

## OECD education policy. A comparative and historical study focusing on the thematic reviews of tertiary education

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Raising competitiveness is a driving force behind education reforms. International organisations like the OECD are important actors in fuelling the dialogue and competition between national education systems. To better understand the motivation behind national education reforms it is essential to research the OECD's way of setting agenda for its member countries.

This dissertation explores the OECD's history, methods of influence and relations with other international organisations. The study is based on extensive source material and interviews with prominent experts from the OECD and academia. The emphasis of research lies on a case study, which analyses how the OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education has been utilised in structural reforms of higher education in Finland. The findings of the case study on Finland are compared to the ones of a second case study on the United Kingdom.

The following questions are examined:

- What kind of an organisation is the OECD? What are its main methods of influence?
- How have OECD education programmes evolved in the past decades? How has the OECD used the concept of human capital?
- What kind of cooperation does the OECD foster with UNESCO, the World Bank, and the EU? Do these organisations compete? Do their programmes converge?
- Why and how have Finland and the United Kingdom as member countries utilised the OECD Thematic Reviews of Tertiary Education in their higher education reforms?

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