents (i.e. documents that were produced by other OECD bodies but yet had influence on the educational activities). Given their richness and representation, the first two subpopulations were the empirical anchors of this study. The design of the qualitative content analysis of the documents (Krippendorff 2013) was inspired by research and debates on education policy sociology (Ball 1990), as carefully detailed elsewhere (Centeno 2017).

The OECD: A Global Intergovernmental Organization

In 1961, the OECD was created to advance its members' economic and social structures, upholding the tasks of its predecessor, the OEEC. However, its scope of action was radically different. The OECD was envisaged to 'contribute to the development of *world* economy' and 'to the expansion of *world* trade'; therefore, its activities aimed to 'contribute to sound economic expansion in Member *as well as non-member countries*' (OECD Convention, Article 1, emphasis added). This new scope reflected two important modifications.

First, the new scope reflected its enlarged membership, which started to include the United States and Canada and, soon, other non-European countries. In 2019, the OECD had 36 member countries that 'span the

globe' (OECD n.d.-a). If the OEEC could be described as a rather homogeneous organization, the same cannot be said about the OECD. The heterogeneity of its membership has been striking since the beginning. In 1961, the organization's membership comprised, for example, authoritarian (e.g. Portugal), socialist (Yugoslavia), and democratic countries. In 2019, the OECD included countries of disparate sizes and administrative organizations and different public policies, socioeconomic situations, and cultural views and values. Inevitably, members' positions are far from uniform, and clear consensuses are difficult to reach. For example, contested economic visions (Mundy 1998; Woodward 2009) and diverging perceptions of the organization's role in education (Martens and Wolf 2009; Centeno 2017) still prevail today as they did in the past.

Second, the new scope reflected a new international outlook. In contrast with the OEEC, the OECD's convention no longer defined the organization's activities according to either its geographical location or its membership; rather, the convention stressed the OECD's commitment to an encompassing global aim. Implicitly, the organization broadened its policy remit. As Ougaard (2010: 36) notes, together with an engagement in core fields, such as economic policy and financial issues, the OECD began 'early and thoroughly' to deal with issues with an 'inescapable global scope', such as environmental sustainability. The convention extended the scope of the OECD's activities and, consequently, of its networks. The OECD gradually started to cooperate with non-member countries and to work with other IGOs and civil society organizations (Woodward 2009; Ougaard 2010). Moreover, it promptly established the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), through which the OECD started to engage in world peacebuilding (Ydesen and Verschaeve 2019). Currently, the OECD's DAC is a 'critical player in the world economy' (Ydesen and Verschaeve 2019: 485). The OECD cooperates with five 'key partners' and has 'global relations' with countries in all regions of the world (OECD n.d.-b); in addition, it has centers in Berlin, Mexico, Tokyo, and Washington DC (OECD n.d.-c). The OECD has relations with several IGOs, including partnerships with the G7/8 and G20, and it interacts with diverse representatives of civil society (Woodward 2009; Ougaard 2010). Whereas the OEEC was a regional IGO, the OECD was designed to act globally from the onset.

The OECD's enlarged membership and new international outlook brought a higher degree of inner complexity to the organization. This entailed a major change. While the OEEC was equipped with strong legal

instruments, the OECD was not meant to issue binding decisions (Marcussen in Martens and Jakobi 2010: 21). Rather, the OECD had a 'direction-setting nature' (Ougaard 2010: 32). The organization still works mostly through agenda-setting and surveillance mechanisms (Weymann and Martens 2005; Mahon and McBride 2008; Krejsler, this volume): it generates peer pressure by coordinating events and meetings; it forms opinions by conducting and publishing studies and reports; and it exerts soft regulation by directing projects and programs. In the 1960s, the OECD already housed almost 100 committees and expert groups (Gottsleben 1968); in 2009, the OECD expanded its facilities to the outskirts of Paris (OECD 2010), since its headquarters and neighborhood facilities were already inadequate for the more than 250 working groups assisted by the 2500 staff members (OECD n.d.-d); in 2019, the numbers increased to more than 300 working groups and 3300 staff members (OECD n.d.-c). By the 1960s the OECD's rate of publication was already remarkable (Gottsleben 1968), at the turn of the century its 'prolific research output' was well known (Henry et al. 2001: 3), and currently the organization is 'one of the world's largest publishers' (Martens and Jakobi 2010: 5).

The OECD's broadened scope and new policy mechanisms show that the organization was envisioned as a global IGO from the onset. The organization was designed to be a global policy actor. That is why it was able to redefine itself after the end of the Cold War and progressively increase its reach and impact. A parallel could easily be drawn between the transformations of the early 1960s and those of the early 1990s. As much as the enhancement of the OECD's governance capacity was due to its response to the challenges of the end of the Cold War and concomitant global economic developments (Sellar and Lingard 2014), the OEEC's transformation into a global organization seems to have resulted from its response to the challenges of the expansion and escalation of the Cold War (Mundy 1998) and economic cooperation (Wolfe 2008). Furthermore, in the early 1990s, the OECD progressively broadened its scope of action by enlarging its membership and renewing its international outlook (redefining its policy remit, partnerships, and networks; Woodward 2009) as it improved its policy mechanisms (e.g. its comparative international data; Martens and Jakobi 2010). In the early 1960s, as explained before, the same took place when the OEEC became the OECD, that is, the latter had a broadened scope—enlarged membership and new international outlook—and soft instead of binding policy mechanisms.

The OECD's agency is the result of how the organization was forged as a global organization in 1961. The OECD has been a policy actor since its inception. Undeniably, this dimension became preponderant at the turn of the century; however, as the next section will show, from the inside, it has been important from the onset.

The Official Establishment of Education as a Policy Area Within the OECD

CERI: Organizational Changes Reflect a New Approach to Education Work

The first step in the process of policy change was the creation of CERI. A new body, with a different organizational profile, was designed to reflect new ideas about the OECD's educational activities. The OECD Council established CERI in 1967 (C(67)63). Michael Harris, who was responsible for the Review of the Operational Activities of the Organisation in 1964, was behind its creation. According to Papadopoulos (1994), Harris admired the work of the CSTP, through which member countries officially advised the OECD Secretariat studies on technological developments and their effects on manpower and educational planning. However, for budgetary reasons, its own review imposed a limited framework on the CSTP, which was restricted to a quantitative approach to education planning. Nonetheless, Harris encouraged the Secretariat to complement that approach with a qualitative view and to outline a new program of work. CERI emerged from this perceived need for qualitative accounts and, which was equally important, was set up on the basis of a two-year grant, which Harris obtained from the Ford Foundation.

The impression conveyed in both the Papadopoulos (1994) account and the internal documents is that this endeavor was the opportunity for which the Secretariat was waiting to secure the continuation of the OECD's educational activities and to put forward a concrete educational program. In fact, the future of the CSTP and consequently of education within the OECD remained rather uncertain. In the 1960s, the Council decisions on the CSTP mandate had been discouraging in terms of both formal and financial support. The Secretary-General unsuccessfully tried to adapt the CSTP mandate to its actual activities, which had progressively ceased to focus exclusively on the shortage of scientists and engineers and

had started to focus on more qualitative school-related subjects (e.g. curriculum development). Yet, member countries preferred to allow the work to evolve within the existing mandate (C(69)77). As a result, the CSTP's educational activities became more quantitative and descriptive. In terms of financial support, the Council steadily reduced the budget, which declined from 4,491,000 French francs in 1964 to 1,485,480 in 1969 (C(69)77).

The profile of CERI clearly marks an attempt to establish autonomy not only vis-à-vis the CSTP's fate, but also with respect to the member countries. Given the different stances of the member countries, it was difficult to agree upon educational policies. In addition, the CSTP did not yet see the OECD as place for the formulation of education policies, which were considered to be a domestic issue. Conversely, the Secretariat clearly sought to develop educational activities that could have a normative impact on policy. CERI embodied the possibility of designing an autonomous body with broader room for action.

After intense and difficult negotiations between the Ford Foundation and the OECD Council (Centeno 2017), CERI was accorded a special status. Two aspects that differentiate it from the existing bodies were particularly relevant: the program and the composition of the GB-CERI. The CERI program would be prepared by the Secretariat, considered by the GB-CERI, and only if feasible discussed with the CSTP, the official policy committee working on educational issues (C(67)63). The CERI and the CSTP programs were, therefore, totally separate from each other, and cooperation remained optional. Besides, the GB-CERI would be constituted of distinguished personalities in the field of education. These two aspects intended to safeguard the CERI's *raison d'être*—self-directed qualitative research (CERI/GB(68)2).

With CERI the Secretariat changed the instruments used to produce educational knowledge within the OECD: from quantitative to more qualitative studies, from descriptive and comparative to more analytical studies, from general to operational studies. But, the aims of the OECD's educational activities *officially* remained the same: to forecast future needs, to study perceived problems, and to help countries to implement their educational policies.

Thus, the creation of CERI did not in itself mean a radical change of the OECD's internal policy on educational matters, as the goal of the OECD's education work remained to supply technical assistance to member countries.

However, by creating an ad hoc setting, the Secretariat introduced an organizational change that reflected new ideas about what the focus of the OECD's educational program was to be about. The new organizational architecture not only expanded the horizon of the OECD's education work, but also provided the place and the tools to turn new ideas into concrete activities. As the next sections explain, it was the beginning of a process that entailed a fundamental change within the OECD.

CERI and CSTP: New Internal Processes and the Disunion of Organizational Actors

Fundamental policy changes involve the occurrence of events that are seen as deviating from expected processes (Hall 1993). The discussions in the CSTP's meetings show how the creation of CERI was an event that deviated from the normal inner workings of the OECD. When the CSTP was formally informed of the creation of CERI, only a few months before it was set up, the CSTP immediately took the view that CERI's program should be developed in harmony with its own program (STP/M(67)2). Some delegates even noted that the CSTP had to be consulted before an independent body of this kind was set up in the organization, but it became clear that delegates' opinions would not be formally elicited (STP/M(67)2). Consequently, even though reluctant to endorse the creation of CERI, unsuccessfully attempting to influence its program of work at least, the CSTP formally welcomed its constitution (STP/M(67)3).

However, the CSTP realized that a program of research and innovation needed to consider policy aspects too, and education policy was a gray area within the OECD. The CSTP was merely entitled to estimate countries' progresses and needs, and not yet officially to formulate policies. Furthermore, the Council had successively suggested that the CSTP's scope of action should remain the same. Although up until then the CSTP had complied with the Council's demands, vis-à-vis the creation of the CERI, it suddenly expressed its interest in tackling education policy. The assignment of significant responsibilities to the CERI and what was perceived as its meddling in policy issues appear to have been the reasons for the swift repositioning of the CSTP, whose main concern was then the distinction and separation between research activities and policy-oriented activities (CERI/GB(68)3).

The creation of CERI triggered a disunion between the main organizational actors. The official national delegates seated round the CSTP table,

contrary to their counterparts on the Council, started to argue that the CSTP could and should deal with education policy. Contesting how the Secretariat set up the CERI, the CSTP maintained that it was the only body within the OECD with the authority to tackle education policy matters (CERI/GB(68)3 and STP/M(68)3, annex). The lack of communication and the duplication of work in the two years following CERI's creation were evident. Instead of bringing a closer union between organizational actors and a harmonization of programs, CERI triggered an internal disjunctive process.

The CSTP and the Secretariat: New Geometries of Power Reshape Influence Mechanisms

Issues of power and authority are normally central to process of fundamental policy change (Hall 1993). Different actors engage in a contest for power and authority over the changes at hand and activate different mechanisms through which they try to influence the outcome.

The process of change progressively altered the geometries of power within the OECD and in relation to the continuation of CERI and its integration in the organizational architecture. As soon as CERI was created, its continuation became a regular topic in the GB-CERI meetings and a main concern of the Secretariat. Although CERI had received an additional grant from the Shell N.V. Company, its future was still not secure, since the contributions of the Ford Foundation and the Shell Group combined did not cover costs of all activities. Furthermore, CERI also had difficulties liaising with the appropriate authorities in the member countries (CERI/GB/M(69)1). Therefore, the full and rapid implementation of CERI's program was yet to be accomplished, and its continuation beyond its experimental period of operation was uncertain.

The Secretariat's concerns regarding CERI's survival increased with the Council's decision to make a Review of the Work of the Organisation in the Field of Education in 1970, in which the continuation of both the CSTP and CERI was discussed in connection with each other. This unexpected turn of events prompted new internal dynamics that implied shifting the locus of authority from the Secretariat to the CSTP, and the development of mechanisms to influence the Council's decision.

On the one hand, the Secretariat realized that to maintain the education work in the form then being envisaged, it needed to 'secure a strong political support from education authorities in the member countries,

strong enough to have an influence on the OECD Council' (Eide 1990: 23). The Secretariat encouraged the CSTP to follow interpersonal communication channels in order to make their opinion known to their counterparts seated at Council's table (STP/M(70)1), and agreed on the need to strengthen the CSTP and its activities within the OECD (STP/M(70)2).

On the other hand, the CSTP openly used its own authoritative power to exert pressure on the Secretariat and the inner workings. Even though the CSTP approved the continuation of CERI, it was not convinced of the underlying organizational arrangements (STP/M(70)2). The CSTP clearly feared its own demise. Until then, the two options suggested to the Council by the Secretariat referred to a formula involving a twin structure (STP/M(70)2)—about which the CSTP was skeptical, fearing CERI's preponderance—and to the amalgamation of the two bodies (C(69)77). The CSTP strongly expressed its opposition to both options (STP/M(70)2) and advised the Secretariat to formulate another option to the Council, in which the GB-CERI would consist of government experts and would report to the CSTP.

The Council: Tensions and Contestation at the Peak of a Fundamental Policy Change

The process of fundamental policy change is normally not the linear consequence of actors' actions, but rather the outcome of interactions, which are embedded in tensions and contestation. In the OECD, decisions concerning the architecture of the organization needed to be made, or at least approved, by the Council. Although the Council must be understood as the organizational actor on which governing decision-making power lies, it must also be perceived as a locus of tensions and contestation. The countries, as represented by their ambassadors, usually have different interests and views on how the OECD should operate, and these are strongly manifested within the Council. Processes of policy change within the OECD culminate at the Council's table.

At the moment of the 1970 Review of the Work of the Organisation in the Field of Education, CSTP arguments clearly reverberated at the Council level. The Secretariat presented to the Council the option of constituting both a 'policy-making body' and a 'body which will have clearly-defined responsibility to bring the results into the policy committee' (C(70)111, 4). The Council was positive toward the transformation of the CSTP into an Education Committee (EDC) with a wider mandate.

Several member countries also approved the continuation of the CERI, as long as the member countries' influence was felt.

However, the US ambassador was not convinced about the continuation of CERI. Even if the US did not formally oppose it, the country would not contribute to its program (CE/M(70)22(prov.)). The US position generated contestation among the member countries, and the debate surrounding the continuation of CERI continued for several meetings. At the basis of the conflict were different views about the OECD's education work. Some countries, such as the US, emphasized the work of the EDC on education policy and considered the CERI budget unreasonable, while others considered both research and policy important and saw the CERI budget as mirroring it (CE/M(70)22(prov.)). In practical terms, some countries feared that the loss of US funding would jeopardize the work of CERI, and considered changing their position.

Final resolutions were passed only two months later, when the Secretariat argued that the OECD would probably lose independent funding if CERI would cease. The Council authorized the Secretariat to explore the possibilities of support from private institutions, and an agreement in principle to the continuation of CERI was based on the possibility of such financial arrangements, which would bring more resources to the OECD (CES/70.81).

It was against these struggles for organizational power, conflicts of interests, divergent views on organizational and financial priorities, as well as on the OECD's education work, that the Council approved the establishment of the Education Committee and the extension of CERI beyond its experimental phase. It was the making of a fundamental policy change within OECD, since the organization was endowed with new institutional capabilities, which allowed it to become a pivotal actor in education multilateralism and later in global educational governance.

Concluding Discussion: The CERI and the OECD's Official Involvement in Education Policy

The EDC replaced the CSTP in 1971. From 1971 onward, the GB-CERI was 'composed of one national expert in the field of competence of the CERI from each of the countries participating in the programme' (C(71)216, 1). The EDC became an explicit policy committee and the CERI a formal research and development body (STP/M(70)3). Education gained a renewed and secure organizational location and an acknowledged

political framework. Thereby, not only the OECD instruments in education and their settings were changed, but also the goals of the OECD's internal policy in matters of education drastically changed. The OECD's goals in education officially changed from assisting member countries on aspects of educational planning for scientific and economic development, to conduct research on educational issues identified by the organization as politically relevant, and to formulate policy problems and matching solutions, thereby proposing concrete education policies.

The process that led to the integration of CERI in the OECD's organizational architecture and the transformation of the CSTP into the EDC heralded thus a fundamental policy change within the OECD. In line with Hall's framework of policy changes (1993), the process whereby this fundamental change occurred displayed a particular set of features, which differentiate it from latter processes of change.

The process of change was initiated by a particular organizational change within the OECD: the creation of CERI. It was hence structured by organizational changes, which in turn were structured by a particular set of ideas about the new role that the OECD was to play on the educational scene. As Hall (1993) aptly remarked, organizational and ideational changes are normally designed to reflect and reinforce each other.

CERI's creation deviated from the expected inner working of the organization and gave rise to an internal disjunctive process. It provoked strong resistance from the CSTP, which felt threatened by the CERI's activities. In addition, the continuation of the CERI became entangled with the review of the CSTP's mandate, increasing the tension between the CSTP and the Secretariat, which was the organizational actor behind the creation and functioning of CERI.

However, the outcome of policy changes depends on actors' positional advantages within the organizational architecture, more than on actors' views, which in such processes are naturally controversial. CERI's difficulties liaising with domestic authorities and in self-funding its activities threatened its initial organizational integration. This compelled the Secretariat to rely on CSTP's organizational authority. Even if the Secretariat continued to provide both the advice given to the Council and the studies and facts on which that advice was based—acting from a privileged position—the CSTP became more active, and the locus of authority over organizational decision-making began to shift. The process of change altered the geometry of organizational power in relation to CERI's matters. The CSTP contested the eventual control of CERI over educational

policy and engaged in keeping organizational power and authority by activating several mechanisms to influence both the Secretariat and the Council. This shift in the locus of authority was an important component in the process of change. The CSTP's pressure was essential to the outcome, as it assured the establishment of a policy committee in addition to CERI.

The evolving process soon embraced other issues and actors. The Council discussions not only mirrored the existing debate between the CSTP and the Secretariat, but it also revealed the different stances of the member countries regarding the place of education in the OECD. Additionally, the Council introduced a new issue on which the final decision depended: the financial aspect of the OECD's educational activities. The establishment of an education policy area within the OECD was not the result of a single actor or group of actors working together toward a common goal; it was rather the outcome of articulations, divisions, and tensions, as characteristic of fundamental policy changes.

The OECD was officially allowed to look into issues of education *policy*. It was the birth of the OECD's education policy area. This was the main outcome of the process of change triggered by the creation of the CERI. The OECD became a legitimate actor endowed with authorized agency in education governance.

This understanding of the birth of the OECD's education policy area partially breaks from the common view of the OECD as an organization that was initially envisaged as an instrument for maintaining socioeconomic structures (Mundy 1998) and then ended up by strengthening its role in global governance through its soft mechanisms (Martens and Jakobi 2010). Indeed, in the 1980s, the OECD gained a new actor role on the international scene, once it met countries' interests in monitoring and assessment (Henry et al. 2001); in the 1990s, it strengthened that role because it was able to better diffuse its agendas through benchmarking practices (Martens and Jakobi 2010); and in the 2000s, new policy instruments such as PISA and its offspring (Sellar and Lingard 2014; Addey 2017; Lewis 2017) propelled the OECD to the fore of global governance in education.

However, as the aforementioned authors rightly document, these changes were triggered by broader developments, such as a new world order, growing demands for technical expertise and comparative data, and the coming together of plural interests around education. Conversely, new socioeconomic and political developments did not generate the change

triggered by CERI's creation. Furthermore, this early change simultaneously entailed changes in all three components of the OECD's internal policy on educational matters: the instruments settings, the instruments themselves, and the goals of the policy. While latter changes altered the instruments of the OECD's policy on educational matters (e.g. benchmarking), and even the instruments settings (e.g. PISA became a new organizational body), they corresponded to strategic action and (major) adjustments in the OECD's internal policy on educational matters (e.g. the International Educational Indicators). Even if these changes have significantly strengthened the OECD's role in education policy, and even the education sector within the OECD, they have only taken place because the OECD already had an education policy area.

The creation of the CERI has been the most crucial policy change in education matters within the OECD. On the one hand, the CERI set a successful organizational precedent for the setting of sui generis organizational bodies, such as PISA. On the other hand, it was within the CERI that the OECD started to assertively formulate policy proposals, in which both policy problems and solution were offered, and research studies were used to benchmark educational developments. Within the CERI, for the first time, educational views were turned into practical actions and policies, regardless of member countries' political commitment. Historical accounts show that, until the rise of PISA, the most widely disseminated and impactful OECD educational activities have stemmed mainly from the CERI (Centeno 2017).

Against the widespread role of PISA in educational governance, CERI and its activities have received little, if any, scholarly attention. However, this historical account shows how CERI has been crucial to the development of the OECD's preponderant role in education policy. It could be speculated that, as much as CERI's significance to the birth of the OECD's education policy area has until now gone unnoticed, the impact of CERI's activities on the OECD governance in education has probably been overlooked. Research into the work of CERI will surely be instructive to a further understanding of the OECD's educational agendas.

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