

International organizations and the globalization of public instruments and ideas:**Micro-processes and actors' configurations***International Conference, Strasbourg, September 1st – 3rd 2016***- Full article -****Introduction: *The power of soft skills*¹. An analysis of OECD's role in the shaping and the travelling of a new cognitive motive in the global agora of education**

This article offers a sociological perspective on the globalization process of ideas and instruments in the field of education and lifelong learning policies. More specifically, we analyze OECD's role in the shaping of a new *cognitive motive* (Benamouzig, 2005) called "soft skills" and the dissemination of correlated norms in the *global agora* (Stone, 2013). Based on our current PhD research, this contribution is therefore part of an ongoing work and humble in his scope.

A wide body of research studies macro-processes of standardization, policy transfers and transnational dynamics of dissemination. Many highlight the key role played by international organizations (IOs) such as the European Union, OECD and the World Bank within these processes (Ozga & Jones, 2006; Lawn & Normand, 2014). However, there remains a need for a deeper understanding of processes through which IOs gain legitimacy and perform their normative power (Hadjinsky & Pal, 2016, forthcoming) especially in the context of complex multi-players systems and multi-scaled dynamics (Ball, 2012; Stone, 2004; 2013).

What kinds of actors, macro-actors and networks are involved, through which channels, and for which purpose? What is there for IOs to gain along those partnerships, and how do they manage to successfully remain the legitimate core of fast-evolving systems of actors? Finally, what is/are IO's precise role(s) in the shaping of new ideas, standards and tools, in their travelling within global agoras and in their embedding at different levels of action?

To provide hints of answers, we draw on our ongoing research which examines roles of OECD and transnational networks in the rise of new cognitive motives, modes of operation, circulations in the "global agora" and correlative national policies². Our study focuses on a specific object seized by the OECD called "*soft skills*".

¹ This title refers to a recent OECD's report titled "*Skills for social progress. The power of social and emotional skills*" (OECD/CERI, 2015).

² Methodology used includes scientific and non-scientific literature analysis as well as network ethnographies. We combined extensive internet research about contents and authors, along with interviews with experts and key actors in order to provide additional information on interpersonal relationships, both formal and non-formal. Data gathered enabled us to identify actors' configurations and to draw mapping of networks linking together

This concept of “soft skills” originates from the one of “hard skills” which describes skills that are technical, diploma-based or job-suited. Therefore, soft skills are characterized by a low level of definition, considered as “non-technical” and “non-academic”. Encompassing both intra-personal and inter-personal skills, this concept has been significantly increasingly used over the last decade, both among scholars and practitioners³. It now acts as an operative concept in the global agora of education, higher education, youth training and lifelong learning policies, as well as in the agora of economical development and employment⁴.

Meeting the cognitive and social needs of varied actors, the concept of “soft skills” consists in a set of cognitive elements which arrangement varies upon social and cognitive contexts. It therefore qualifies to what D. Benamouzig calls a “cognitive motive”⁵ (Benamouzig, 2005, 2014), offering actors a meaningful vision of problems and solutions, and acting for them as a new “frame of reference” (Muller & Surel, 1998). Though characterized by a degree of malleability, it preserves its internal consistence and remains unified – just as a melody remains recognizable after being transposed into another key.

The statement developed here is that OECD acts both as a “*knowledge network*” (Stone, 2013) and as a “*crossover actor*” (Ball, 2012) and that it plays a key role in the transfer of the cognitive motive from the agora of research to the one of policies. Meanwhile, OECD powerfully disseminates its vision of “human capital” and the “innovation economy” through educational strategies and policies.

identified actors, as well as cognitive maps. Following Stephen J. Ball’s method, we grasp the concept of policy network both as a method to identify connections between actors and as a conceptual device (Ball, 2012, p.6).

³As underlined by behavioral economist J. Balcar: “*It is worth stressing that “soft skills” represent a term that is generally known and understood, but yet not precisely defined. This is probably the result of both its usage in business practice, where specification of particular skills is more important than a definition of comprehensive term (thus soft skills are usually defined by enumeration of skills, which can differ among companies), and usage of alternative terms in academic sphere, such as non-cognitive skills, personal skills or people skills (which do not, however, represent a synonym for soft skills).*” in Balcar, Jiří. “Soft Skills and Their Wage Returns: Overview of Empirical Literature.” *Review of Economic Perspectives* 14, no. 1 (January 1, 2014). Page 3.

⁴ Evidence is borrowed from our PhD thesis work. For an illustration of the “take of” of the term “soft skills”, please refer to the *Google Ngrams Viewer* chart of this term : <https://goo.gl/2qf9QW> . *Google Ngrams Viewer* chart is an open-access tool which allows tracking the frequency of occurrence of any term through time, within the *Googlebooks* database.

⁵ Translated from the French words “motif cognitif”.

I. OECD, a *knowledge network* shaping a new cognitive motive. Puzzling and powering knowledge⁶

Firstly, we will show that the status of “knowledge network” (abbreviated in KNET) enables the OECD to shape a new cognitive motive around the concept of “soft skills”. OECD builds its expertise on economic knowledge and naturally relies on human capital economists’ cognitive motives. Econometric tools are growingly brought to the forefront in matter of policies evaluation (Normand, 2011); concepts of ‘society of innovation’ and ‘economy of knowledge’ (Ozga & Jones, 2006) are emphasized in the context of a globalized economy. OECD’s ‘Innovation Strategy’ introduces human capital as a core lever (OECD, 2010).

At a micro-level, this vision is translated in a set of skills presented as essential for individuals to succeed in the 21st century global economy⁷. Such skills are non-specific, innovation-targeted, easily transferred from one job to another in order to suit fast-evolving economies. They include creativity, autonomy, entrepreneurship, self-confidence and teamwork. They form a new “cognitive motive” which derives from the one of “human capital” and OECD calls “soft skills”:

“There is some evidence that demand for human capital is changing. Changes in the organization of work, often combined with more intensive use of ICT, seem to be increasing the requirement for “soft” skills such as teamwork, flexibility and communication skills. At the same time, demand for workers with only basic skills may be falling.”(OECD, 2001)

The rise of this new cognitive motive – which we abbreviate as “SS motive” henceforth- reveals a paradigm shift for public social policies, operating a switch from assistance toward investment in developing individuals’ capacities⁸. Pointing out “legitimate” skills to invest in, it also conveys a new vision of what makes individuals successful in societies which economies are guided by “innovation” and “knowledge”. It usefully equips the OECD’s Innovation strategy by translating its core cognitive motive – human capital and the economy of innovation - into the one of SS, tightly fitted to education and lifelong learning public policies.

⁶ Our title borrows from Hugh Hecló’s expression of, “puzzling and powering of knowledge” (Hecló, 1974: 305-06), quoted in Stone, 2001, p.10.

⁷As it is illustrated by the following CERI report’s extract: “*Human capital is the familiar notion that knowledge and skills, derived from education, training and experience, represent some of our most valuable resources.*” Source: OECD, Report “The well-being of Nations. The role of human and social capital”, 2001.

⁸ As it is illustrated by the following CERI report’s extract: “*The welfare state was essentially a vehicle for security. Yet in a more individualised society with a wider spectrum of life chances, some kinds of risk are not only economically healthy but also good for the individual. Indeed one of the measures of confident, self-directed individuals is their ability to take considered risks. Hence the new emphases on self-employment, soft skills and self-confidence as key goals of welfare.*”

Source : OECD, report “The Creative Society of the 21st Century” 2000.

A. Mobilizing knowledge. Knowledge actors as inspirers and legitimatizers of a reputational intermediary⁹

KNETs are networks oriented toward the production and the dissemination of knowledge. Although pointed out for their growing influence on the global policy game, KNETs remain little known (Stone, 2013, p. 37) and rarely studied both in their internal and external micro-dynamics. Therefore, our purpose is here to examine the role of OECD as “knowledge network” acting in the global agora of education and to analyze its role in the shaping of the SS motive.

In the field of education, OECD’s activity of knowledge production is apportioned by an internal organization called the Center for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI). Focusing on the question of “*the future of education in the 21st century*”¹⁰, it translates OECD’s cognitive motive based on “human capital” into the field of education through several study programs designed to tackle modern educational issues and to foster innovation¹¹. CERI follows a twofold mission: gathering existing knowledge and producing its own complementary knowledge¹². We will show here that what it really does is not just *gathering* knowledge but *mobilizing* knowledge and *adapting* it to its own questioning. Such dynamic is channeled by the personal engagement of “knowledge actors”¹³.

Academic research on SS is mainly pursued by economists, psychologists and neuroscientists. Therefore those are “*knowledge actors*” targeted by CERI to contribute to its research programs. Nobel Prize-winning economist J.J Heckman is considered the father of the concept of SS. Professor at the University of Chicago, he started studying these skills and their impact on individual success in the early 2000s¹⁴. In 2012, he published a widely disseminated academic paper untitled “*Hard Evidence On Soft Skills*” which suggests a “predictive power” of SS on lifetime success and professional outcomes, demonstrating significant correlations between SS developed at school and

⁹ The concept is borrowed from the work of Shinn and Gourevitch (2002), used by Susan Stone (Stone, 2013).

¹⁰ Quotation from Dirk Van Damme, Head of CERI, retrieved from CERI’s official brochure, p.4. Source : CERI’s website : http://www.oecd.org/edu/cei/brochure_CERI-final-all--web%20Aug%202013-size.pdf

¹¹ “*What are the skills and qualifications needed in innovation-driven societies? What kind of education (curricula, pedagogies, assessments) fosters these skills for innovation? [...] Which skills matter? Why do these skills matter? How can we develop these skills that matter? [...] How can today’s schools be transformed to foster deep learning and prepare their learners for the rapidly changing 21st century?*” *Ibid.* p. 7-9. Questions refer respectively to the “Innovation Strategy for Education and Training” (ISET), “Education and Social Progress” (ESP) and “Innovative Learning Environments” (ILE) CERI’s study programs.

¹² *Ibid.* p.3.

¹³ Such actors are among the most renowned scholars of their field. We call them “*knowledge actors*” after S. Stone. Related works may also use the term “experts of truth” (Ball, 2012, p.50).

¹⁴ As illustrated by J.J.Heckman’s early works:

Heckman, James J., and Dimitriy V. Masterov. “The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children.” *Review of Agricultural Economics* 29, no. 3 (September 2007): 446–93.

Heckman, James J, and Yona Rubinstein. “The Importance of Noncognitive Skills: Lessons from the GED Testing Program.” *American Economic Review* 91, no. 2 (May 2001): 145–49.

Heckman, James, Jora Stixrud, and Sergio Urzua. “The Effects of Cognitive and Noncognitive Abilities on Labor Market Outcomes and Social Behavior.” Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, February 2006.

level of wages. Two years later, J.J Heckman writes a very similar publication¹⁵ released in the CERI's framework. Directed on measuring and developing SS in young generations, it conveys a strong argument for the SS cognitive motive in education¹⁶:

“The larger message of this paper is that soft skills predict success in life, that they causally produce that success, and that programs that enhance soft skills have an important place in an effective portfolio of public policies.”

J.J Heckman personally contributes to CERI's research, early positioned as a “keynote speaker”. As a featured speaker at the 2014 Sao Paulo Forum “High Level Policy Forum on Skills for Social Progress”, he participated to the launch of CERI's major study program called “*Education and Social Progress*” (ESP).

Angela Lee Duckworth is another “knowledge actor” working on SS. Psychology professor at the University of Pennsylvania, she developed in the 2000s a theory on the predominant role of “grit”¹⁷ on school and work success¹⁸. It has been given a particular attention in the academic agora¹⁹ because it was the first Psychology work to state that SS are not just natural dispositions but may be fostered through appropriate interventions²⁰. A.L. Duckworth's is also involved in CERI's ESP program. J.J Heckman and A.L. Duckworth both gave CERI filmed interviews where they expressed a personal engagement in the Center's work, paying personal tributes to ESP research. These video clips are posted at the forefront of CERI's web site²¹. Both are cited at the 2015 ESP report's head of acknowledgment page²², which confirms their central position in CERI's work.

Finally, educational sciences and neurosciences are two other disciplines accountable for a growing part of knowledge on SS and their effect on educational and professional achievement. Harvard

¹⁵ Written by economists J.J Heckman, T. Kautz, L. Borghans and other colleagues, it essentially builds on Heckman's previous work.

¹⁶ As it is illustrated by the report's title: “Fostering and Measuring Skills: Improving Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills to Promote Lifetime Success”.

¹⁷ “Grit” is conceptualized as a skill close to perseverance which refers to the capacity of producing a continuous effort in pursuing long-term goals.

¹⁸ Knowledge builds on existing theories of psychology, more particularly works on self-discipline, growth mind-set motivational dimension of learning.

¹⁹ A.L Duckworth received numerous academic awards, as shown through her official CV. *Source* : UPenn website <https://upenn.app.box.com/s/fqw3usxprbsrxautn5nmy8rott6mi558>

²⁰ She writes: “I don't think anyone's figured out how to make people smarter, but these other qualities of grit may be teachable”. *Source* : Interview conducted by E. Packard in “Grit: It's what separates the best from the merely good”, *American Psychological Association* , Vol 38, No. 10. November 2007.

²¹ *Sources* : CERI and OECD websites:

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/seminarandlaunchofthereportskillsforsocialprogresspowerofsocialandemotionalskills.htm> ; <http://www.oecd.org/site/espforum2014/>

²² OCDE, « Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills ». *OECD Skills Studies*. Paris. p. 5.

University's²³ Professor Kurt Fischer is particularly notable²⁴ and representative of the recent integration of cognitive sciences in these questionings²⁵. With colleague Christina Hinton, he also contributes to CERI's publications²⁶.

This review shows that CERI relies on latest social sciences' breakthrough to support its SS motive. We identify two levers of mobilization of these knowledge actors. Firstly, profiles of CERI's Project leaders allow them to come in close contact with knowledge actors. For instance, ESP program's project leader Koji Miyamoto is an economist expert of econometrics and human capital measurement tools²⁷ and personally knows Angela Lee Duckworth²⁸. ISET program's project leader is Stephan Vincent-Lancrin, a French economist²⁹ specialist of the innovation economy and higher education. ITTEL program's Project leader Sonia Guerriero is, as for her, a cognitive psychologist from McGill University expert of learning and teaching cognitive dynamics³⁰. All three have published academic papers and benefit from a keen understanding of the academic agora. Secondly, OECD's proximity with knowledge actors is fueled by such actors' hybrid position as both "scholars" and "consultants". As a matter of fact, some happen to be former CERI's experts. It is the case of Harvard University psychologist Christina Hinton³¹ who personally worked with current CERI project leaders³².

Knowledge actors are considered as the most legitimate sources of knowledge on SS in the academic agora. Building on « *loosely-coupled weakly-tied multi-organisational sets* » (Kickert et al, 1997, p. 37), OECD proves capable of tying agile and reactive collaborations with producers of "legitimate knowledge". Their personal involvement in CERI's activities enables OECD to benefit from this recognition. Nature of knowledge mobilized and subsequent scientificity adds on to this legitimacy -

²³ Harvard University is one of the leading universities on the subject, positioned at the cutting edge of research through its *Graduate School of Education de Harvard* (GSE).

²⁴ As said in his official webpage : "*Fischer has been visiting professor or visiting scholar at University of Geneva (Switzerland), University of Pennsylvania, University of Groningen (Netherlands), Nanjing Normal University (China), and the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (Stanford).*" Source : *Ibid*.

²⁵ He developed his expertise through a long academic career dedicated to the cognitive dynamics of lifelong learning processes. For more information on Fisher's CV and works, please refer to his institutional official page on the Harvard University's Graduate School of Education : <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/faculty/kurt-fischer>

²⁶ Fischer Kurt, Hinton Christina, "Chapter 5 – Learning from the developmental and and biological perspective" in Dumont, Hanna, David Istance, Francisco Benavides, and OECD, eds. *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*. Paris: OECD, 2010.

²⁷ Source : official webpage on CERI website : <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/kojimiyaamoto.htm>

²⁸ Source : Interview led in Paris, December 2015.

²⁹ He was formerly a teacher at the London School of Economics and Paris University of Nanterre. Source : official personal webpage on CERI website : <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/stephanvincent-lancrin.htm>

³⁰ Source : official personal webpage on CERI website: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/sonia-guerriero.htm>

³¹ She has been a CERI consultant for more than ten years. Sources: Christina Hinton's official personal webpage and *LinkedIn* profile: <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/faculty/christina-hinton> ; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/christina-hinton-a037b957>

³² As an analyst. For instance, she co-wrote an article with CERI's Project leader Koji Miyamoto. Hinton, C., K. Miyamoto et B. Della-Chiesa, « Brain Research, Learning and Emotions : Implications for Education Research, Policy, and Practice », *European Journal of Education*, vol. 43, n° 1, 2008, pp. 87-103.

disciplines such as economics, psychometrics and biology displaying use of quantified data and objective models.

B. *Recomposing* knowledge through blending. The dissemination of “OECD’s knowledge” in the academic agora

Putting together fragmented academic knowledge on SS, CERI creates a new cognitive motive legitimated by knowledge actors’ involvement. Such knowledge is remobilized in CERI’s study reports³³ and working papers³⁴. Not only does OECD gather fragmented disciplinary knowledge, it also wishes to produce its own original knowledge through multiple interdisciplinary study programs³⁵. As a project leader puts it:

“First, what we did was synthesize what we already know. But existing research is limited in terms of tools used, in terms of types of outcomes [that have been documented], in terms of geographical areas where empirical research is produced. That is why our goal is also to push for research. [...]

Question is: do we have good instruments [to measure social and emotional skills]? Not good enough still! And I believe we won’t have good measures for five or ten years... You know, we call those skills ‘hard-to-measure skills’. We don’t have one good tool so we try to combine...Each discipline brings its own knowledge, so we ‘triangulate’ to come closer. I think that today we need to cross disciplines.” [Extract from an interview conducted with a CERI’s project leader, Paris, December 2015]

Even though CERI’s main ambition is to provide educators and political actors with practical knowledge, its goals is also to contribute to the development of a highly scientific knowledge³⁶ on the question of SS, so to guarantee the legitimacy of the cognitive motive produced. In order to do so, CERI’s programs are equipped with scientific protocols and based upon to large-scale studies, and on field investigations in member countries.

Such “OECD’s knowledge” then widely circulates in the global academic agora within a circular movement. Spread is enhanced by relations between CERI and influent KNETs with which it benefits

³³ As it is the case for ESP 2015 Program’s report: OCDE, ed. *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*. OECD Skills Studies. Paris: OECD, 2015.

³⁴ See for instance: Miyamoto, Koji, and Hiroko Ikesako. “Fostering Social and Emotional Skills through Families, Schools and Communities.” *OECD Education Working Papers*, June 10, 2015.

³⁵ Currently, CERI runs the following study programs: *Education for social progress (ESP)*³⁵, *Innovative teaching for effective learning (ITEL)* and *Innovation Strategy for education and training (ISET)*.

³⁶ As it is illustrated by the following interview extract: “*In our ongoing research project, we try to document each non-cognitive skill with neuroscience data. As long as we don’t know what’s going on in the brain for one skill, how it really works, we don’t put that skill in our list. If we can’t show evidence, then it’s outside the scope of our empirical study.*” Source : interview conducted with a CERI’s project leader, Paris, January 2016.

from “networks alliances” (Stone, 2013). It is the case of the *Institute for the Study of Labor* (IZA) which is considered as one of the major “epistemic communities”³⁷ in the field of economics. Here again, strong acquaintances are observed between OECD experts and IZA fellows. In 2014, CERI co-organized with IZA a conference on “*Cognitive and Non-cognitive skills and Economic development*”³⁸. Several academic papers published in the framework of IZA are written by former CERI’s experts³⁹. CERI is also tightly connected with *International Mind, Brain and Education Society* (IMBES). IMBES is a cognitive neurosciences KNET⁴⁰ directed by Kurt Fischer, quoted above, who coordinates a dedicated journal where he publishes articles putting forward CERI’s work⁴¹. Reciprocally, CERI emphasizes IMBES’ expertise⁴².

Subsequently, CERI’s reports are increasingly referenced within academic papers and conferences. For instance, ESP 2015 study report is quoted in communications presented at the *Third 21st Century Academic Forum, Conference at Harvard*⁴³, alongside academic works such as A.L. Duckworth’s and J.J Heckman’s⁴⁴. OECD is highlighted for its conceptual input on SS as well as for the reflection it opens about the consequences for educational policies’ evolution⁴⁵.

³⁷ As regards to its scientific composition and its “shared normative and principled beliefs which provide the value-based rationales for their action”, IZA qualifies to D. Stone’s definition of a global “epistemic community” (Stone, 2013, p.47).

³⁸ As stated by the conference’s presentation:

“*The workshop, organized by IZA, OECD and the World Bank will focus on the role of cognitive and non-cognitive skills in the labor markets of developing, emerging, and developed economies. Possible topics include but are not limited to:[...] Policy interventions and the formation of cognitive and non-cognitive skills.*”

Source : http://www.iza.org/conference_files/CognitiveSkills_2014/call_for_papers

³⁹ It is the case for the following IZA working paper: “The Role of Personality, Cognition and Shocks in Determining Labor Outcomes of Young Adults in Madagascar” co-written in 2015 by David E. Sahn, a former OECD analyst. Source : David E. Sahn’s official webpage on Cornell’s University website: <http://www.human.cornell.edu/bio.cfm?netid=des16>

⁴⁰ Source: Dumont, Hanna, David Istance, Francisco Benavides, and OECD, eds. *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*. Paris: OECD, 2010.

⁴¹ Source: Kurt W. Fischer. “Mind, Brain, and Education: Building a Scientific Groundwork for Learning and Teaching”, *Mind Brain and Education*, Volume 3—Number 1, 2009, p.4.

⁴² Namely through a dedicated inset in one of its first report produced on this question : Inset #7.1. in Dumont, Hanna, David Istance, Francisco Benavides, and OECD, eds. *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*. Paris: OECD, 2010.

⁴³ As detailed on the Conference website : “*The theme of the Third 21st Century Academic Forum Conference at Harvard is Facilitating, Fostering, and Harnessing Innovation to Meet Key Challenges of the 21st Century. [...] three major topic tracks: (1) Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century; (2) Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship; and (3) Socially Responsible / Impactful Research*”. Source : <http://www.21caf.org/3rd-conference-at-harvard.html>

⁴⁴ As illustrated by the following academic paper presented at the Conference : Cao, J. “Non-Cognitive Skills and the Role of College Activities: An Empirical Study in Hong Kong.” In *21st Century Academic Forum Proceeding , 2015 Conference of Harvard*. Boston, 2015.

⁴⁵ As illustrated by the following extract : “*OECD identified a conceptual framework of non-cognitive skills with three domains and nine sets of non-cognitive skills, including pursuing goals(perseverance, self-control, passion for goals), working with others (friendliness, respect, caring) and managing emotions(calm, optimism and confidence) (OECD, 2015:34). [...] OECD (2015:40-41) mentioned that schooling was one of the important learning contexts to promote the development of non-cognitive skills, and curricular and extracurricular activities in schools were important factors to shape skills.*” *Ibid.*

Disseminating well beyond the scope of the United States where CERI's knowledge originates, "OECD's knowledge" becomes global and finds resonance in Europe as well as in Eastern and Southern Asia, where higher education studies' literature on SS grows rapidly in the 2010s⁴⁶.

All in all, cognitive dynamics displayed on SS motive supports Jenny Ozga's study of OECD's "topoi" on "knowledge economy" (Ozga & Jones, 2006), as well of Brunsson and Jacobsson's analysis of the role of "standardization organizations" (Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2012, p.15-16). It finally conforms to Diane Stone's definition of a KNET, combining diverse sources of knowledge through a unique network organization ensuring legitimacy and polarizing authority (Stone, 2013).

II. OECD as a *crossover actor*. Disseminating a normative motive through the global agora of educational policies

Another aspect of OECD's role is yet to examine: the making and the spreading of a practical knowledge that serves action in education. This section studies the dissemination of "OECD's knowledge" beyond the academic agora, toward the one of educational policies. Existing research documents OECD's role in terms of brokerage. In the field of education, Romuald Normand shows that one of the main roles played by OECD consists in translating scientific knowledge into resources accessible by -and appealing for- actors beyond the academic agora. Easily accessed, such knowledge then circulates through multiple channels and specialized portals (Normand, 2016). We will show here

⁴⁶ As illustrated by the following selection of Asian management science works :

- Abdullah-Al-Mamun, M. "The Soft Skills Education for the Vocational Graduate: Value as Work Readiness Skills." *British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioural Science* 2, no. 4 (2012).
- Cao, J. "Non-Cognitive Skills and the Role of College Activities: An Empirical Study in Hong Kong." In *21st Century Academic Forum Proceeding, 2015 Conference of Harvard*. Boston, 2015.
- Hassan, A., M. Maharoff, and N.Z. Abiddin. "The Readiness of Lecturers in Embedding Soft Skills in the Bachelor's Degree Program in Malaysian Institutes of Teacher Education." *Journal of Education and Training Studies, Malaysia* 2, no. 3 (2014).
- Pang, E., and H. Hung. "Designing And Evaluating A Personal Skills Development Program For Management Education." *Journal of College Teaching & Learning* 9, no. 3 (2012): 159–70.
- Parrya Jane, Martin Hayden. "Skills Development: A Review With Reference To Southeast Asia." *Journal of International and Comparative Education* 4, no. 2 (2015): 67–78.
- Raman, M., and A.S. Koka. "The Ever-Increasing Demand for Soft Skills at Workplace: A Study on IT Professionals' Perspectives." *International Conference on Management and Information Systems*, Bangkok, Thailand, September 2015.
- Seetha, N. "Are Soft Skills Important in the Workplace? – A Preliminary Investigation in Malaysia." *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Malaysia, 4, no. 4 (2014).
- Sermasuk, S., D. Triwichtkhun, and S. Wongwanich. "Employment Conditions and Essential Employability Skills Required by Employers for Secondary School Graduate." In *5th World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013*. Thailand, 2013.
- Vibulphol, Jutarat, Jyrki Loima, Sornnate Areesophonpichet, and Chanita Rukspollmuang. "Ready Contents or Future Skills? A Comparative Study of Teacher Education in Thailand and Finland." *Journal of Education and Learning* 4, no. 4 (November 9, 2015): 149.

that as a KNET⁴⁷, OECD becomes an arbiter, a coordinator and a primary actor in the dissemination of a new norm in the global agora of educational policies⁴⁸.

A) A cognitive motive fitting the needs of policy makers. Tight ties with governments and the European commission

Dissemination of OECD's knowledge within the global agora of educational policies is favored by CERI's capacity to integrate national governments into the making of such knowledge. Unlike academic papers, CERI's study reports focus on what science can teach for *action* in education. Ambition is to provide policy makers and "educators" with knowledge on efficient educational programs and tools they can implement to foster SS development among children⁴⁹. To ensure member states' involvement, CERI's programs directly draw on member States' best practices. Goal is to create a collective reflection with member states' representatives and to value initiatives identified at national and local levels. As a CERI's Project director indicates:

"At CERI we discovered quite a lot of evidence showing the impact of those skills. But at the same time, we notice these skills are still not very emphasized...they are not reflected in public policies. Why? First, politicians don't know the power of those skills. Secondly, even if they do, they don't know what they should do to improve them. Finally, those skills are hard to measure. [...]"

⁴⁷ As it is underlined by Diane Stone, this brokerage function is one of KNETs' key roles: *"The primary motivation of such networks is to create and advance knowledge as well as to share, and, in some cases, use that knowledge to inform policy and apply it to practice."* (Stone, 2013, p.44)

⁴⁸ Global agora is here defined as a space that includes all actors involved in the design and the implementation of policies in the field of education. This concept allows to shed light on networks and complex public-private arrangements as well as to draw attention on actors and relations between them. We refer to Diane Stone's definition : *"The global agora [...] is used here precisely for these varied meanings in recognition of the dynamic dual role of public and private actors in the agora as well as the multiple identities and functions of networks"* (Stone, 2003, p.4). It is to be noted that the recent emergence of a "global agora" is documented by Diane Stone (2003), and that the "global agora" of education is also subject to a deep study by Stephen J. Ball (2012).

⁴⁹ As stated by the ESP study program's flyer:

"A considerable amount of research sheds light on different ways to enhance individuals' level of literacy and academic skills. [...] Less is known, however, about ways to improve social and emotional skills. [...] How can education promote people's success in life and well-being? [...] How can we raise skills that matter?" » [ESP study program's flyer, p.5-6]

"The long-term objective of this project is to translate these findings into a set of recommendations and measurement instruments for policy-makers, school administrators, practitioners and parents. [...] The ESP project addresses diverse learning contexts, in homes, schools, communities and workplaces." » [ESP study program's flyer, p.9]

"This includes continuing efforts made in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as well as the new phase of the Education and Social Progress (ESP) project. The latter will involve the enhancement of existing social and emotional skills instruments to better understand the levels and developmental processes across countries and cultures." » [ESP study program's flyer, p.2]

"It also describes evidence on how policy makers, schools and families facilitate social and emotional skills development through teaching practices, parenting and intervention programs." [ESP study program's report, 2015, p. 13]

We gather good practices during high level meetings as well as low level meetings. In our high level meetings, we can access innovative practices coming from representatives of Ministries for each country of the board. At the low level, we organized conferences at local level, gathering teachers and employers...They actually show real interest to those events.”

[Extract from an interview with a CERI's Project leader, December 2015]

This dynamic is reinforced by political activities performed by OECD's "knowledge actors" themselves. Economists J.J. Heckman, B. ter Weel and L. Borghans, co-writers of the ESP 2014's report⁵⁰, all benefit from a great proximity with policy makers and are involved in advisory activities⁵¹. Psychologists Kurt Fischer and Christina Hinton, contributors to the 2010 OECD's report "*The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*" provide consultancy expertise, for instance to the Swedish Parliament in 2011⁵². KNETs such as IZA also play this role. As underlined in its motto « *Shaping the Future of Labor* », IZA is willing to drive labor and lifelong learning policies' evolution⁵³. As a matter of fact, it happens that academic papers on SS published by IZA are often co-financed by national governments⁵⁴ and contribute to transfer OECD's SS motive to public policies.

The European Union is another IO playing a visible role in the dissemination of the SS motive. As part of its *2020 Strategy*⁵⁵, it expresses a specific concern about the « skill gap » observed between employers' needs and young generations' skills. Entrepreneurship and lifelong learning are highlighted as key levers. Several flagship programs are created starting 2008, such as "*Youth on the Move*" and "*An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs*".

⁵⁰ Heckman, J.J., L. Borghans, T. Kautz, B. ter Weel, and R. Diris. "Fostering and Measuring Skills: Improving Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills to Promote Lifetime Success." OCDE, 2014.

⁵¹ J.J Heckman's expertise has recently mobilized by the US Government concerning the Federal strategy of education and budget issues, and he has featured as a speaker at the «2015 World Education Forum » en South Korea Source : J.J. Heckman's official personal page on IZA website ; Maastricht University Professor Bas ter Weel directs the *CPB Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis* attached to the Ministry for Economic affairs and colleague Maastricht University Professor Lex Borghans is member of the Dutch Education Council⁵¹. Source : Authors official webpages on IZA website.

⁵² Source : Harvard's Graduate School of Education's website.

⁵³ As stated on IZA website: "*IZA sees itself as an international research institute and a place for communication between academic science, politics, and economic practice. [...]Additional funding for specific research programs, projects, reports and events is drawn from various government institutions, international organizations and other foundations.*”;

“IZA's special focus on "Labor Policy" reflects the great importance of evidence-based policy making. With its team of policy experts, IZA analyzes and evaluates existing policies on the national and international level, utilizes the results of the IZA program areas, and develops concrete policy proposals.”

⁵⁴ As it is the case for the following article, co-financed by the British government: David E. Sahn, Kira M. Villa "The Role of Personality, Cognition and Shocks in Determining Labor Outcomes of Young Adults in Madagascar" IZA, 2015, which the Foreword says : "*The work was supported by the IZA/DFID GLM | LIC Program under Grant Agreement GA-C1-RA4- 067. This document is an output from a project funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) for the benefit of developing countries.*”

⁵⁵ Source : « *Europe 2020 flagship initiative 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment'. Frequently asked questions* », press release posted on the European commission's website on November 23rd 2010.

Starting 2010s, European programs are launched that present SS as essential skills to develop so to foster youth employability⁵⁶. Two examples are “*Measuring and Assessing Soft Skills: a European Project for Developing Employability Skills in Young People*” (MASS)⁵⁷ and “*Gaining and strengthening 'soft skills' for employment through models of supporting methods (peer coaching and mentoring)*” programs. The former aims at producing knowledge and measurement tools, the latter at creating European “*learning partnerships*” on this theme⁵⁸. MASS also provides financial support to national innovation networks and local experimental policies, as it is the case of British NESSIE program which focuses on soft skills e-learning in schools and which partners with local companies⁵⁹.

If cognitive convergence on the SS motive appears between EU and OECD, neither direct connection nor coproduction are observed between these IOs⁶⁰. How come, then, that the SS motive that we presented as “OECD’s motive” is also found in the EU strategy? A piece of answer may be found building on Romuald Normand’s work (2011) which shows that EU’s lifelong learning strategy is directly influenced by human capital economists, who come in close contact with the European Commission⁶¹. EENEE is a *think tank* tightly connected to political instances and plays a direct influence on the European Commission⁶². Links between EENEE and IZA are numerous and can be seen through cross-belonging of papers published on SS⁶³. Our study shows that another

⁵⁶ See for instance articles posted on *Euractiv* and the *European Youth Forum* platforms, respectively untitled : “*Soft skills' seen as key to employability*” and “*Young people lack “soft skills”, say business leaders*” and available on the following web pages : <http://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/news/soft-skills-seen-as-key-to-employability/> ; <http://intranet.youthforum.org/newsletters/node/14593>

⁵⁷ The MASS program was launched at the occasion of a dedicated meeting held in Brussels on September 21st-22^d 2011, as it can be read on the day program’s presentation on line : http://mass.educational-innovation.org/attachments/378_mass-brussels%20programme%20-%20uppdaterat%2011-08-22.pdf

⁵⁸ Goal is to “*develop a project application for a European Soft Skills Network*”. *Ibid.* It involves seven countries and eight partners. As the presentation retrieved from the project’s website stands: “*The project's main objective is to develop learning tools and environments for strengthening 'soft skills' and models of supporting learning and training [...]. Therefore, the project aims at raising the awareness of the need for these skills and supportive models that incorporate best practices available for use by individuals, other organizations, enterprises and local, regional, national and European authorities.*” Source : <http://www.gainingsoftskills.eu/>

⁵⁹ NESSIE stands for “*NETwork for Soft Skills Innovation for Employment*”. More information on the program’s website : <http://nessie-project.org/> and on MASS’ dedicated report, accessible online : [http://mass.educational-innovation.org/attachments/396_MASS%20wp4%20final%20report%20part-7%20\(Partners%20Reports\).pdf](http://mass.educational-innovation.org/attachments/396_MASS%20wp4%20final%20report%20part-7%20(Partners%20Reports).pdf)

⁶⁰ Source: interview with a CERI’s Project director, conducted in Paris in December 2015. When asked about the MASS program, this person admitted not to be aware of it. During the interview, interviewee looked it up on the Internet and said this would be a very interesting program to connect with his CERI’s study program.

⁶¹ Romuald Normand’s work provides evidence on relationships between EU’s Directorate-General for Education and Culture and economists’ network EENEE (standing for European Expert Network on Economics of Education), as well as acquaintances with CERI’s analysts (Normand, 2011, p.184-185).

⁶² As stated by EENEE’s official presentation: “*EENEE is an EU Think Tank sponsored by the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture. The network is coordinated by the Ifo Institute. EENEE aims to contribute to the improvement of decision-making and policy development in education and training in Europe by advising and supporting the European Commission in the analysis of economic aspects of educational policies and reforms.*” Source : EENEE web site, <http://www.eenee.de/eeneeHome.html>

⁶³ See for instance : M. Schlotter and G. Brunello “*Non Cognitive Skills and Personality Traits: Labour Market Relevance and their Development in Education & Training Systems*” both published as a *EENEE Analytical Report No. 8 Prepared for the European Commission* in April 2011 and as a *IZA Discussion Paper No. 5743* in May 2011.

KNET is involved in this convergence dynamic: the COEURE research coordination network (*COoperation for EUropean Research in Economics*). It involves IZA fellows such as Lex Borghans, who is a CERi's report co-author (Heckman et al., OECD, 2014). Financed by the EU⁶⁴, COEURE aims at fostering EBPM, enhancing use of economist knowledge in the making of new public policies – just as IZA.

B) A cognitive motive seized beyond the scope of public action. Evidence of “educational alliances” with transnational advocacy networks (TANs) and policy entrepreneurs (PEs)

Our study of SS motive's dynamics of circulation allows us to identify new public-private “assemblages” in the making and the disseminating of new norms for action. Here, we will shed light on the keen role played by OECD and highlight as well significant role of “crossover actors”⁶⁵, who act both in the framework of OECD and of private networks such as TANs.

OECD benefits from tight ties with TANs in the field of education. Focused on advocacy, lobbying and agenda-setting, TANs produce conviction effects and spread values and correlative norms. Unlike KNETs, they are normative and value-based⁶⁶. Existing literature on TANs highlights their role in the diffusion of knowledge and norms (Ball, 2012; Stone, 2013). Our study of five TANs offers an understanding of connections with OECD and knowledge circulations. It thereby highlights private actors' cognitive and political *inputs* in the shaping of the SS motive and in its translation in policies.

Global network CASEL (for *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning*) is one of the most significant network in advocating for an education system taking better account of SS⁶⁷. Created in 1994, it is dedicated to the promotion of its own teaching method called *Social and emotional learning* (SEL). Built on scientific theories, CASEL method offers practitioners guidelines and tools⁶⁸ that are adopted in all fifty American states⁶⁹. CASEL is referenced in CERi's study reports

⁶⁴ COEURE's project "COoperation for European Research in Economics" is funded by the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) under the grant agreement n° 320300 (COEURE).

⁶⁵ S.J. Ball defines “crossover actors” as “*some members of these policy communities [which] have multiple roles (within agencies, public service and philanthropy). They are, at different times or sometimes simultaneously, representatives of business, advisers to the state, philanthropists, moral entrepreneurs [...].*” (Ball, 2008, p 754).

⁶⁶ We refer here to Stephen J. Ball's definition of TANs: “*They differ from other types of networks in that they exist to promote principled causes, ideas and values. They exist to change international policy as well as make these changes real in the day-to-day lives of ordinary people.[...] TANs are ‘communicative structures’ organized around the ‘shared values’ of their members. [... TANs provide networks for the diffusion of knowledge and information.*” (Ball, 2012, p.12-13) as well as D. Stone's (Stone, 2013, p.40-41).

⁶⁷ CASEL's ambition is to equip children with skills that are useful not only for school achievement, but for lifetime success - as its motto sums it up: « *Success in school, skills for life* ».

⁶⁸ For more information, please refer to “CASEL Guide - Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs,” 2013.

both for its conceptual input and its expertise⁷⁰, and for the “best practices” it leads to locally⁷¹. Ashoka and Design for Change (DFC) are two other major TANs involved in the global advocacy on SS. They share with CASEL the ambition to guide the education system’s evolution so that it can better support the development of social and emotional skills, which they consider as essential to empower each child. Their specificity is that they come from the agora of social innovation and social entrepreneurship. Therefore, they address directly to teachers and children -which they qualify as “innovators” and “entrepreneurs”- rather than directing advocacy towards educational authorities and policy makers. They offer methods and practical tools based on the SS motive⁷² and organize global events and communities. OECD appears connected with these TANs: Ashoka refers to CERI’s expertise⁷³, while DFC is put forward in the Center’s *Innovation Strategy for Education and Training* (ISET) program⁷⁴.

International *Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills* (ATC21S) and *Partnership for 21st century learning* (P21) are the last two global networks identified for their advocacy for SS. They are multi-stakeholders projects gathering scholars and private groups such as *Cisco*, *Intel* and *Microsoft*, as well as policy makers⁷⁵. Both work on the design of a new skills framework called “21st century

⁶⁹ Source: CASEL’s website : <http://www.casel.org/casels-20-year-timeline/>. CASEL’s expansion is supported by Foundations and Charitable Trusts. Source : CASEL’s website : <http://www.casel.org/funders>

⁷⁰ As stated by the following CERI’s report extract : “*Evidence from a large-scale meta-analysis of school-based interventions on social and emotional learning (SEL) in the United States also documents numerous lessons. First, SEL programmes have significant positive effects on social and emotional skills such as goal setting, conflict resolution and decision making. Second, classroom teachers and other school staff can drive successful SEL programs. Third, SEL interventions can be incorporated into routine educational practices. Fourth, these interventions may be successful at all educational levels (elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary).*” in OCDE, ed. *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*. OECD Skills Studies. Paris: OECD, 2015. Page 83.

⁷¹ Source : US States’ examples described in « *Box 5.2. Curriculum-wide approaches to social and emotional skills: Country examples*” *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁷² Ashoka’s program is called “*Changemaker schools*”; DFC is presented as “*the largest global movement of Children driving change in their own communities by unleashing their 'I CAN' superpower.*” More information on DFC’s website : <http://dfcworld.com/> and the flyer from Ashoka France Belgique Suisse: <http://france.ashoka.org/sites/france.ashoka.org/files/Brochure-%C3%89ducation-bd-web.compressed.pdf> Through their respective programs, both create new schools networks and global communities of innovative practices.

⁷³ As illustrated by Andreas Schleicher’s interview performed in Paris, June 2015, and available on Ashoka’s website: <http://france.ashoka.org/interview-dandreas-schleicher-directeur-charg%C3%A9-de-1%C3%A9ducation-et-des-comp%C3%A9tences-%C3%A0-locde>

⁷⁴ Source: Box 2.3 “*Design for Change: A successfully scaled project*”. in OECD, ed. *Innovation Policies for Inclusive Growth*. Paris: OECD, 2015, p. 41.

⁷⁵ As observed in ATC21S: ““*Cisco Systems Inc., Intel Corporation and Microsoft Corp. unveiled plans in January 2008 to sponsor a research collaboration to accelerate global education reform by mobilizing the international educational, political and business communities to help transform the teaching, learning and measurement of 21st century skills. The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills (ATC21S) project is focused on defining those skills and developing ways to measure them.*” Source : Cisco’s web blog : <http://blogs.cisco.com/education/atc21s-consortium-at-london-education-world-forum>

“*The Assessment and Teaching of 21st-Century Skills (ATC21S) is a multistakeholder research partnership made up of governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and research and teaching institutions that explores ways of assessing — 21st-century skills — and encourage schools and education systems to incorporate these skills into teaching and learning programs to prepare students to be successful in the work force and as*

skills” pricing creativity, autonomy, entrepreneurial spirit and teamwork, and they advocate for its integration in educational tests as well as recruitment ones⁷⁶. OECD pays a particular attention to their conceptual inputs and assessment tools. P21’s tools are mobilized within the *Innovative Teaching for Effective Learning* (ITEL) program⁷⁷. Linked with OECD’s reflection since 2008⁷⁸, ATC21S is presented as a significant partner by OECD Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, which highlights stimulating perspectives in integrating ATC21S measures in PISA tests⁷⁹. This illustrates TANs normative power on OECD’s skills measurement tools.

Ties with TANs are made possible by CERI’s acquaintances with *crossover actors* who cumulate the roles of academic *knowledge actors* and of *policy entrepreneurs*⁸⁰ (PEs). Cognitive psychologist Daniel Goleman, renowned in the academic agora for his “emotional quotient” theory and derived operational expertise⁸¹, appears as one of them. Put forward in the 2015 ESP study report⁸², he is the leading designer of the *Social and Emotional Learning* (SEL) method and is one of CASEL’s founders. He is also tightly connected to public organizations and private groups⁸³. Such crossover

global citizens.” Source : « *Frequent Asked Questions* » section of ATC21S web blog: <http://www.atc21s.org/faqs.html>

⁷⁶ Source : Griffin, Patrick E., Barry McGaw, and Esther Care, eds. *Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills*. Dordrecht ; New York: Springer, 2012.

⁷⁷ P21 experts’ mobilization can be seen through reports’ contributions as well as their participation of seminars. Sources: “What is the Evidence on Teaching and Learning of 21st Century Skills?” *Powerpoint presentation for ITEL’s workshop*. p. 2. ; Study report « *Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century* », OECD/CERI, 2014 ; Symposium “Teachers as Learning Specialists – Implications for Teachers’ Pedagogical Knowledge and Professionalism”, Brussels June 18th 2014.

⁷⁸ Fadel C., “21st Century Skills: How can you prepare students for the new Global Economy?”, *PowerPoint Cisco*, displayed at CERI, Paris, May 2008.

⁷⁹ As expressed by OECD Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills Andreas Schleicher: “ATC21S has played an essential pathfinder role to move the assessment agenda forward. It fills a critical gap between existing basic research on assessment design and methodologies, on the one hand, and the implementation of large-scale assessments that provide reliable data at reasonable cost, on the other. Its latest venture, the piloting of tasks to assess collaborative problem-solving skills, provides important insights for OECD’s efforts to broaden future PISA assessments to encompass interpersonal skill dimensions.” Source : Cisco’s blog, “Education” section : <http://blogs.cisco.com/education/atc21s-at-education-world-forum-2013-key-reflections>

⁸⁰ We use here Stephen J. Ball’s concept (Ball, 2008, p 754) in order to draw attention on individual mobilization dynamics behind TANs. Indeed, a large body of evidence exists on the role of TANs in the making and disseminating of global norms and instruments; less is known, however, about the individual actors that allow TANs to perform such a role by providing cognitive material to build on legitimate advocacy (Ball 2012, p.14). TAN structures, respectively, provide those individual with a favorable environment, connecting them with resources and networks needed to disseminate norms globally.

⁸¹ Goleman’s expertise is disseminated in general public books such as 1995 best-seller « *Emotional Intelligence. Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* » as well as other books on leadership :

Goleman D. *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (2002); Goleman D. *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Social Relationships* (2006), vendu à plus de 5 millions d’exemplaires ; Goleman D. *Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence* (2011); Goleman D. *The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights* (2011); Goleman D. *What Makes a Leader: Why Emotional Intelligence Matters* (2014).

⁸² « Box 5.2. Curriculum-wide approaches to social and emotional skills: Country examples” in OCDE, ed. *Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*. OECD Skills Studies. Paris: OECD, 2015. p.102.

⁸³ Groups include Accenture or PepsiCo and public organization the US Federal government, as it is underlined in D. Goleman’s bibliography : <http://www.danielgoleman.info/biography/>

actor mediates SS motive's circulations, as do Patrick Kyllonen and Jim Pellegrino, both active contributors to CERI's study programs⁸⁴. J. Pellegrino is involved in CERI's study program ITEL and its international *Symposium*. He benefits from high recognition and legitimacy as an education expert in the United States. He has been a member of the *Board on Testing and Assessment* of the *National Research Council*, with which he published a report untitled "*Education for Life and Work: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century*". He is personally involved in the P21 project. P. Kyllonen is part of the CERI's ESP project's longitudinal survey's steering committee and appears in the 2015 ESP study report's acknowledgement page⁸⁵. He directs the *Educational Testing Service* (ETS) company which is present as one of the leading company for school and professional assessments⁸⁶. ETS is put forward as "best practices" by the OECD⁸⁷ and is linked to the ATC21S project⁸⁸.

OECD's ties with Ashoka and DFC are also boosted by acquaintances with PEs linked to these TANs. It's the case of Ashoka fellow François Taddéi, considered as a leading figure in the French agora of innovation in education. Deeply integrated in national circles of reflection on education, he works with the French Ministry of Education⁸⁹ as well as UNESCO⁹⁰. He wrote an OECD report designed to be a "contribution to the OECD Innovation Strategy"⁹¹ and personally knows CERI's Project leader

Source: Symposium "Teachers as Learning Specialists – Implications for Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge and Professionalism", Brussels, June 18, 2014.

⁸⁵ As illustrated by a CERI's internal review: "*Patrick Kyllonen (Educational Testing Service) presented an overview of the advantages of using anchoring vignettes to adjust for biases associated with using self-reported rating scales. He demonstrated significant gains in terms of reducing numerous biases (e.g., cross-cultural comparability) across and within countries by re-scaling self-reported measures using anchoring vignettes.*" *Source*: Miyamoto, K., M. Huerta, and OCDE, CERI. "Education and Social Progress. Summary Record: Steering Group Meeting of the OECD Longitudinal Study of Skill Dynamics.," October 2014, p.4.

⁸⁶ The company introduces itself as a major actor in the field of skills assessments.

Source: site web <http://www.ets.org/k12>

⁸⁷ "*The work of Kyllonen and his associates at the Educational Testing Service (Kyllonen, 2012; Kyllonen, in press) exemplifies the high quality of this work and the nature of the information obtained from the administration of these assessments*"

Source: Nusche, Deborah, Henry Braun, Gábor Halász, Paulo Santiago, and OECD, eds. *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Netherlands 2014*. OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education. Paris: OECD, 2014. p.93.

⁸⁸ P. Kyllonen is member of the "*committee on defining deeper learning and 21st century skills*". *Source*: James W. Pellegrino, Margaret L. Hilton, the Committee on Defining Deeper Learning and 21st Century Skills; Center for Education; Division on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education « Education for life and work : developing transferable knowledge and skills in the 21st century », *National Research Council*. 2012.

⁸⁹ F. Taddéi works in relation with the French Ministry of Education's R&D department (Département Recherche et Développement en Innovation et en Education – DRDIE).

⁹⁰ F. Taddéi holds a UNESCO's Chair in Education, untitled "learning how to learn" ("apprendre à apprendre").

⁹¹ Untitled "*Training creative and collaborative knowledge-builders: a major challenge for 21st century education*", this draft report was released on February 28th 2009. It is available online : <http://cri-paris.org/wp-content/uploads/ocde-francois-taddei-fev2009.pdf>

Stephan Vincent-Lancrin⁹². Finally, OECD's connections appear with DFC's founder Kiran B. Sethi, an Indian educational PE⁹³.

This study shows that PEs bring to OECD's SS motive new resources for dissemination. They foster dissemination through the use of web media and widespread channels such as TEDx conferences⁹⁴. Some design innovative educational programs and are personally involved in the SS motive's normalization process⁹⁵. Some introduce the SS motive to actors such as policy makers and entrepreneurs which will proceed to its normalization and "embeddedness". Some, finally, disseminate the SS motive to other parts of the agora, introducing it to private actors such as Foundations⁹⁶ and philanthropy actors, which have been shown to gain a growing influence on the educational policy game. This analysis conforms to Stephen J. Ball's work on "crossover actors" in which he highlights multiple and hybrid identities⁹⁷, personal acquaintances and cross-referencing (Ball, 2012, p. 53). This study on the specific case of SS cognitive motive confirms that highly linked and mobile PEs are capable of engaging powerful actors and networks in their projects while coordinating them at local and global levels and meanwhile disseminating new norms for action.

⁹² They regularly meet in the framework of projects or events, as it was the case in 2015 where they were both speakers at the Innovation Days organized by the French Ministry of Education, put together at the same roundtable untitled "Prospective roundtable. Research serving tomorrow's school" (« *Table ronde prospective. La recherche au service de l'école de demain* »). Source : French web site *Eduscol*, 2011 Innovation Days' program: <http://eduscol.education.fr/cid56630/retour-sur-les-journees-de-l-innovation-2011.html>

⁹³ Kiran B. Sethi "Riverside School" experience is worldwide famous and became the starting point of the DFC action. She is quoted in OECD's report *Innovation Policies for Inclusive Growth*. Paris: OECD, 2015. p 45.

⁹⁴ This supports D. Stone's analysis (Stone, 2013, p 179-185). See for instance K. Beth Sethi's 2009 TEDx conference exposing DFSC's story and philosophy, watched over 1,3 million times and available in 36 languages, and François Taddéi's 2010 TEDx Conference performed in Paris, untitled "For a new education model".

⁹⁵ This is the case of psychologists A.L. Duckworth, K. Fischer and C.Hinton listed above. A.L. Duckworth offers practical support to American schools willing to develop children's SS in the framework *Character Lab* that she founded at the University of Penn.

Authors of several practical handbooks K. Fischer and C.Hinton run an international program called *International Research Schools* aiming at a better appropriation of neurosciences in schools and to build an international network of schools. Source : the Graduate School of Education (GSE)'s website <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/faculty/kurt-fischer> ; the *Transformative for Teaching and Learning* project's website <http://www.thectl.org/partnership-with-harvard-gse/>

⁹⁶ This is the case of American researchers J.J Heckman, whose expertise activities are financed by the *Pritzker Children's Initiative* as well as A.L. Duckworth who partners with numerous foundations and philanthropy actors. Sources : J.J Heckman and A.L Duckworth official CVs.

This is also the case of F. Taddéi, who created in 2006 and directs the Center for Research Interdisciplinarity (CRI) in Paris. It is actively supported by the Bettencourt-Schueller Foundation from the beginning and has given F. Taddéi a Research prize in 2003. This French foundation also supports global network *Ashoka*. Source: CRI and Ashoka websites.

⁹⁷ Stephen J. Ball observes the rise of such actors : "startups, edupreneurs, knowledge companies, private equity" (Ball, 2012, p.2)

Conclusion

This article showed how OECD performs the shaping and the disseminating of the new cognitive motive called “soft skills” in the global agora of education. Mobilizing existing academic knowledge and personally involving its producers, it blends it into an original expertise, recognized by actors as “OECD’s knowledge”. This knowledge frames a cognitive motive then seized by actors and networks, adjusting the cognitive motive to their cognitive and practical needs. We underlined micro-processes involved, focusing on the key role played by OECD’s center of research (CERI) in the shaping and the spreading of knowledge. Interpersonal acquaintances, multi-positioning of “crossover actors”, cross-referencing and circulation of knowledge through epistemic communities were also highlighted. Meanwhile, this study shows that boundaries traditionally made between “crossover actors” and “knowledge actors” – and, at the network level, between TANs and KNETs- are growingly blurred. OECD’s example also confirms the need for redefining the concept of “think tank”, as already pointed out by D. Stone (Stone, 2013, p.176).

Positioning at interfaces (between research and policy, between public and private action...) and highly mobile, OECD’s actors and partners act as “crossovers actors”. They play an active role in the spread of a cognitive motive, translating it to different forms of knowledge (scientific, normative, political...) circulating from one system of actors to another, at local, national, and supranational levels. Tied up with transnational actor networks, OECD demonstrates its ability to push for the dissemination of its cognitive motive beyond the scope of public action, toward private one, mastering « *new kinds of educational alliances* » where « *entrepreneurship and enterprise are a primary theme* » (Ball, 2008, p 757). Close relationships with a diversity of actors reflect the OECD’s capacity to take into account the “*diversification of standardizers*” (Brunsson and Jacobsson, 2012, p.25) and to benefit from their social and cognitive inputs for the “*filling in*” (Taylor, 2000) of its cognitive motive. It also offers additional channels of dissemination, thereby granting the cognitive motive a larger echo and a deeper normative power. Meanwhile, OECD positions as a needed intermediary in the making of new “*policy narratives*” (Ball, 2008, p 757) that shape new educational instruments and hybrid policies.

Today, policies are designed and implemented through complex multi-players processes, involving public-private relationships as well as multi-scaled dynamics. This study calls for a deeper study of these complex systems of actors. To produce such knowledge, new tools may be needed, namely for the study of cognitive motives and policies *transfer* dynamics - in order to encompass diversification of “shapers” and intertwining of scales involved in the production of powerful norms and instruments.

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