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The implementation of OECD recommendations in Danish Policies

Shared beliefs and structural relations among
OECD experts and national policymakers

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PREFACE

The topic of this thesis was to me a matter of theoretical interest. Through my bachelor studies I gained interest in network theories of governance and how governance today excels. The theoretical explanations of governance within network theory gave me new insights on how the future of the State and public administrations could look like. To me, this theoretical perspective was a new way to look at democratic societies and how societies could provide new policy ideas. The possibility of getting more in-depth knowledge and operationally use these theories with this thesis was therefore apparent, and to examine the reality of such network governance was of early interest to me, when searching for a research topic for this thesis.

The international perspective of network theory was an element, which I previously had not studied and advised. The inclusion of the epistemic communities theory as the main theoretical component of this thesis was therefore highly interesting to me. This gave me new theoretical insights on international organisations and their influence on Member States.

This thesis is my contribution to network theory, where I have included probable and contemporary theories that should spark to the debate of both international and national debate on policy development.

I would here like to thanks Dr. Stéphane Moyson for his continuous supervision and revisions, which have helped me in improving my points and the general quality of my thesis. I will thank Stinne Møller Grønne for our discussions that have lead to new ideas and second opinions on this thesis. Also a thank you to Dr. Menno Fenger his constructive comments on my first draft of the thesis.

Also big appreciations shall be given to Arne Eggert, Anders Eldrup and Minister of Employment, Mette Frederiksen for their participation. Without their participation this thesis would not have been possible to carry out.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the topic of policy change and therein the role that international organisations have on national policy change. It conducts research on the factors of what decide whether policy recommendations made by international organisations are implemented nationally. This is done through a test of two research hypotheses. One hypothesis objectifies that congruence among policy beliefs of national policymakers and professionals in international organisations induce implementation of policy recommendations. The second hypothesis contest that the quality and intensity of relations among national policymakers and professionals are a factor that induces implementation.

In order to test these hypotheses empirically, two cases that represent a 'most similar system' was chosen. These cases were the Compulsory Education Reform in Denmark from 2013 and the Youth Employment Effort, also Denmark, from 2012. Prior to the agreement of these two reforms, the OECD had made reviews of the respective sectors – reviews that provided recommendations for further policy development.

Here it was found that implementation of the policy recommendations occurred in the case of the education reform, whereas there was no implementation in the Youth Employment Effort. The explanation behind this was found to be the high degree of quality and intensity of relations that policymakers had with OECD professionals with development of the education reform – together with a detection of congruent policy beliefs among national policymakers and OECD professionals. In the other case, such findings were not inherent, and the reason for policy recommendations not being implemented could be prescribed to the absence of such quality and intensity of relations along with no shared policy core policy preferences among policymakers and the professionals of the OECD.

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1. Introduction

This thesis concerns the implementation of policy recommendations from international organisations within states through policy networks. The thesis seeks to explain what influence international organisations have on policy changes at the national level of Member States.

International organisations are more than just arenas of negotiation and politics. Today, most international organisations produce a wealth of information, knowledge and expertise on their own specific areas. They analyse and draw lessons on policies experienced by their various Member States and suggest possible improvements of these policies. This research activity makes international organisations a rich source of new policy inputs for States to learn from policy successes and failures and improve their governmental programs. The influence that international organisations have on national policy development is therefore interesting.

International organisations such as the EU and the OECD both provide policy recommendations for member states, but the policy recommendations have different perspectives in matters of legal rules. The policy recommendations made by the EU are mostly legally contingent, whereas the OECD provides recommendations that are non-binding to their Member States. Within both organisations States can gain, add and exchange information and knowledge between each other, which can vary depending on the considered policy area. By addressing this exchange of information and knowledge to organisations that produce policy recommendations, which are non-compulsory to implement, I seek to analyse a dimension of internationalisation of policies and issues that goes beyond the legally contingent policy areas found in e.g. the EU.

One way of explaining the influence that policy recommendations made by international organizations have on national policies is to examine the networks, which connect the organization members to national policymakers. Today, many policy areas, especially within social policy, can be categorised by the policy network typology. This mainly results from an increased fragmentation of the State, where more stakeholders than before seek to influence policies. International organisations can be considered in that perspective. The Members of international organizations interact with a variety of other actors. Specifically, they can interact with domestic

policy networks, since governments; politicians and interest groups can consult and retrieve information from them. This thesis scrutinizes the characteristic of these interactions that explain whether – or not – the policy recommendations made by international organizations ultimately influence the content of policies made by national policymakers.

Two basic principles of conducting research within social sciences shall be stated on the relevance of this topic: Lehnert, Miller and Wonka (2007) have argued on the importance of *theoretical* and *social relevance* of research questions. The theoretical relevance refers to what a study adds to already existing research discourses or how it contributes to new theoretical knowledge. This is also described as the ‘inside’ of research relevance (Lehnert et al. 2007:23). The social dimension refers to the relevance for non-peers, the ‘outside’ relevance of research (Ibid).

1.1. Theoretical relevance

Understanding why policy change is occurring as a result of policy networks, today, has become highly relevant since, in recent decades, we have referred to an understanding of governance rather than government. Governance is a broad understanding of how citizens today are conducted and how policies are developed and implemented, where government was centred on the government body of the State. The body of the State today is highly fragmented, thus making it difficult to be speaking of government only. Policy shifts involve actors from the private, semi-private as well as public spheres and occur at the local, regional, national, transnational and global levels (Kersbergen and Waarden 2004:143). This has changed the forms and mechanisms of governing, since it can take place on a variety of levels and withholds a variety of different capacities (Ibid).

As the concept of governance have reached significance among scholars as the main focus instead of government, a wealth of related new concepts came about. One of these is the ‘policy network’, which Rhodes (2007) defines as the “*sets of formal and informal institutional linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared interests in public policymaking and implementation*” (Rhodes 2007:1244). This becomes relevant to the theoretical dimension, as much literature has been criticized for being more descriptive than explanatory. More specifically, Rhodes argues that most of the policy network literature “*in general pays too little*

attention to change and the role of ideas in change” (Rhodes 2007:1251). The aim of this research is therefore to conduct theoretical investigation about the role of two dimensions of policy networks in policy change: the beliefs held by the members of those networks and the nature of the relations they have with each other. Another added value of this thesis is to promote the dialogue between one of the most famous policy perspectives on international organizations – namely, Haas (1992)’s epistemic communities – and several other theories of the policy process.

1.2. Social relevance

Social relevance is a matter of why people “should care” (Lehnert et al. 2007:23). Social relevance can also be prescribed as being the interest for a certain topic and problem for non-peers. The social relevance of the present thesis is related to the way international organizations do – or do not – influence national policies as well as the content of this influence. More specifically, it is a matter of what decides whether OECD-recommendations are applied in Danish policy outputs.

The rise of importance of international organisations and their influence on national policies should be of interest for non-peers. With an increased globalisation and inherent transfer of policy ideas within and outside organisations, the social relevance becomes a matter of why and where policy ideas come from. Do they trace back to national experiences, or are they prominently affected by the interaction government officials, politicians and other national policymakers have with the members of international organisations? This is characteristic since international organisations provide a forum for exchange of policy knowledge and information that is not found on national level. International organisations have a broader and bigger knowledge base, simply because of a higher degree of participants. However, since international organisations have gained proficiency on policy areas, they can have gained very institutionalised values and norms that can be decisive for their work. This raises concerns on whether such a (re)-production of certain paradigmatic policy ideas and knowledge are viable for the development and innovation of policies. On the one hand, international organisations can produce paradigms of policies through provided arenas, where exchanges of policies are possible. On the other hand, international organisations more or less can serve their own purpose and episteme; organisations such as the OECD, the WTO and the EU should be questioned on their production of

certain policies. This is of social relevance since it can create a form of uniformities of policies. Furthermore, the interactions of government officials with organisations can lead to a socialisation to policy ideas. Non-peers should be interested in the reasons of why policies change and what influence international organisations have on this change.

1.3. Overview of the research

1.3.1. Research question

The ambition of this research is to identify some factors, which cause the transfer and implementation of recommendations made by international organizations into national policy outputs, by national policymakers.

Until this point, I have been speaking in broad measures on international organisations. In order to delimit the research to be conducted here, I will solely focus on the OECD and the policy-recommendations produced in the OECD. Focusing on the OECD is rather interesting since OECD comprises a broader group of countries than the EU. Furthermore, the OECD policy recommendations are solely recommendations; there are no obligations for national governments to implement them. The OECD produces a wealth of reports and country assessments. More specifically, experts and professionals within the OECD produce these. I will argue that the OECD therefore has gained its own life as an institution internationally, which only increases the importance and relevance of assessing what factors that influencing national implementation of OECD policy recommendations.

The research questions is therefore as follows:

Research Question:

What are the factors that decide whether OECD-recommendations are implemented in its Member States?

In order to answer this research question, I will delimit the notion of OECD-recommendations by focusing on policy recommendation found in official documents produced the OECD.

1.3.2. General hypotheses

Two general hypotheses will be tested in order to answer my research question. The hypotheses are based on the general theoretical orientation that will be presented in

the literature review. Both hypotheses assume factors inducing national implementation of OECD recommendations.

General hypothesis 1:

Shared belief systems between national policymakers and the OECD induce implementation of policy recommendations.

General hypothesis 2:

Interactions between national policymakers and OECD induce implementation of policy recommendations.

If my empirical research does not validate the above hypotheses, I suggest the following alternative hypotheses:

Alternative hypothesis 1:

Shared belief systems between national policymakers and the OECD do not induce implementation of policy recommendations.

Alternative hypothesis 2:

Interactions between national policymakers and the OECD do not induce implementation of policy recommendations.

The concepts used by these hypotheses will be presented together with the theoretical framework. This will be based on the literature review.

1.3.3. Cases

The above research question and hypotheses will be answered and tested with use of two comparative case studies. The methodological reasoning behind case studies and the validity hereof will be elaborated in the research design.

The two cases used will be two Danish governmental policy reforms in the education sector and the employment sector. In the summer of 2013, the Danish Ministry of Education launched a reform on compulsory education. This will be the first case. The second case will be the Danish Ministry of Employment's Youth Employment Effort of the fall 2012. In both cases the OECD made assessments and reports before the reforms were initiated, in which policy recommendations were provided for further policy development. As will be showed by the analysis, the implementation of OECD recommendations is clear in the first case whereas such implementation did not occur in the second case. The two cases share a same cultural, institutional, and organizational context. Hence, if there is some variation in the

degree of implementation of OECD recommendations should result from more political factors like the beliefs held by the members of policy networks and the relations that they have with each other.

1.3.4. Chapters

The thesis will contain the following chapters.

Chapter 2 will present the literature review, in which the two general approaches within implementation literature will be outlined, top-down and bottom-up. This leads to the perspective of policy networks, which will be confined to the epistemic communities theory, the interdependence theory and the advocacy coalition framework.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework. This includes the hypotheses derived from theories and the indicators used for operationalizing the variables connected by those hypotheses.

Chapter 4 presents the research design of a small-N research. Furthermore, the methodological considerations will be outlined.

Chapter 5 is the analysis, where the variables' indicators are applied to the two cases and empirical observations are made according to these indicators.

Chapter 6 is the discussion of the findings, which lead to the final validation or invalidation of the hypotheses. Additionally, the findings will be discussed in relation to their contribution of the theories that have been advised in the literature review.

Chapter 7 will summarise the thesis and provides directions for future research.

2. Literature review

This Chapter outlines the important streams of literature within the field of policy implementation and policy networks – thereafter will the relevant theories be derived from this reasoning.

In policy implementation research, studies on top-down processes were complemented by studies on bottom-up processes. Those two streams of research, however, were criticized for their overly linear view on the policy process. By looking at the patterns of relations among actors involved in policy implementation processes, policy networks research allows combining the insights of those two streams of research while “de-linearizing” the view on policy implementation processes.

At least three complementary theories in which policy networks play a role may be cited: Epistemic Communities, Interdependence theory and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). The literature review will show how these theories can complement each other analytically. The relevance of epistemic communities theory in this thesis relates to its overall aim of explaining international organisations’ influence on national policy. Haas (1992) argues that transnational epistemic communities can influence state interests:

“either by directly identifying them for decision makers or by illuminating the salient dimensions of an issue from which the decision makers may then deduce their interests” (Haas 1992:4).

The interdependency theory provides original insights about the influence of the structure of network relations have on the implementation of policy recommendations. Furthermore, epistemic communities theory accounts for actors’ beliefs. The ACF will prove to be a useful complement for understanding their actual influence on policy implementation processes. In particular, the ACF helps operationalizing the concept of beliefs in an original way.

2.1. Policy implementation

Most of the implementation literature focuses on how policies transform from their initial starting point and further throughout the implementation of the policy, and then the consequential outcome they generate in society. This thesis will not focus on the outcome of policies in society, since the research question focuses on the input side of policies, as per “what factors” therein. In policy-implementation literature, top-down and bottom-up approaches are often distinguished.

2.1.1. Top-down approaches

The top-down approach presupposes a model of policy implementation being rather rational and clear by focusing on the policy makers at top of the policy chain. It thereby credits much to policy and decision-makers, since they are presented as in charge and control of the implementation.

Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) defined a top-down process of implementation as 1) the problem(s) to be addressed; 2), the objectives to be pursued, meaning a clear definition of goals; and 3) the structures of implementation indicating a clear path of how to implement the policy. This process produces a policy in form of a law or agreement, where the implementation ideally was carried out, as per this basic policy process definition. By assuming principles of a clear, rational implementation and development of policy, Mazmanian and Sabatier's approach obviously counters theories of anarchy and coincidence such as Garbage Can models (Cohen et al. 1972; Kingdon 1984).

Hogwood and Gunn (1984) outlined the conditions of a *perfect implementation*, which relies on decision-makers having perfect control over the full process. By listing the needed circumstances of a perfect implementation, they outlined an ideal model of policy implementation.

Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) questioned the rationality and clarity of top-down models by describing the process of implementation as atomised due to complications of cooperation among institutions within the implementation processes, which causes small deviations that lead to variations. Pressman and Wildavsky alter from the traditional rational acceptance of policy makers being in full charge, as was usually depicted in top-down approaches. Inevitably, the top-down approach of policy-making and implementation produced skepticism among some scholars. Mainly, concerns regarded structural problems; management problems, behavioural biases and political problems have been addressed, leading to a focus on a bottom-up approach. I will therefore now continue into the bottom-up approach of policy implementation.

2.1.2. Bottom-up approaches

The bottom-up approach started as a critique and questioning of the top-down approaches' focus on law and agreements as the only significant factor in policy processes and analyses. The bottom-up approach thus claimed that many other factors are affecting issues and problems in society as well.

An example of how the bottom-up approach can be used is Lipsky's (1980) street-level bureaucracy. Lipsky noted that essentially policies and their implementation come down to the ones who implement them. The role of the policymaker and policy entrepreneur at top of the policy chain is not disregarded in the street-level bureaucracy. However, the real responsibility of policies being carried out effectively lies with the individuals who on daily basis provide the citizens their public services. The bottom-up approach thereby finds its strengths of dynamism in the context of the policy.

Girdwood (2013) has cited DeLeon and DeLeon (2002) on their conclusion of bottom-up implementation as being more “*realistic and practical*’ and *much more democratic*’ than the top-down approach” (Girdwood 2013). Their conclusion is based on the idea of bottom-up implementation as being more reflective of ‘community interests’ than the top-down approach (Ibid). Girdwood additionally states that the bottom-up approach is best used to “*locate and describe the level of policy success in relation to the policy goal*” (Ibid). Tolerance of ambiguity is furthermore a characteristic of the bottom-up approaches on implementation, since scholars accept that policy processes withhold normative precepts (Matland 1995:167, cited by Girdwood 2013). Hence, bottom-up approaches insist on the absence of hierarchy among actors responsible for the implementation of policies. Rather, they are members of a network of policymakers connected to each other with complex relations, sharing knowledge and exerting power. I will therefore now move into the description of policy network theories and their content.

2.1.3. Policy Network Theories

Top-down and bottom-up approaches, though with a different orthodoxy, share a common view on policy implementation processes, with a starting point – top downers steering policy processes or bottom-uppers responsible for their concrete operationalization – and a possible end – the implementation of the policy. Considering policy implementation processes through the lenses of the network relations among actors involved in this processes allows overcoming this linearity.

The network governance literature is portrayed through four streams, which all can be characterised by their different approaches of how ‘wicked problems’ are solved by networks members. ‘Wicked problems’ are situations in which there are

many stakeholders, uncertainty on problems and solutions, and a need for specialised knowledge, and thus a high potential of conflict (Sørensen & Torfing 2008a: 5).

Generally these four streams can be divided by the concepts of conflict contra coordination, and calculation contra culture. Conflict describes a situation of individual actors searching for a common goal to be achieved – this search for common goals results in conflicts over resources and interests among actors. Coordination counters the concept of conflict by depicting a situation in which the actors are controlled and led by rules and norms of the given networks. In short, the difference between calculation and culture can be described on the actors' awareness of surrounding structures, institutions and the norms herein. Calculation is where actors are aware of surrounding structures and culture describes actors being less aware of the surrounding structures. The existing streams are portrayed below here accordingly to these two typologies.

Box 1: Theories of policy networks and governance

	Calculation	Culture
Conflict	Interdependence theory	Governmentality theory
Coordination	Governability theory	Normative integration theory

(Table from Sørensen & Torfing 2008a: 17)

The interdependence theory builds on the idea that stakeholders are mutually dependent, as the name also claims. Over time, stakeholders will develop mutual norms and story lines, which upholds cooperation despite different preferences. Actions within policy networks in the interdependence theory are thereby a result of institutional path dependency and the source of institutional path junctures (Rhodes 1997:79; Kickert & Koppenjan 1997:42). Obviously, the theory has its roots within historical institutionalism. Policy networks in interdependence theory build on the same assumptions as historical institutionalism due to a focus on governance relations between State and society that seeks to understand how different social interest groups have reached influence on government, and how it has been institutionalised over time (Marsh & Rhodes 1992:1). Furthermore, actors and stakeholder are typically compiling in an institutional context, which gives space for communication,

collective strategies, a shared experience and knowledge-, together with shared norms and value-systems, which all have been developed over time and thereby produce the collective actions of the network (Kickert et al. 1997:42). In general, this produces a network of collective actors, which are a group of individuals placed in an institutional or functional linkage that gives them coinciding interests (Ibid). In this matter, Rhodes has defined policy networks as “a complex grouping of organisations” (Marsh & Rhodes 1992:13). The interdependence theory puts emphasis on the construction of structural relations among actors over time.

The interdependence theory is in contrast with the governability theory (Scharpf 1997; Mayntz 1993; Kooiman 1993), which has its roots in rational institutionalism. Networks are therefore regarded as rational games of negotiation. Networks are here held together by anticipated gains and the development of mutual trust among actors, rather than the development of common goals over time.

Normative integration theory (March & Olsen 1995; Powell & DiMaggio 1984; Scott 1995) depict networks as institutionalised arenas of interaction that link relevant actors, which then become normatively integrated to the institutional rules, norms and perceptions. Interaction is thereby mainly based on a ‘logic of appropriateness’. Integration theory is in general mostly focused on describing institutional designs and why actors conduct as they do within networks, rather than explaining why policies change.

The governmentality theory differentiates from the integration theory on this exact matter – the actors’ awareness of structures. Michel Foucault invented the concept of governmentality. However, he never did really operationalize it. Both Rose (1999) and Dean (1999) have elaborated and operationalized the concept of governmentality. In a policy network perspective, networks are comprised as the reflective, facilitating and regulative governmental attempts of mobilising and form actors’ free actions, which is widely defined as the ‘conduct of conduct¹’. It is a poststructuralist approach and has less operational focus on the implementation and change of policies, thus making it less relevant to this thesis.

¹ The ‘conduct of conduct’ within Governmentality-theory is a concept of how we (as citizens) conduct our own conduct due a general ‘governmentality’ consisting of a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, which are employing techniques and knowledge to shape the way we conduct through our own beliefs and desires (Dean 2010:7).

To conclude, these four different streams of research on network governance have different abilities for describing the development of network members' beliefs, the relations they have with each other and the effect of these two dimensions on policy change. The integration theory is better served when assessing institutions and actors' actions therein. The governmentality approach serves a better analytical purpose when assessing governance rationalities and how actors are governed. The governability theory predicts that network actors are colliding because of incitements that are presupposing individual gains, thus emphasising a rationalistic perspective, whereas the interdependence theory expects that actors collide because their interests coincide over time.

In the next three sections, one of the most famous policy perspectives on international organizations – namely, Haas (1992)'s epistemic communities – will be presented. Two specific network dimensions should be able to increase the potential of epistemic communities to explain the national implementation of policy recommendation made by international organizations. The first dimension is the relations that link national policymakers to the experts of international organizations. The second dimension concerns the congruence of policy beliefs between national policymakers and international experts. Both dimensions derivate from the view of interdependence theory that interactions among network actors, over time, make their policy preferences closer to each other.

2.2. Policy implementation process of recommendations from international organizations

2.2.1. Policy networks in international organisations: Haas' Epistemic Communities

In general, the epistemic communities theory describes international policy coordination. This conjures a theoretical discussion on whether national policy makers can “*identify the national interests and behave independently of pressures from the social groups they nominally represent*” (Haas 1992:1). An epistemic community is a policy network of actors that coordinate policies internationally. They exchange policies and knowledge in such communities, but as the title refers to epistemic, it withholds that certain beliefs, both normative and causal, characterises the community (Haas 1992:3). It also refers to the important role of experts and professionals in these networks. International organisations tend to stimulate the

reproduction certain policies grounded in the professionals' beliefs. Haas thereof defines an epistemic community as a

"network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area" (Haas 1992:3).

The theory thus claims that certain international organisations have recognised expertise on particular policy domains or issues. These organisations consist of communities that can influence national policies because of their expertise and knowledge. Thus making it very relevant in explaining policy change internationally, and especially as an overall theoretical basis for analysing OECD policies and reasons for their implementations.

The influence that epistemic communities have on state interests builds on the concept of domestic and international agendas becoming more interlinked, thus resulting in a confusion among decision-makers when comprehending the complex linkages herein (Haas 1992:13). Haas notes that decision-makers risk making decisions without adequate information, which leads to conditions of uncertainty diluting policies in their general aim and purpose (Ibid). In addition, it is stated that under conditions of uncertainty, decision-makers would have "*a variety of incentives and reasons for consulting epistemic communities*" (Ibid:15). This leads to a diffusion of new ideas and information, which can lead to new patterns of behaviour for policy and decision-makers (Ibid:3).

Haas argues that ideas and information produced by an epistemic community is the product of shared "normative and principled beliefs" and "shared causal beliefs" among the professionals within epistemic communities (Ibid). Such beliefs are derived from the practices that lead to, or contribute to, a central set of problems, which serve as basis for "*elucidating multiple linkages between possible policy actions and desired outcomes*" (Ibid). It means that the professionals of epistemic communities direct their competences at certain problems and certain policy ideas able to solve problems. This is based on their common practices, which are derived from their shared beliefs. These practices can be understood within the conception of a "common policy enterprise", which is a set of common practices associated with a set of problems to which the professionals' competences are directed (Ibid). This dictates the communities' production of knowledge and information, which eventually leads to new policy ideas. These new policy ideas eventually come from the specified knowledge based on research and empirical evidence collected by

professionals and experts within the epistemic community. Here it would have been both relevant and useful to include works on scientific knowledge and their utilization in policymaking, for instance Beyer and Trice (1982), who have outlined the steps policymakers go through when using scientific research in their policymaking, as described in Hanney et al. (2003). The aim of applying the epistemic communities theory in this thesis is to add and elaborate on less operational parts and concepts of the epistemic community theory. An inclusion of the scientific knowledge in policymaking literature would be less adaptive to my perspective and aim. Firstly, the epistemic communities theory is already very much focused on information and knowledge as drivers for policy change, whereas the beliefs behind such information and knowledge is less operational in the theory. It is this part I seek to explain and understand. Secondly, as the hypotheses emphasise, the focus is not directly on the importance of scientific knowledge but on the beliefs and structures of the networks that produce such knowledge and thereof the policies. This is where the interdependence theory and the ACF will prove more worth in understanding the connection and relations between national policymakers and OECD professionals.

Two aspects of the epistemic communities deserve attention. First, how can the literature on epistemic communities be positioned with regards to the aforementioned top-down and bottom-up approach of policy implementation? It is noted that transnational epistemic communities can influence state interest by identifying issues (Haas 1992:4), but not what factors that decide whether the policy recommendations made about those issues will be actually implemented in national policy outputs. Haas, notably, considers the diffusion of information as a mechanism of policy change (Haas 1992:6). By adding complementary theories I will seek to complement explanations of Haas' theory on why such policy diffusion occurs. In Haas' theory, the primary actors are individual States in an international organisation, whereas the general level of analysis is the State-administrators (Ibid). On the one hand, Haas aggregates and combines a top-down and a bottom-up approach of the policy process, with knowledge production by organization professionals (top-down) as well as the mechanisms of diffusion among national policymakers (bottom-up) and the factors that decide whether they will use this knowledge (bottom-up). Rather than aggregating the same view as Haas, I will seek to add to Haas' theory by using the

network approach, which should produce a combined view, in which there is no predominance of nor the top-down processes nor the bottom-up processes. Instead will the theory of interdependence provide complementary elements to the epistemic communities theory in regards to the relations among policy actors.

Secondly, and in regards to the relation of actors, then come the actors' beliefs. Such seem to play a crucial role in the epistemic communities theory. Their concrete impact on the policy process, however, is sometimes difficult to assess as a result of the problems related to their methodological operationalization and empirical identification. Promising attempts have been made to operationalize network relations and actors' beliefs in epistemic communities, as well as to assess their impact on policy implementation processes. Those two questions, however, have been recently identified as being still very challenging (Dunlop 2013).

It is on this basis that I will adhere the theories of interdependence and ACF to the epistemic communities theory. The epistemic communities theory describes how policy ideas and knowledge are produced due to beliefs and practices. Here the ACF can operationalize these beliefs and practices into a concept of policy beliefs. Whereas the interdependence theory will dividend the relations between the community and actors on national level, not the State as a whole. Thus making it a complementary theoretical grounding.

2.2.2. Structure and nature of relations in policy networks: Interdependence

Theory

The interdependence theory can in general explain the state of relations among actors in policy networks. This will be a valuable theoretical addition to the epistemic communities theory for explaining policy change in that the interdependence theory has a wider focus on actors and especially the conflicts that excel among them in order to produce policies.

Rhodes (1997) stated that the rise of policy networks was a reaction to the inappropriate forms of governance within a more and more fragmented State (Rhodes 1997:45). Rhodes thereby perceives policy networks as a “non-intended consequence of marketization” (Rhodes 2000:54). The fragmentation of the state has caused that various stakeholders took initiative in the formation of informal networks. The State thus went from being a holistic integrated organisation towards a collection of networks consisting of different public actors and other social actors (Rhodes

1997:54). However, as Rhodes further confines, where the State before was the sovereign autonomous power, it is now compiled of a network without a single sovereign executive (Ibid).

Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997) describe policy networks as being self-organised, where public actors must subordinate to the goals and rules of the network that are agreed upon (Kickert et al. 1997:9). Thereby network actors become interdependent, since they are dependent on other actors' resources if they are to reach their goals (ibid: 6). Policy networks thereby differ from former bureaucratic governance by relying on horizontal models of negotiation and the formation of coalitions.

The negotiation and coalitions among actors is the heart of making policies through networks. The actors have chosen to cooperate in order to reach their goals. Many scholars of the interdependence theory have raised the question of why actors with different and to some extent conflicting interests choose to cooperate, and the answer is inevitably interdependence (Kickert et al. 1997:6). The network shall on this behalf be seen as the mean to collect resources in order to reach a higher impact. These resources are acknowledged as being economic, organisational and knowledge-based resources (Marsh & Rhodes 1992:199). Resources are thereby an important factor of the final output of a policy network, especially since the negotiations within are more complex when resources often are unevenly distributed among actors (Rhodes 1997:15). In a policy network, an epistemic community will for example bring a wealth of resources in form of specified knowledge and information. Something minor policy actors such as national interest groups do not have on the same level.

The matter of resources leads onto the case of success and failure within networks. Success and failure of policy networks relies on finding the right balance between cooperation, which promotes interest-aggregation, and conflict, which constructively can produce innovation and creativity (Rhodes 1997:10f). Kickert and Koppenjan (1997:54) address the differences, which policy networks can have in regards to the openness and closeness. They address the matter of inclusion and exclusion within networks through these terms: Openness of networks results in many actors, which secures a high degree of knowledge and legitimacy, whereas closeness through smaller networks secures vigour and internal trust (Ibid: 54f). Additionally

comes the importance of being able to secure a balance between stability and changeability: Stability roots trust and a certain path in the governance of society, whereas changeability is needed for certainty and adaption to new circumstances in networks (Kickert & Koppenjan 1997:55).

The interdependence theory is highly relevant in understanding the role of information and knowledge that epistemic communities can provide for national ministries in their policy making, and how much influence international experts can have on national policy making, when other more domestic actors are assumed to have less informative or material resources. The interdependence theory has the capability to apply to more than one level of governance due to its inclusion of other actors.

2.2.3. Congruence of beliefs in policy networks: Advocacy Coalition Framework

While the interdependence theory has a focus on the structure of relations among horizontal actors, the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) gives the primary importance to the content of their beliefs. In this research, the ACF will be used to examine the effect of the congruence of beliefs among national policymakers and professional experts from international organizations on national policy outputs.

The ACF was initially based on Sabatier (1986)'s work on policy implementation. The ACF is a framework that describes policy process and the mechanisms within. As a theoretical framework, the ACF have been reworked and revised multiple times. So forth, there have been many additions and modifications of Sabatier's original framework. The arc framework stands today as the one by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988). In this review, I will use one of the latest revisions of the ACF by Sabatier and Weible (2007).

The ACF trails back to the implementation literature. Here it was developed as a way to deal with "wicked problems" (Sabatier & Weible 2007:189). In the ACF, decisions are a product of political coalitions among likeminded individuals that combine around similar beliefs (Sabatier & Weible 2007:191ff). It describes decision-making more as a process affected by the different coalitions where the strongest coalition can affect decisions most effectively. The framework does not focus on the rationality of policy dynamics; instead it surrounds the formation of powerful advocacy coalitions between groups of policy actors as the explanation of policy

dynamics, which are situated within specific and specialised *policy subsystems* (Sabatier & Weible 2007:194). Hence, quite paradoxically for a framework focusing on policymakers' cognition, the ACF gives the primary role to power, in the policy process.

In this thesis, the ACF can provide an operational concept of beliefs. Policy beliefs are an important concept within the ACF, and it is these beliefs I will advise analytically in this thesis to complement the epistemic communities theory. Where the interdependence theory can add explanations of relations among actors in network, the ACF provides explanations of how actors' beliefs can conjure policy change. The ACF thus presupposes that networks of actors organise around specific 'policy beliefs', meaning that

“ (...) policy participants will seek allies with people who hold similar policy core beliefs among legislators, agency officials, interest group leaders, judges, researchers, and intellectuals from multiple levels of government” (Sabatier & Weible 2007:196).

The explanation of policy change goes with the specification of policy beliefs. Policy change thus occurs when there is a change in the beliefs of policymakers from the dominant advocacy coalition – i.e., the coalition who controls the policy. The ACF provides three levels of policy beliefs: First, the *deep core beliefs*, which refers to norms and values that are consistent among actors in a coalition. These are rather stable and hard to change. Secondly are the *policy core beliefs*. These are norms and values that are relevant in a context of a policy issue, and they are also rather stable and hard to change. The third level is the *secondary aspects*. Here we find subsidiarity as a principle closely related to the two cores. However, these are easier to change and replace by other policies. (Sabatier & Weible 2007:194f). I will therefore advise concepts and precepts of beliefs from the ACF. The ACF will therefore not be applied in its traditional 'fashion'. For analytical reasons and in order to delimit the focus of the thesis, I will rely on the within coalition process. Here, the ACF will be applied as a theoretical component in order to explain, understand and operationalize beliefs of governing policymakers on national level and their possible congruence with the beliefs of OECD experts. The applied analytical focus of the ACF does therefore not trail the traditional focus on different policy coalitions in regards to dominant and alternative views and beliefs, but rather the beliefs within the dominant governing coalition and the beliefs of the OECD community. Analytically, I will adhere to the policy core beliefs in order to complement the epistemic communities theory with an

operational concept of beliefs. It is thereby the theoretical component of beliefs that is applied and used of the ACF. In which the attention is drawn to the process within coalitions so that the beliefs of policymakers and OECD experts can be outlined and explained as components in the epistemic communities theory. The ACF is very applicable with the epistemic communities theory in its description of these policy beliefs and their effect on policy change. The ACF explicitly supposes that

“Scientific and technical information plays an important role in modifying the beliefs of policy participants, it correspondingly assumes that researchers (...) are among the central players in a policy process.” (Sabatier & Weible 2007:192).

The ACF thus states that the information produced by researchers have a general effect on policy beliefs of policy process participants. The ACF thereby acknowledges the epistemic communities supposed effect of professionals and their production of information and knowledge as a factor for policy change. The scientific and technical information, which is produced by researchers, will in this thesis exactly be the policy recommendations made by OECD professionals (the researchers). The ACF thereby provides a framing on policy beliefs, which will enable a process of the policy learning happening between policymakers engaging in epistemic communities such as the ones within OECD. Based on the ACF, I would here argue that such an exchange of information and policy learning within an epistemic community could modify the policy beliefs of policymakers. The ACF claims that policy change happens when policy coalitions’ beliefs move closer to each other. Specifically, this would excel into the situation of policymakers’ beliefs converging with the ones of OECD professionals, thus enabling implementation of policy recommendations The ACF describe this as “policy-oriented learning”, which is the

“relatively enduring alternations of thought or behavioural intentions that result from experience and/or new information and that are concerned with the attainment or revision of policy objectives.” (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:123, cited by Sabatier & Weible 2007:198).

The ACF thus claims the effect of information and policy learning on policy change as the epistemic communities’. The ACF thereby conforms the theoretical assumption presented by the epistemic communities theory. However, the ACF provides a theoretical assumption of beliefs being shared across coalitions in order to facilitate policy change, whereas the epistemic communities theory explains that professionals within epistemic communities have shared principled beliefs. In that sense, the ACF can explain that policy beliefs are a mechanism for policy change on national level, if the policymakers share the beliefs of the epistemic community producing information.

Policy learning and belief change are thereby inherent to policy change. The policy core beliefs of the ACF can explain this, since they represent the actors' beliefs within a certain policy issue or area. The policy beliefs can so forth guide the analysis of my two cases within two different policy areas, where we find both OECD professionals and national policymakers that have their own beliefs, namely their own policy beliefs. Policy beliefs are hard to change and are situated within certain norms and values, like the deep core beliefs. However, the fact that policy core beliefs are bound to certain policy areas make this perfectly suitable for the conduct of this analysis. The deep core beliefs, on the other side, are the general normative and ontological beliefs of actors – beliefs that are products of childhood socialisation (Sabatier & Weible 2007:194). They can therefore not elaborate much on the beliefs in between the policy actors highlighted in this thesis. Within the policy beliefs, the ACF provides components of the policy core beliefs that are to be advised when analysing actors' beliefs. The components advised in this thesis are the *basic cause of the problem* and the *policy core policy preferences*. The *basic cause of the problem* refers to the problem identifications actors make on a certain policy issue and what they identify as the cause for such policy problems. Policy actors can have different or similar perceptions of problems that need attention and also what actually causes the problem. This component is therefore highly relevant in explaining why the policy change occurred in my two cases and whether national policymakers and OECD professionals were congruent in their perception of this. The *policy core policy preferences* as a component of policy core beliefs refer to what policy actors then prefers or preference to adhere on to certain policy issues.

These two components provide some very operational aspects of policy beliefs that inherently can explain policy change due to policy actors' beliefs. These two components will thus be used in order to complement the theory of epistemic communities with operational measures on beliefs.

2.3. Summary

The literature review has now introduced the applicable theories of this thesis. By including the interdependence theory and the ACF, I will try to supplement and complement less operational dimensions of the epistemic communities theory.

The epistemic communities theory is applicable to my research question, since it describes networks involving actors from international organization and States

including policymakers and professionals. However, I have argued, that the beliefs that are claimed to tie epistemic communities together are less operational in Haas' epistemic communities theory. The ACF will help operationalize and test the relation between the congruence of beliefs among professionals and national policymakers and the effective implementation of policy recommendations into national policy outputs. This relation – as it is suggested by the ACF – is not obvious. The ACF is applicable with the epistemic communities theory in this matter, since it provide some very clear components that analytically can be advised and investigated for congruence between the professionals and national policymakers.

The interdependence theory will supplement and complement the epistemic communities theory in regards to the relational interaction among professionals in the epistemic community and the national policymakers. The theory allow me to scrutinize in details the structure and nature of relations among professionals and national policymakers, which could influence the congruence of their beliefs and, ultimately, the implementation process and results.

3. Theoretical framework

This chapter will present the theoretical framework of the research. It is so forth the operationalized framework derived from the theories presented in the literature review. The theoretical framework is arranged in order to define and elaborate the broad concepts that are viable and will be used for answering my research question. In order to correctly assess the research question, the concepts within first need to be defined.

3.1. Definition of several important concepts

The following concepts could lead to other understandings than the ones pursued and used in this research. They are here listed in the way they will be used and understood throughout this research.

Epistemic Community

An epistemic community is “*a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area*” (Haas, 1992: 3). In both sectors related to the two cases of this research – education and employment –, such a network of professionals does actually exist at the OECD. To Haas, an epistemic community must be distinguished from the broader scientific community together with professions and disciplines (Haas 1992:19). An epistemic community consists of more than this. Several professions and disciplines are present in the OECD, and as an organisation the OECD systematically contributes with certain knowledge and information that is bounded in economics. The professional network of the OECD can be considered an epistemic community since they share both causal and normative principled beliefs, as the theory prescribes. These beliefs guide the way in which the OECD professionals produce knowledge and information, which is derived from practices within the OECD. Furthermore, as Haas explains, an epistemic community holds a “*reputation for specific expertise by society and elite decision-makers, which gives them access to the political system and legitimizes their activities*” (Haas 1992:17). The OECD professionals certainly fit such a description. The OECD professionals surely have an expertise on policy domains and policy areas, which by far is consistent in the recommended policies that are produced. When speaking of an epistemic community in this thesis, I am referring to the parts of that community

regarding education and employment situated within the OECD. This interpretation was also endorsed, for example, by Morgan and Shahjahan (2014) in their own study.

Policy Network

A policy network does withhold many conceptions, however it does seem that it has taken over the place of corporatism as a concept within interest group politics (Van Waarden 1992:30). However, the concept of policy networks has a wider and more neutral sense to it than corporatism, which can describe a wealth of state-society relations (ibid). In this thesis, I define policy networks as

“sets of formal institutional and informal linkages between governmental and other actors structured around shared if endlessly negotiated beliefs and interests in public policymaking and implementation. These actors are interdependent and policy emerges from the interactions between them” (Rhodes 2006:426).

First of all, I must state that the OECD as epistemic community actually represents the international level of policy networks. Here the OECD is one of the formal actors within the policy network. A policy network consists of both formal and non-formal actors that partake in both policy development and implementation. In this thesis I will assess two cases, an educational reform and a youth employment reform in Denmark. Specifically this means that two separate policy networks are assessed, where both cases have the OECD as an actor that might have transformed policies that were produced. The policy networks assessed will therefore be the two policy networks, from which the reforms were negotiated among stakeholder actors, where the OECD in both cases made policy recommendations. In both cases, an epistemic community is part of this network.

Policy recommendations of the OECD

Policy recommendations will be widely defined as non-legal binding guidelines or policy advices made on basis of research and knowledge obtained by the OECD, which countries can adapt into national legislation. Though discussions and debate among OECD-member states can evolve into agreements on international co-operation, the focus of this paper is to conduct information on why states implement policy recommendations. The OECD recommendations shall therefore be found in official OECD documents on countries; here it will be the recommendations made in *Jobs for Youth: Denmark* (OECD 2010) and *OECD Reviews of Evaluations and Assessments in Education: Denmark* (OECD 2011). The policy recommendations in

these two reports form a basis of analysing the policy beliefs within the epistemic community of OECD, since a ‘review team’ carried both of these reports out.

3.2.The analytical framework

The objective of this thesis is to identify factors that decide whether OECD-recommendations are implemented in its Member States. Hence, **the dependent variable of this research is the implementation of OECD recommendations into national policy outputs**. Based on the literature review, I put forward two hypotheses that should impact that dependent variable.

First, **shared belief systems between national policymakers and the OECD induce implementation of policy recommendations (Hypothesis 1)**. This hypothesis refers to the theoretical role that the ACF gives to belief change in policy change. I derived from the ACF that policy learning by national policymakers from international professionals could realise policy change. In the epistemic communities theory the compatible theoretical component is the explanation of policy diffusion due to the expertise and production of knowledge and information by professionals in epistemic communities. As the epistemic communities claim, such professionals share certain principled beliefs. If this hypothesis is to be rejected, then I suggest an alternative hypothesis, that is that **shared belief systems between national policymakers and the OECD do not induce implementation of policy recommendations**. However, I will argue on the relevance of my general hypothesis, as presented first.

I assume that national policymakers through policy learning, as the ACF describes, will engage in policy diffusion of the policy ideas produced by the OECD’s epistemic communities and thereby implementation of policy recommendations will be induced. On basis of my literature review, I argue that a shared belief system among national policymakers and international policy actors should induce implementation of policy recommendations. This is due to a significant expertise and informational production by international policy actor – here the epistemic community within OECD. These policy beliefs can be affected due to a lack of information on national level, as it is proposed by Haas’ epistemic communities theory – the beliefs of national policymakers must thus change when they engage in policy learning with an epistemic community e.g. in a search of new information or policy expertise. As per the ACF, I therefore envisage that beliefs are a mechanism

for policy change on national level. If the beliefs of national policymakers are close to the beliefs of the epistemic community members, the implementation of policy recommendations should occur. A shared belief system will therefore mean a congruence of beliefs between national policymakers and the epistemic community.

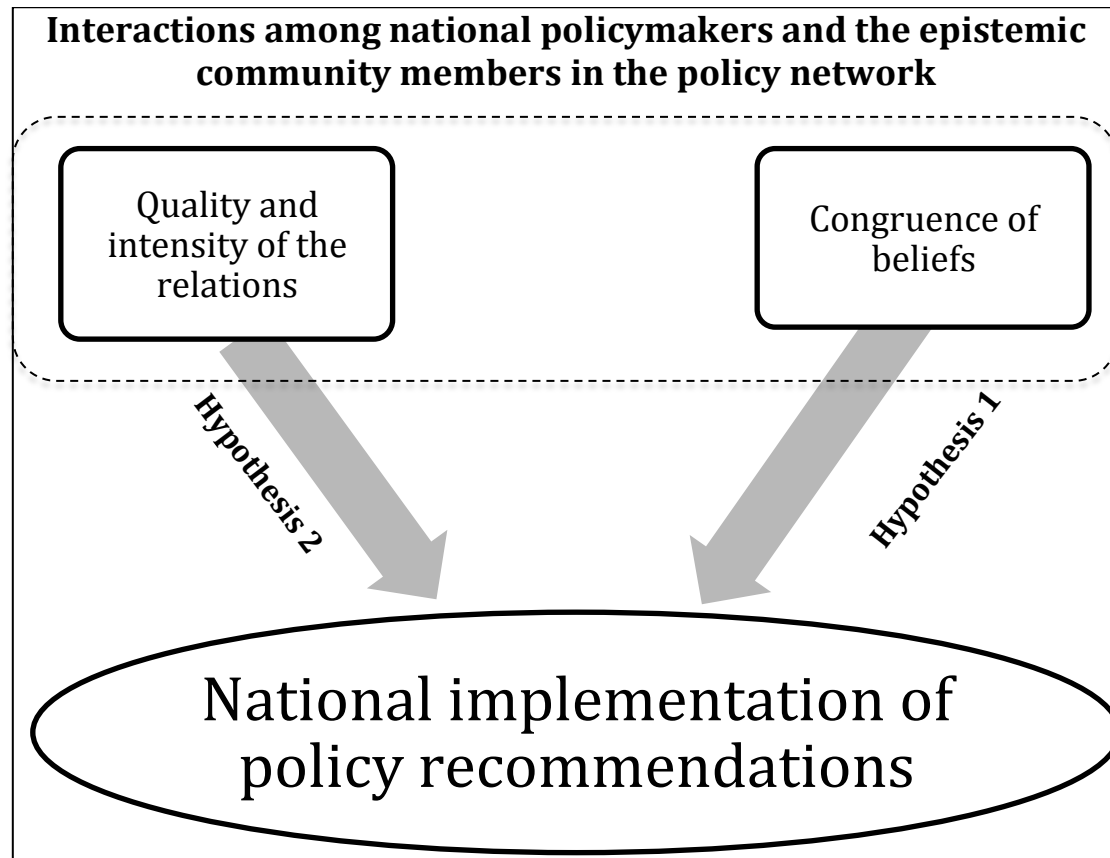
The second hypothesis suggests that **interactions between national policymakers and OECD induce implementation of policy recommendations (Hypothesis 2)**. This hypothesis is based on the theoretical implications of the interdependence theory and what this theory can add of explanatory reason to the epistemic communities theory. Here, it is likely that the interactions between national policymakers and international professionals should induce policy implementation, since interaction happens in networks, where there is a lack of resources among actors. Policymakers could therefore consult and interact with an epistemic community in order to receive policy knowledge and resources. Policy actors will here be interdependent due to this lack of resources. Thereby national policymakers would receive greater policy information through corporation and relations with epistemic communities. My alternative hypothesis will here be, that **interactions between national policymakers and OECD do not induce implementation of policy recommendations**.

An epistemic community within the OECD would have significant amounts of resources, which may delude the influence of other policy network actors. As policy networks provide a forum for exchanges of policy ideas among stakeholders, a high quality and intensity of relations among national policymakers and the OECD members could have the effect that implementation of policy recommendations does happen. The OECD as a forum for policy professionals and national policymakers provides the arena for such exchanges of ideas and experiences.

The two hypotheses presented above result in the framework in Figure 1. The framework withholds two variables that are derived from the hypotheses. The first hypothesis suggests that the higher is the congruence of beliefs among national policymakers and experts from international organizations, the stronger should be the national implementation of policy recommendations. The second hypothesis suggests that the higher are the quality and intensity of relations among national policymakers and experts from international organizations, the stronger should be the national

implementation of policy recommendations. The details about the definition and operationalization of the variables of the framework will be provided in the next sections.

Figure 1: Analytical Framework of the Research



3.2.1. National implementation of policy recommendations: Traceability

The dependent variable of the theoretical framework is the national implementation of policy recommendations made by international organizations. This means that recommendations were turned into a piece of national legislation. However, recommendations by the OECD do not necessarily need to be implemented explicitly as they are, but rather they are transferred into or inspiring national reform or policy. I will not consider implementation as if a recommendation is fully integrated into national legislation. Instead, I will consider whether recommendations were integrated into national policy reform, and to how such recommendations are present in national policy reform. The dependent variable will therefore be the piece of policy output that is produced on national level.

Reform is typically broad defined and according to Barbara Vis, reforms ranges from radical overhauling of the welfare state to minor cutbacks in unemployment benefits (Vis 2009:38). I will here outline two appendices – one on the Compulsory Education Reform (UVM 2013) and one on the Youth Employment Effort (BM 2012). In these, the policy recommendations from the ‘OECD Reviews of Evaluations and Assessments in Education: Denmark’ from 2011 (OECD 2011) and the ‘Jobs for Youth: Denmark’ from 2010 (OECD 2010), will respectively be listed and traced in regards to their comparability of specific policy ideas and initiatives. Some details about those two Danish policy reforms will be provided in the empirical analysis.

‘Traceability’ will therefore function as the indicator of national policy implementation of policy recommendations made by international organisations. As an indicator, this one refers to the ‘linkages of traceability’ between national policies and policy recommendations of the OECD. According to Pierson (1993), traceability as a term refers to two tests:

“(...) can visible outcomes be linked to government policy and can those policies be linked to someone who can be given credit or blame?” (Pierson 1993:622).

Pierson focuses on the policy outcome and their linkages and causalities of policy feedback in policy processes. I will use the same reasoning as Pierson, but instead consider what Pierson refers to as the ‘policy outcome’ as being the national policy output at governmental level as my “traceability outcome”. Thereby the aim will be to trace the Danish policy reforms’ initiatives with reference to whether or not the policy ideas in the reform visibly can be traced to the OECD policy recommendations. For analytical reasons I will not focus on the uploading of policy ideas from Danish policymakers, since it will broaden the analytical scope of the thesis. However, such uploading of policy ideas is implicitly included as the OECD reports and reviews in which the recommendations have been retrieved has been produced in collaboration with Danish policymakers/policy experts. Additionally, the following variable on quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers does address some aspects of uploading of ideas such as the exchange of information and knowledge through relations among national policymakers and OECD experts.

3.2.2. Quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers: *Knowledge & Information, Indirect Contacts, and Direct Contacts*

The interdependence theory suggests that relations among the members of a policy network can provide them with the resources they need to achieve their objectives – in this case, reforming policies. I will operationalize three different levels of relational resources between the national policymakers and the OECD. The first one – knowledge and information – refers more to the quality of relations while the two other ones – direct and indirect contacts – refer more to the intensity of relations.

Knowledge & Information

Knowledge and information is the first indicator of the quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers. This concerns one-way communication produced by the OECD and their reception by national policy makers. It means that analysis will be conducted on whether national policy makers do receive, read and assess reports and assessments produced by the OECD on their specific domains. The knowledge and information produced by the OECD are expected received by the national ministries and policymakers, but consultation is not investigated here. This level is therefore only concerned with policy ideas. At the most practical level this indicator assesses whether policy recommendations by the OECD are used on national level and whether it inflects policy making.

Indirect Contacts

This indicator concerns a level of consultation regarded as indirect. This can be, for examples, conferences hosted by the OECD, where policy makers do not directly consult the OECD, but rather a level where policy makers can exchange policy ideas through the network that the OECD provides. It eventually means that OECD, as an organisation, does not necessarily make direct consultations and information with policymakers, they rather facilitate the spaces in which policy ideas are exchanged. This indicator seeks to investigate whether such indirect contact as conferences or arenas of contact, where other member states for instance provide recommended policies, induce the implementation of such policy recommendations.

Direct Contacts

Direct contact is the concrete consultation between OECD professionals and national policy makers, which is assumed to increase policy diffusion of recommended policies and thereby induce implementation of the recommendations. Focus is interactive consultation that is considered two-way, such as, for example, meetings. It is consultation in which national policy makers can get elaborate knowledge on recommended policies. Assumably such direct contact would make national policymakers better suited to implement policy recommendations, and furthermore also detain other network actors and inform them of recommended policies. Direct contact is therefore also the most concrete level of knowledge and informational exchange between international experts and national policymakers.

3.2.3. Congruence of beliefs among OECD experts and national policymakers: *Basic causes of the problem & policy core policy preferences*

Beliefs can be a difficult variable to work with and measure. My general definition of beliefs will therefore be the following: Bevir, Rhodes and Weller (2003) understand beliefs as “*the way actors construct their world, including the ways they understand their location, the norms that affect them and their interests*” (Bevir et al. 2003:7). I will use the ACF’s understanding of *policy core beliefs* to operationalize this variable. I will organise and confine the analysis of beliefs around the use of two types of policy core beliefs – namely the *basic cause of the problem* and the *policy core policy preferences* (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:132). These two work as indicators for my variable. Operationally, I will focus on the actors’ beliefs within the two reforms – meaning the beliefs of OECD professionals and national policymakers. This will allow me to assess whether shared beliefs is a factor for implementation of policy recommendations.

I will find the OECD professionals’ beliefs in the two reviews in which I deduced the policy recommendations. The OECD reviews are representative of OECD professionals’ beliefs, since review teams consist of experts and professionals within the organisation. Interviews with national policymakers having played a key role in the Danish reforms, on which this thesis focuses empirically, will allow measuring the beliefs held by national policymakers. Interviews will allow me to get in-depth knowledge and make sure that the beliefs of network members were congruent (or

not) before policy change occurred at the national level. This is necessary to prove that the implementation of international policy recommendations results from belief congruence, rather than the contrary.

Basic causes of the problem

As an indicator of the variable beliefs, this indicator will focus on identifying what the causes of policy problems identified by OECD professionals and national policymakers were. It thus means that congruence between the OECD professionals and national policymakers will be found, if they have identified the same causes to policy problems. In a simple way, this indicator can be summarised as the 'identification of problems that need policy actions by policy actors'. In both cases, the OECD professionals and national policymakers have made an identification of problems. Practically, congruence will be found if these problem identifications are similar or shared.

Policy core policy preferences

While the previous indicator focuses on the causes of the policy problem, this indicator focuses on the preferred solutions to this problem. The OECD provides an arena, in which member states and professionals can exchange and transfer policies on basis of their experiences. Here the focus is on what policy solutions that are preferred to implement. As an indicator, this one refers to policy ideas that were chosen to implement in order to solve the problems and causes, which were identified with the above indicator. The congruence within the 'policy core policy preferences' is to be found when the national policymakers share OECD professionals' policy preferences. This is not to be confused with the former indicator of traceability. Traceability identifies the transfer of policy ideas and the implementation of such ideas into concrete policy reforms. The policy preferences are the policymakers' and the professionals' beliefs, not just what was implemented of policy recommendations. As an indicator, this directly focuses on whether national policymakers' policy preferences are to look at OECD for inspiration, if they gain relevant policy ideas within the OECD, and if they prefer to advise OECD policy ideas in their policymaking. Congruence of beliefs here, is thus if policymakers agree and share the policy core policy preferences of the OECD.

4. Research Design and Methods

In this chapter, I will be going through the research design and the considerations that have been present in the process of choosing the concepts and cases. As the chapter moves on, we will move into the more narrow and specific methods used in the thesis. The chapter shall therefore be read and considered ordinated as a funnel, which starts with broad research design considerations and choice, and then moving down towards the specific methods applied.

4.1. Small-N: A Qualitative-Comparative Study

This thesis takes the form of small-N research, which means that we are assessing a small amount of empirical observations. I seek to answer what factors that decide whether OECD-recommendations are implemented nationally through two case studies. Inevitably, this means that some sort of comparison within the chosen cases will occur, especially if it is found that implementation occurred in one case, and not the other one. According to Hopkin (2010), comparison serves the principal function of *“developing, testing and refining theories about causal relations”* (Hopkin 2010:285).

Hopkin explains that small-N studies typically run two risks: First, cases that are studied can be unrepresentative and findings are specific to these cases. Second, the researcher may be too heavy reliant on interpretation of events and processes, which eventually exposes the analysis conducted to the researcher’s bias. (Hopkin 2010:300). However, Hopkin further states that small-N studies should not be considered “methodologically soft”, since it can provide rather sophisticated and in-depth responses to some types of research questions (Ibid). With the research question and selection of cases for this thesis I seek to address these two risks. On the first risk, I will argue that the OECD is highly representable of how an epistemic community work. The OECD consists of a community of professionals that produce a wealth of information and knowledge that can be obtained by its Member States. This information and knowledge represent certain policy ideas that seem to be reproduced, and must thus be based on the norms, values and beliefs of professionals within the OECD – thereby justifying the epistemic community within the OECD. This wide and continuing production of knowledge witness that, as an international organisation, the

OECD is very advanced. OECD should therefore also be representative of other organisations producing non-binding policy recommendations.

On the second risk addressed by Hopkin, I will address this problem by stating that my selection of cases is confined within the most similar system. My findings will not depend on interpretation, as I will compare my cases in a most similar system design. This will be elaborated in the next section.

4.2. Selection of cases – Most similar system design

There are many things to consider when working with case studies and choosing the cases to be investigated in answering a research question. The most prominent ways of designing case studies have been described by Przeworski and Teune (1970). They differ between two case-study designs that are named the ‘Most Similar Systems’ and the ‘Most Different Systems’. They describe the Most Similar Systems as the most common of the approaches at the time (Przeworski & Teune 1970:32).

In the most similar design, the researcher focuses on the *intersystemic* similarities and differences, and the system is typically the original level of analysis (Ibid: 33). This means that the researcher controls for common systemic characteristics, and the intersystemic differences on the other side functions as explanatory variables (Ibid). Here, the researcher should seek high degrees of common characteristics and a minimal of non-shared characteristics (Ibid). In other words, in most similar system designs, cases are similar with regard to the context whereas there is variation of the dependent variable. Hence, the variation of independent variables can legitimately be related to the variation of the dependent variable.

The Most Different Systems design takes its focus on another level than the most similar systems. Where the most similar systems design focuses on the systemic level, the most different systems focuses on the level of individual actors (Ibid: 34). This design disregards that systemic factors play a part in explaining observed behaviour (Ibid: 35). To do this, the researcher must consider the observed actors as homogeneous across the cases, meaning that if the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable is the same within and across subgroups of observations, systemic differences need not to be included (Ibid). In other words, in most different system designs, cases are different in terms of context but not in terms

of dependent variable. Hence, any similarity in terms of independent variables can legitimately be related to the similarity in terms of dependent variable.

Hopkin recited on these two designs, where he states that the most similar approach often has the problem of having too many variables, and too few cases (Hopkin 2010:293). In the most different systems design, the problem rises that the unit of analysis should be on the lowest level possible, being individuals rather than groups or countries, according to Hopkin (Ibid). Hopkin states that this results in a design that favours large-N scale studies over small-N, and also quantitative data over qualitative (Ibid).

The Most Similar Systems design is the most appropriate for this research, since the focus is narrowed to two cases, in which qualitative methods and research is in the limelight. There is no aim at comparing across countries here. Instead, by using to very similar cases, where the systemic attributes are very much alike, it would be more feasible to test the hypotheses for in-depth and elaborated answers on why OECD-recommendations are implemented.

The two cases chosen in order to test my hypotheses are examples of policy areas where OECD professionals have a certain expertise – namely labour market and education. The cases of the Danish Compulsory Education Reform and the Youth Employment Effort will be compared in a most similar system design, as the most similar systems design consists in comparing very similar cases that only differ in the dependent variable. This allows me to assume that the variation of the dependent variable – here, the national implementation of OECD recommendations – should result from the variation of the independent variables. Here the independent variables are 1) the congruence of policy beliefs and 2) the quality and intensity of relations among national policy makers and OECD experts.

The similarity of the cases consists in their contextual setting. In both cases OECD produced a review prior to the political agreement, which provided points for further policy development. As explained, such policy recommendations are not obligatory for implementation. However, national policymakers can choose to develop policies drawn on inspiration from OECD professionals' knowledge and expertise. In both cases we find a similar institutional contextualisation: Both the Danish labour market and educational sector can be characterised by a high amount of

stakeholders resulting in the induction of policy networks when developing policy networks. Politically, the same government initiated both the Educational Reform and the Youth Employment Effort. Administratively speaking, municipalities are in charge of administrating public schools and labour market activation policies – policies that are outlined by the sectorial ministries. Both sectors are thus very decentralised and the execution of policies occurs locally. Additionally, it shall be stated that regarding the policy recommendations by the OECD – both sectors of education and labour market are not part of the EU's first pillar. The EU therefore has no direct political power on these policy areas, which results in autonomy of national policymakers when developing policies.

While the two cases of the research are similar in context, they vary substantially in terms of dependent variable. Indeed, the recommendations made by the OECD were implemented in one of the cases, while they were not with the other case, as the empirical analysis on the indicator 'traceability' will show. Since implementations were made in one of the cases, and not with the other, explanations of what factors that decide whether policy recommendations are implemented, as per the research question, should be possible to withdraw from the analysis and the context of this most similar design. As the two cases persist of very similar systems with highly comparable systemic settings, the difference in the dependent variable of implementation of policy recommendations must arguably be found in the variation of the independent variable.

If the empirical analysis actually shows that there is variation of the independent variables of quality and intensity of relations and congruence of beliefs between the two cases, it should strongly be emphasised that the difference in the dependent variable of implementation should very well result from the differences in these two independent variables. On basis of the set hypotheses, these claims will be tested empirically and explanations of why implementations were made in one of the cases and not the other will be provided in order to answer my research question.

4.3. Data collection: Elites interviews and text analysis

'Elite' interviews have been extensively used within political science, and interviewees are here prominent individuals within their specific political sphere (Pierce 2008:117-127, cited by Vromen 2010:258). For the conduct of this research, I

use elite interviews since it gives in-depth information and knowledge regarding the functioning of specific policy areas. I interviewed Arne Eggert, Anders Eldrup, and Mette Frederiksen.

Arne Eggert is the Head of Department of Compulsory Education and International Tasks at the Ministry of Education in Denmark. He has had a very central role in the development of the Compulsory Education Reform, and in so, he worked closely together with the Minister of Education. His prominent part as senior civil servant in the Ministry and his knowledge on the policy process of the reform makes him essential for an elite interview in this thesis.

Anders Eldrup is former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. He has almost 30 years of experience within the Ministry and has prominent expertise on how Danish ministries work. He had a prominent part in the ministerial restructuring happening in the 90s when he was Permanent Secretary. This restructuring placed the Ministry of Finance as secretariat for the Government's Economic Committee – A Committee that consisted of the most central ministers and their permanent secretaries. Today this central committee is still in existence, regardless of changing governments. Because of his experience and position as former Permanent Secretary, Eldrup represents an elite 'expert' interviewee, since he can provide background knowledge on what the political and ministerial landscape looks like, and how culture and norms excel in Danish ministerial administration.

Danish Minister of Employment, Mette Frederiksen, is from the Social Democratic Party and took over the Ministry in 2011. As Minister, she is most central to the policy development within the Ministry of Employment. She outlines what directions policies should be aimed at and is in charge of the civil service of the Ministry. Due to time constraints with the Minister's schedule it was not possible to get an interview, but the Minister completed my questionnaire in writing and sent it to me.

When using documents or texts as part of a research, first it must be considered whether such documents and texts are primary or secondary sources (Vromen 2010:261). Primary documents are official documents that are generally considered to reflect a position of an actor and do not have an analysis in them. An exception from this is newspapers and organisational research reports. (Ibid: 262). The OECD and the

two political agreements, which I use in this thesis, can therefore be considered as primary sources, as they do not include analysis of my research questions. Vromen states that the difference between quantitative and qualitative textual analysis are that primary sources in qualitative studies are used in order to make meaning from them, thus enabling researchers to ‘tell the story’, whereas quantitative analyses seek for patterns in order to make generalisations (Ibid:262). This research is qualitative: the primary sources are used to tell the story of policy recommendations and their possible implementation in my two cases, thus making a storyline on policy change.

OECD documents will be used to assess the policy recommendations made by the international organization. National policy documents will be used to assess whether those recommendations were implemented in Danish policy reforms. Finally, elite interviews with key Danish policymakers will be used to assess the relations as well as the congruence of beliefs between them and OECD experts.

5. Analysis

This chapter presents the empirical analysis of the cases in accordance to the theoretical framework. The cases will be analysed individually in the order of the theoretical framework, meaning that at first the indicator of *traceability* will be assessed, and then we move into the indicators of my variables derived from the hypotheses. Here, the quality and intensity of relations will be analysed with the *knowledge & information*, *indirect contacts* and *direct contacts*. Then we move on to the congruence of beliefs variable, which will be analysed through the *basic cause of the problem* and *policy core policy preferences* indicators.

In order to organise and keep an overview of the policy initiatives made by the OECD and also the policy initiatives made nationally, the Appendices A and B will be used as references to both recommendations and policy reforms. The Appendices will show the traceability of policy ideas between the recommendations and the policy reforms. The Appendices will therefore additionally function as an overview of policy ideas and initiatives. They will be used in that regard to keep track of the different policy initiatives and their comparability across policy recommendations made by the OECD and the national policy reforms.

The observed empirical findings of the two cases will be discussed and compared in the Chapter 6 in order to finally conclude on the hypotheses.

5.1. Reform of the Compulsory Educational System – Denmark 2013

In June 2013 the Danish Government (Socialdemokraterne, Radikale Venstre & Socialistisk Folkeparti) made an agreement with Venstre – the Liberal Party of Denmark and the Danish Peoples' Party (Dansk Folkeparti) on a reformation of the compulsory educational system known as the Danish "Folkeskole"². The reform focuses on three general goals: 1) The Folkeskole shall challenge all pupils, so that they become as skilful as possible; 2) the school shall diminish the affect of social background relative to learning achievements; and, 3) The trust and well being in schools should be strengthened inter alia through respect of professional knowledge and practice (UVM 2013:2).

² "Folkeskole" is the name of general public compulsory education, meaning the primary and lower secondary school. Other compulsory education performed by, for instance private schools, are not part of the educational reform. When speaking of the "Folkeskole", it therefore refers public compulsory education.

These three goals are sought achieved through three general areas of action that are interlinked, and furthermore withhold several underlying initiatives that are to be carried out. These areas are: 1) A longer and more varied school day consistent with more and better teaching and learning; 2) a lift of competences on teachers, educators and school leaders; and 3) few clear goals and simplification of rules.

In order to achieve these goals, several initiatives were agreed upon. It is these initiatives that will be analysed as policies in this case. On the policy recommendations I delimit myself to the 'OECD Reviews of Evaluations and Assessments in Education: Denmark' of 2011. The implementation of these policy recommendations has been traced and can be seen in the Appendices A.

5.1.1. Traceability

The policy recommendations by the OECD on Danish compulsory education generally focuses on that Denmark needs to develop an evaluation and assessments culture. The recommendations are made within five frames focusing on different aspects of evaluation. The first frame is the development of a general evaluation and assessment framework in compulsory education, whereas the last four are more specific regarding evaluation and assessment of students, teachers, schools, and the school system as a whole.

Appendices A show the recommendations found in the OECD review of education in Denmark from 2011 (OECD 2011). The appendices list the recommended policies together with the comparable initiative found in the national political output. At last the recommendations are considered in terms of the traceability, as per the theoretical framework. The appendices show that many of the recommended initiatives have been obliged, however, not directly as the OECD proposed them, rather they have been adjusted and interpreted on national level.

In the reform, the traceability of OECD is very explicit, since the OECD is mentioned already on the first page of the agreement text (UVM 2013:1). The text states that the Danish students are on OECD average in several subjects, whereas the political goal is to increase the students' results so that they range higher in OECD context. Here the OECD commends the implementation of an overall evaluation and assessment framework, as the way general way to increase the quality of the Folkeskole. This recommendation has been complied in the educational reform. It is most visible with the implementation of overall national tests, which are to be

assessed on national level by a new Resource Centre. This Centre is in charge of collecting information and evaluations of students all over the country. Furthermore, the national tests will be used in assessing the individual students performances and progression. With the reform, the school leaders will assess the teachers more intensively; and the municipalities will assess the school leaders.

The reform thereby provides an overall binding evaluation and assessment framework, which will exist on all levels of administration and education, as the OECD generally recommended. Concluding on traceability, this provides a clear, however, not direct, implementation of the recommendations. As the recommendations first of all have been modified to national needs and context, but the general implementation of an evaluation and assessment framework is highly derivative with the OECD policy recommendations. Nevertheless, the reform does also withhold initiatives that are not based on the recommendations assessed here. Most notably is the initiative of increased lessons of teaching and longer days of school in all Forms. Another significant initiative that cannot be linked to the OECD is the policy of municipalities now becoming responsible for securing an overall inclusion of surrounding local actors.

When comparing the recommended policies presented in OECD's review (OECD 2011) with the educational reform (UVM 2013), as the Appendices A show, it can be concluded that certain visible policy ideas can be traced to the OECD. Though they have been changed at national level and therefore not directly implemented, the policy recommendations must be considered traceable in the compulsory education reform, since policy ideas from the recommendations can be found in the reform. Especially the increased attention on the evaluation and assessment framework in the reform is clearly traceable with the OECD recommendations.

5.1.2. Quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers: *Knowledge & Information, Indirect Contacts and Direct Contacts*

This section of the analysis will assess the quality and intensity of relations among the OECD experts and the national policy makers on the reform of the compulsory educational system.

Knowledge & Information

Knowledge and information as an indicator concerns the one-way communication between OECD professionals and national policymakers with e.g. reports and reviews produced in the OECD being received by national policymakers.

The initial implication of knowledge and information produced by the OECD were used in this reform, was the fact of OECD being explicitly mentioned at the first page of the reform in regards to Danish students' mediocre results in PISA surveys. A general aim of the reform is to increase the level of Danish students compared to the OECD average. Obviously, this means that policymakers have paid attention to the work of OECD, and the benchmarking of students that is produced in PISA surveys.

Arne Eggert, Head of Department of Compulsory Education and International Tasks, confirms that the Danish students' results in PISA surveys was one of the reasons behind initiating the reform:

"In this case, one can say that a there thus comes a new PISA survey, in the autumn 2011, I believe it is. Again, it shows mediocre Danish rankings, in combination with us being one of the countries in the world using the very most resources on our Folkeskole"³ (Arne Eggert, Interview 04.04.14)

Subsequently Eggert explains that, besides the PISA results, other implications that needed policy change was the students' motivation in mid-school, the diverging results between girls and boys, together with the Folkeskole still not able to compensate enough for the difference made by negative social heritage (Eggert 04.04.14). These were also problems that the reform should address.

The information and knowledge produced by the OECD, which the Ministry of Education mainly relied on in this reform was the PISA surveys. As Eggert explains, the Ministry basically advised on the PISA surveys, making them the most used information from the OECD. Additionally, policymakers drew their attention towards all the international researches and observations that were attainable, which also were compiled and present in the OECD (Eggert 04.04.14). When asked the question on whether the Ministry should be more or less engaged with the OECD in their policymaking, Eggert answers that definitely not less. However, as he emphasises:

"I think the most important is to observe all the time, and then take it into the present context. Not just transferring it on a 'one-to-one basis' by saying "Okay, if we take all these from the OECD", without contest, and then basically introduce that in Danish context. Then we will have a problem, I believe. (...) We would then risk going back to a 'New Public Management-like' thinking" (Eggert 04.04.14).

³ The author has translated quotations taken from the interviews.

The above quote broadly reconciles that the visible traces of OECD, that were found in the former section on traceability, are actually legit and policymakers did use OECD-produced knowledge and information in their policymaking on the reform. However, as Eggert explains, policy ideas need to be transferred by noting the right context. Otherwise such policy recommendations might only be a focus on “questions of measurement and assessment”, when using the words of Eggert.

The knowledge and information Danish policymakers received from the OECD was thus used and assessed in the Ministry for inspiration. The ideas that policymakers found useful and attainable were thus transformed and linked to national policy ideas of inclusion of stakeholders and actors surrounding the school system.

The Ministry of Education did indeed receive and assess information and knowledge produced by the OECD in the development of this report. Mainly, the PISA surveys served as an indicator for policymakers on the Danish students' mediocrity internationally. Thus making a reform necessary in order to increase the proficiency level of Danish students. Policymakers did advise international reports and research, not only for inspiration, but also in a search for evidence, which Eggert describes as one of the defining factors in developing of the reform.

Indirect contact

OECD provides an arena where professionals can produce and exchange information and knowledge among each other. The indirect contact is regarding these relational contacts, in which knowledge get exchanged among different national policymakers and OECD professionals within the forums of OECD. It is thus the situation where the OECD withholds a position as a facilitator of forums, where experiences with different policies can be exchanged.

From a Danish perspective, Anders Eldrup, former Permanent Secretary of the Danish Finance Ministry, tells that OECD ministerial meetings in Paris could have an effect on norms and values of policymakers. However, as he elaborates:

“It's a huge meeting, there's a many (people). So it has been – these meeting are a bit like the UN General Assembly – it has been a lot talking shop about it” (Eldrup 03.04.14).

With this, Eldrup does not debunk the influence of the OECD, as an arena for policy exchanged. However, as he details his thoughts, he entails that the political power that

the EU possess, makes the OECD more of a forum for broad contemplations for policymakers.

Another important point highlighted by Eldrup, is that OECD has been a meeting point for wealthy countries. Accordingly, this has a given effect in educating and inducting newer economies into the fold of western European and northern American thinking (Eldrup 03.04.14). However, Eldrup emphasises that this is not on the same level of importance as the effect of the EU's convergence requirements and economical policies. The OECD has little to provide other than a talking shop at this matter. When asked the question of how relevant policy recommendations by the OECD are to policymaking specifically on the educational sector, he answers:

"When looking at the general economic political area, the EU sets the rules. It can be interesting what the OECD has to say, it is nevertheless, not directly operational. When moving into the educational sector, then there is no one. It is an area where the EU does not set the rules. It is left for the countries themselves to. Thus making a space for the OECD who can make PISA surveys, benchmarks. And tell who does well, and who doesn't" (Eldrup 03.04.14).

What Eldrup refers to above is very much in relation to what Eggert explained in regards to the relevance of using OECD within educational policy development. As in the compulsory educational reform, the possibility of getting international experiences and ideas provided policymakers with inspiration and inputs on how to drive the development of the schools forward. Here, Eggert highlights a famous example from Ontario, Canada that was very inspirational to the development of the Danish reform. In Ontario they operated with an outlining of a few clear and overall goals (Eggert 04.04.14). Danish policymakers received this policy idea from an OECD context, and the Ontario example furthermore inspired the Ministry in establishing an initial partnership of stakeholders that were to develop the educational reform. Eggert elaborates this by explaining that Danish policymakers in regards to OECD worked with a "most similar/most different"-approach:

"(...) in reality, we have been able to identify that we might get most new perspectives on our school improvement by not always gazing at Finland and Sweden, but instead maybe turning to Canada. In that way, OECD has in fact proved extremely useful, by getting some other countries in or focus, than the ones we usually look for." (Eggert 04.04.14).

The forum and policy context, whom the OECD provides, therefore does seem to have a great influence on the reform, and on national educational policy development in general. Nonetheless, as Eldrup did state, the EU has more direct political influence on member states policies, especially economically. Contrary, the OECD, as a forum for exchanges of policy experiences, provides an alternative international policy

forum than the EU. As Eggert did explain on the importance of including the Canadian example as inspiration for the reform, rather than looking at their usual neighbours and most similar cases. Both Eggert and Eldrup confirm that the OECD, as a policy entrepreneur, proves more important and influential on sectors, which are not bound by policy areas within EU's first pillar. The educational sector is a great example of this.

Direct contact

The direct contact refers to concrete consultation and policy development among national policymakers and OECD professionals. With the case of the compulsory educational reform, the direct contact existed in form of working groups in the OECD, in which the Ministry of Education is participative. As explained in the theoretical framework, direct contact is the most concrete level of exchanges of policy ideas and development of policies in the OECD, which national policymakers have with the OECD. Eggert explains that the Ministry of Education is participating in 5-6 working groups, which have different scopes on the exploration of educational systems (Eggert, 04.04.14):

“Therefore we have a quite an intensive contact with them (the OECD), and it is one of these international forums, in which there is most ‘value-for-money’ relative to getting some very specific instructions on where the problems are – and also the possibility of international comparisons via benchmarks. (...) The whole benchmark mind-set goes more and more into this. (Eggert, 04.04.14).

Eggert is very positive on what this contact with OECD professionals and other OECD countries can bring to educational policymaking. Again, he emphasises the possibility of drawing on inspiration from other countries' examples, which added with a new focus in benchmarking, in his opinion, has added a new valuable dimension to the OECD:

“(...) I believe that we have seen a movement in the OECD, in the sense, that one moved further from this very hard-core focus on professionalism and efficiency, effective resource allocation and so, onto now having a recognition of there might be more things we should be measuring.” (Eggert, 04.04.14).

This direct contact with OECD professionals and the increased relevance of what they produce have in regards to this reform provided some genuine perspectives on how to improve compulsory education in Denmark. Both of the above quotations from Eggert explain an appreciation of what the OECD can bring to the table on this policy area. Eggert explains that the inputs OECD provided have been very applicable with the political intentions of the Danish Government on the area of education. He believes that the policy ideas derived from the OECD can exist coherently with the

ideas that did not derive from the OECD, since the Ministry of Education and the Government from the beginning had a strong focus on research results and evidence, rather than underlining ideological lines in the new school reform (Eggert, 04.04.14). The combination of policy ideas deriving from within the OECD being mixed with original intentions of the Nordic school project named 'Ny Nordisk Skole' (Eng.: New Nordic School) can according to Eggert well so coexist in the reform (Eggert, 04.04.14).

The quality and intensity of relations among OECD professionals and Danish policymakers in this reform have thus provided an arena, where the policymakers have broadly sought inspirations within the OECD and beyond internationally. That was together with a heavy focus on research and scientific results within the educational sectors in search for evidence. OECD has here provided forums, which actually gave Danish policymakers new evidence and policy experiences outside of their usual scope of policymaking on education. That gave the reform a new focus, which integrated an assessment and evaluation framework, which was very inspired by interactions within the OECD, together with a focus on inclusion of actors and a holistic Folkeskole, where everybody around the schools take part in making greater continuity and learning for the students.

On a more general perspective on the relation between policymakers and the OECD, Anders Eldrup explains to me that there might be a formation of managing attitudes among top politicians and top civil servants within the relations created by e.g. the OECD:

"(...) I believe there is a socialisation, or how to say; the leading persons create, in the OECD, an attitudinal community. People that work in the OECD, people that are in contact with the OECD, on the way, it creates the same values and main views." (Eldrup, 04.04.14).

Compiling this view by Eldrup with the above observations on direct contact with the OECD, it magnifies the position of policymakers and the community relations they partake in.

5.1.3. Congruence of beliefs among OECD experts and national policy makers: *basic cause of the problem and policy core policy preferences*

This variable serve the purpose of analysing whether there is congruence between policy beliefs among OECD experts and national policy makers, and if so, whether it

have induced the implementation of policy recommendations conjured by the OECD. A defining characteristic within the ACF that is used here is the identification of the “*fundamental policy positions concerning the basic strategies for achieving core values within the subsystem*” (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:132). Congruence will be searched for within two precepts of the ACF, that is the ‘basic causes of the problem’ and the ‘policy core policy preferences’. The scope here is the subsystem of OECD professionals, practically speaking the review team, which carried out the OECD review on Danish education (OECD 2011). The other subsystem is the one of national Danish policymakers on education. The policy recommendations OECD made for the Danish educational system can be seen in Appendices A, and the traceability indicator outlined that implementation of policy recommendations did occur. The previous assessment on the variable of relations has shown that the Danish Ministry of Education took inspiration from contacts with OECD professionals. Here the aim is to assess the other hypothesis, in which congruent beliefs are assumed to induce implementation of these policy ideas.

The overall policy recommendation presented by the OECD was the development of an evaluation and assessment framework within Danish compulsory education. The lack of such a framework in Danish education has primarily been identified in the recommendations by the OECD review carrying out the review. This review team consisted of OECD experts, such as analysts and researchers, thus making the review representative of OECD professionals’ policy beliefs.

Basic cause of the problem

This indicator focuses on whether the OECD professionals and national policymakers have identified the same problems and causes of the problems. Congruence will be found if the identifications of such are similar.

Appendices A show that such an evaluation and assessment framework that the OECD recommended has been initiated and is to be implemented with the Danish school reform. It is clear that such a policy idea derive from the professionals of the OECD review team. The policy idea of establishing an evaluation and assessment culture in Danish education is though a very broad policy idea. It is a general policy recommendation that withholds characteristic management tools such as performance standards together with an increased attention on results. I will argue that such an evaluation and assessment framework generally represents a main precept of what the

OECD mainly is about. The OECD thus identified that the Danish educational system was lacking behind in their attempts of creating a national knowledge and information basis. By developing an evaluation and assessment framework, the Danish educational system would be able to produce further knowledge and research on all levels within the compulsory educational system. The OECD review team identified that a ‘basic cause of the problem’ within the educational system was that the evaluation framework in Denmark was incomplete; *“the implementation and assessment of Common Objectives varied among schools and municipalities”*; and *“there was a need to improve evaluation and assessment competencies throughout the systems”* (OECD 2011:37-40). The review team thus believes that the problem in the educational system was the lack of consistency and linkages among the different levels of assessment (OECD 2011:41). The OECD review team outlined pointers for future policy development for each of the different levels, which can be seen in Appendices A.

I will therefore argue that the incomplete evaluation and assessment framework and the absence of an evaluation and assessment culture are what the OECD review team detected to be the basic cause(s) of problems within Danish compulsory education. Previously, Denmark had refused to implement such a framework. Increased assessments and measurements are very characteristic for the purpose that OECD serves, it must be considered that the OECD professionals have regarded this as the main cause of why Denmark e.g. had mediocre results in PISA surveys. For instance, in order to have performance standards and goals, a framework for measuring such is also very much needed in order to assess improvements. The incomplete framework must therefore be considered the basic cause of the problem, according to the OECD review team.

On the other side, the Danish policymakers identified several problems that needed policy attention. The Folkeskole needed a professional lift in terms of students’ professional competencies (UVM 2013:1). Furthermore, Eggert explained that other problems addressed were that the Folkeskole was not able to diminish negative social heritage, solve the problems of differing results between boys and girls, and an evident lack of motivation among students in mid-school (Eggert, 04.04.14). Generally, Danish policymakers thus wanted to address the different results among

students and also the differing results due to gender and social background was a problem, together with the overall problem of Danish students' mediocrity in PISA surveys.

Eggert additionally explains that the Government program contained a plan of seeing out the possibilities of reforming the educational system (Eggert, 04.04.14). The identified need of change within compulsory education was therefore already present before the civil service were included. It means that the compulsory educational system had some very obvious problems, and that the system needed a reformation. The national policymakers, both the political and the civil service, were thus agreeing on that policy change was needed. Here the Ministry of Education looked for international examples and experiences, as already addressed in the examination of the other hypothesis. Eggert explains that the Minister of Education invited leading stakeholders to partake in a partnership with the task of defining and outlining the problems existing in Danish public schools, and together form some objectives that should be redeemed (Eggert 04.04.14). These stakeholders were the Teachers Union⁴, BUPL⁵, The Schools Leaders Association⁶, The Association of Children and Culture Administrators⁷, The Students' Association⁸ and the Parents' Organisation⁹ (Eggert, 04.04.14). The idea of including key stakeholders into the policy development was also part of the OECD policy recommendations. OECD suggested that stakeholders were included in the development of the evaluation and assessment framework (OECD 2011:41). As Eggert explained, this policy idea came from international examples, with the Ontario example leading.

This becomes rather interesting when looking at the basis for which the OECD review team conducted its research on the educational system in Denmark. Here, Denmark participated voluntarily in the review and furthermore requested the OECD to focus on compulsory education, meaning the primary and lower secondary education in the country (OECD 2011:21). The review team conducted the review with participation of several actors of national, regional and local authorities (OECD 2011:21). Many of these actors were also part of the partnership, which the Minister

⁴ Danmarks Lærereforening

⁵ Børne og Ungdomspædagogernes Landsforbund, Eng: the Organisation for Children and Youth Educators

⁶ Skolelederforeningen

⁷ Børne- og Kulturchefernes Forening (BKF)

⁸ Danske Skoleelever (DSE)

⁹ Forældrenes Landsforening (FOLA)

of Education initiated when starting the work on developing the reform. Notably, the analysis of problems that lead to the policy recommendations from the review team is therefore based on the same groundwork of actors as in the education reform. Since the actors involved in the school system in Denmark participated in forming the reform, as well as being subject to information conducted by the OECD professionals, it might have affected the problem identification leading to policy recommendations to some degree. However, the recommendations are a symptom of the policy beliefs of OECD experts, representing one policy subsystem in this analysis, whereas the partnership is another. This could have led to congruent beliefs on what the basic causes of the problem are.

This leads me to two general observations with this indicator. The OECD review team identified the basic cause of the problem to be the incomplete assessment and evaluation framework. In order to improve the school system, this framework therefore needed completion. The policy recommendation of this is very significant for what the OECD as an organisation stands for, namely assessments and reviews. In order to make such, collection of data and information is needed. By completing the framework, it would become possible to assess and evaluating everything from students' results, teaching standards onto school standards.

The policymakers in the Ministry of Education must allegedly have acknowledged that one way to deal with the Danish students' mediocre results would be to increase the usage of performance standards and thereby make proficiency more measureable and operational – by for instance outlining more explicit implementation and usage of the Common Objectives, so that all schools and municipalities dealt with the same objectives. By doing so, it would enable them to monitor if the school system succeeded in diminishing other problems detected, such as the differing results due to social background.

The basic cause of the problem is thus not completely congruent between Danish policymakers and the OECD professionals within this case. However, I will argue that since the evaluation and assessment framework was actually initiated and completed with this reform – Danish policymakers must have acknowledged this as a problem. Though this moves a bit into the next indicator of 'policy core policy preferences', I will argue that the general identification of the basic cause of the

problem was that the school system needed changes and reformation. One of these changes was the induction of an evaluation and assessment culture, which the OECD review team detected as one of the main causes of the problem. These two observations are not contradictory. Rather it seems that the interaction with the OECD had a defining part in detecting this cause, which then lead to implementation of the policy recommendation.

Policy core policy preferences

This indicator refers to the policy preferences actors pursue in order to meet and solve problems. Congruence of beliefs is sought detected by looking at the preferences policy actors have when developing policies, which eventually means the values that policy actors perceive as valuable to their policymaking.

The Danish Folkeskole is, like a lot of other components of the Danish welfare state, authorised by the state, but administered by the municipalities. The distribution of authority between different institutions in the Folkeskole is therefore highly decentralised, where each municipality have the responsibility of governing the schools within their area. With the educational reform, some responsibilities have been delegated to new institutions, most significantly is the new Resource Centre (UVM 2013:21), but also the initiated group of ‘learning consultants’, consisting of proficient teachers and school leaders, are a newly established competencies (UVM 2013:20). The educational reform had the purpose of confining and clarifying the responsibilities within these linkages among authorities on education. By establishing the partnership of stakeholders, the Ministry of Education wanted to solve such linkage and authority problems by redefining a set of a few, clear common objectives among compulsory education stakeholders (Eggert, 04.04.14). The inclusion of stakeholders and wanting to only have a few, clear measureable goals was inspired by the earlier mentioned example from Ontario, Canada - an inspiration Danish policymakers gained from interactions with OECD professionals. By following the Canadian example, policymakers outlined performance indicators, which oblige the policy idea of common performance standards. These performance standards are to be based on the results of yearly national test results, which should make it possible to assess the proficiency level in all Forms (UVM 2013:31). Performance standards did not exist in the educational system before the reform. The reform thereby provided some sort of critical juncture for the educational system, where policymakers opted to

introduce performance standards. In the policy recommendations made by the OECD review team, the Canadian example is highlighted in several places. The OECD review team suggested that the Danish educational system should implement common performance standards and redefine the common objectives, as a way to better their student assessments (OECD 2011:61). It is obvious that policymakers within the Ministry of Education took the inspiration from the OECD professionals, and thereof the Canadian example, in the very initial part of formulating the educational reform.

Eggert explained to me that this was very characteristic for the way the policymakers worked with the educational reform. They were very much focused on that what was going to be implemented should also work in reality:

“Policy development that has the best possible knowledge-related suspension. ...Research on the field – what does it say? What kind initiatives are working? And what practical experiences are there, which we can include in forms of evaluations and experimental programs? This is something that we (the Ministry of Education) have been working very systematically with the last two years up till the reform.” (Eggert, 04.04.14).

As Eggert elaborates above, the main policy preferences of policymakers and their development of this reform a clear focus on evidence and search for evidence. The policymakers wanted policies within the educational system that evidently worked and were already practically proven. The Resource Centre that comes with the new reform is an example of also wanting this perspective after the reform. By establishing the Resource Centre, policymakers would enable a stronger focus on accumulation of knowledge:

“In principle, it has the task of accumulating knowledge, for future policy development, and adjustments of the reform’s elements – if it becomes necessary. (...) (so) it has definitely a focus that we have applied.” (Eggert, 04.04.14).

Policymakers were thus focusing on having a more evidence based policy development with this reform.

The OECD review team made policy recommendations with a focus that was a lot similar to what Danish policymakers did in their policy development. The policy recommendations are very focused on enabling the educational system to do assessments on all levels. In many instances the review team recommended policies to better clarify and strategize the evaluation and assessment framework among the different actors. This was applied in the reform by establishing links between the authorities on who monitors and assess whom. With the educational reform, the resource centre is thus responsible for collecting and assessing national test results, and advises them for further knowledge and policy development. The municipalities

are responsible for schools' improvement, and especially in assessing the school leaders, whereas the school leaders are responsible for the school's students' results, in terms of the teachers' capabilities and their assessment. Performance standards are to be implemented to better clarify and assess progression in proficiency of students on all levels; local, regional and national, as well as comparing it internationally, since the standards and their measurement will be based on OECD standards. It is interesting how these policy ideas from the OECD have been implemented into the educational reform. Since it can be said about the OECD professionals' work on reviews and reports that it is very much focused producing evidence and knowledge. That is generally what the organisation OECD does. Danish policymakers have with their focus on this reform applied a similar perspective. They were searching for evidence and they wanted to be able to produce evidence themselves. Danish policymakers thus had policy core preferences for knowledge based policies, rather than ideological preferences, which Eggert confirms was left out of the reform.

By implementing the evaluation and assessment framework, Denmark will get a knowledge based educational system that in the future will be based on own policy experiences and best practices. The OECD review team recommended that the educational system needed such a strengthening of central support and also clarification of key purposes and objectives of evaluation, as mentioned above (OECD 2011:42). This policy recommendation has obviously been obliged with the reform. It is therefore rather difficult to distinguish difference in policy preferences regarding the evaluation and assessment framework – mostly because this have been implemented so fully with the reform, and maybe also because the beliefs are then much similar.

The beliefs adherent for the policy recommendations by the OECD (OECD 2011) can in short be characterised by a strong focus on evaluations and assessments as the basic strategy for achieving better compulsory education and results. This characteristic confines every recommendation in several aspects, mostly though by recommending to implement performance standards on several levels within the educational system, ranging from students and teachers, school leaders and the schools. Almost every aspect of the educational system should accordingly to the OECD be adhered measurably and thereby produce evidence on performances and proficiency across the aforementioned levels. Before the recommendations were

made, some initiatives were made in establishing an evaluation culture and framework (OECD 2011:41), however, as mentioned in the basic cause of the problem, this was incomplete. The OECD review team appraised that in order to complete this; the stakeholders on of the educational sector should be included. Including stakeholders should thus make a strengthening of the evaluation and assessment culture in Denmark. Generally speaking, the OECD review team believe such instruments would lead to better schools. Their fundamental policy position must therefore also be stated as being centred around the strategies of measurement and assessment, and how to improve such. I will thus claim that the OECD in this case have a belief system centred on evidence based policies, where assessments through performance standards are the way to achieve better results. This a defining characteristic that must be said to cover the policy recommendations made on compulsory education in Denmark.

Such an intensified focus on collecting new evidence and searching for evidence is exactly what the Danish policymakers have accustomed in developing the reform. In that sense, the Danish policymakers share beliefs with the ones of OECD. However, the Danish school reform does also withhold other perspectives and beliefs, which is not necessarily fitting within the OECD's paradigm of evaluations and assessments. Nevertheless, as Eggert explains, these other perspectives can perfectly coexist with the increased evaluation and assessment:

"You can just put them up side by side with what is your political agenda in a given country, e.g. in relation to the 'Ny Nordisk Skole'. I believe that the OECD, and various OECD analyses are perfectly compatible side by side with out 'Ny Nordisk Skole' perspective. Because it can help us defining a framework." (Eggert, 04.04.14).

The OECD perspective added to this reform was thus very decisive in the formation of the overall framework of the reform.

The policy core policy preference Danish policymakers have in the 'Ny Nordisk Skole' perspective consists in achieving better learning and a better school through the creation of a holistic school, where all individual parts of the school are connected and responsible for students' learning (NyNordiskSkole.dk, 14.07.14). The belief in the holistic school and better results deriving from an all around inclusion are much different from what OECD recommended and advise. However, the coexistence of these two different perspectives on how to improve learning and students' results

does make that the belief system of Danish policymakers are rather shared with the one of OECD. If policymakers believe that the evaluation and assessment perspectives in the reform does not exclude the ones of ‘Ny Nordisk Skole’, as Eggert claims. Then the belief system is actually shared, since the Danish policymakers also have the defining characteristic of believing in that increased evaluations and assessments of the schools, the school leaders, teachers and student will improve results and proficiency – just like the OECD review team proclaims. On this matter we therefore find congruent beliefs, though the Danish policymakers also have policy core policy preferences in the ‘holistic school’ perspective. Nevertheless, as long as the beliefs of this policy perspective do not delude the one of more evaluations and assessments, beliefs are shared and congruent. Danish policymakers, on basis of Eggert, believe that such policy ideas can perfectly supplement each other in a coexisting policy perspective, as in the reform.

5.2. Youth Employment Effort – Denmark 2012

In November 2012 the Danish government (Socialdemokraterne, Radikale Venstre & Socialistisk Folkeparti) agreed with the party Enhedslisten on initiatives that should help and better the increasing unemployment and employability among youths (BM, 2012:1). The agreed package of policy initiatives was named the Youth Employment Effort¹⁰. The agreement text state that after the economic crisis hit in 2008 many young people have lost their jobs and others have not even had the chance of joining the labour market (BM 2012:1). In 2006, before this package was agreed, Denmark participated in the thematic OECD review named *Jobs For Youth*, which had the purpose of outlined a synthesis report based on individual reviews on 16 OECD countries (OECD 2010:3). The policy recommendations by the OECD assessed here will be the ones made in the report on Denmark from the Jobs for Youth program, namely the *Jobs For Youth, Denmark 2010*. The Jobs for Youth report contains a review of the development of youth employment in Denmark and identifies three main challenges and pointers for future policy developments to cope with such challenges.

¹⁰ Aftale om særlig Ungeindsats.

5.2.1. Traceability

The policy initiatives in the Youth Employment Effort (YEE) are less extensive as the compulsory education, since it is not a total reformation of the labour market.

OECD identified three general challenges on youth employment, which is 1) “ensuring that everyone leaving education is capable of gaining the skills needed on the labour market”(OECD 2010:14); 2) “Removing remaining demand-side barriers to promote better jobs for more youth” (Ibid:19); and 3) *Strengthening activation to better help all disadvantaged youth* (Ibid:20). In order to meet these challenges policy recommendations were made. Appendices B summarises these policy recommendations and their traceability with the YEE policy initiatives. Here it can be seen that traceability between policy recommendations and the YEE do occur. However, there is a transfer in between, which means that the same ideas of policy change are present, but maybe not the same policy tools are advised to achieve the goals. Furthermore, most policy measures recommended by the OECD are not present in the Youth Employment Effort.

The OECD review team identified that the high dropout rate in VET programmes was becoming a challenge on the labour market and it must be tackled (OECD 2010:18). In the review it is stated that teenagers should be better prepared before starting basic courses of VET programmes (Ibid). Better individual monitoring in primary and secondary education could be a policy initiative that would better this. From the analysis of the first case, we know that such policy initiatives were implemented with the compulsory education reform (UVM 2013). Furthermore, OECD suggests that Youth Guidance Centres should be better in assisting young people when they apply for their main courses and apprenticeships (OECD 2010:18). The challenge OECD identifies have been accommodated and met by a similar initiative by the Ministry of Employment. The YEE withholds an initiative of ‘bridging education’, which targets that young people enrolling in VET programmes should get a good start. The bridging consists in making a better link to VET programmes when young people leave primary and lower secondary education. Traceability then exists between the YEE and the policy recommendations. It furthermore shows that VET-programmes now, due to the YEE, have to employ apprenticeship consultants, who have the task of helping and assisting students in

acquiring apprenticeships (BM 2012:1). These consultants are also responsible for a better inclusion of students when they start VET programmes.

On the second challenge, the OECD review recommends two initiatives, which can be considered traceable to some degree. They recommend that in “*a period of faltering labour demand, social partners should explore ways of temporary reducing the cost of employing low-skilled youth*”, and alternatively they commend that the same effect can be achieved by “*more generous hiring subsidies in the private sector for disadvantaged youth*” (OECD 2010:19). The first recommendation have been accommodated by a Danish initiative of creating a Profession Pilot Scheme, which addresses young, newly educated people, where small and medium enterprises can get grants for 6-12 months for employing people with vocational training (BM 2012:2). A similar program for young people with academic background was initiated years before. This program has also been enhanced with the YEE, so that enterprises can hire people with academic background for a period up to three years (Ibid). The OECD recommended that policy initiatives should give incentive for youths to get into jobs and enterprises to hire youths (OECD 2010:20). With the policy initiatives in the YEE, the Ministry of Employment addresses exactly such issues. However, not with the same policy tools as the OECD review suggested. For instance, 272 mi. DKK will be addressed for job rotation schemes, which can be considered as hiring subsidies. However, these initiatives are not the exact same basis as what is recommended by the OECD. The Danish initiatives do address the same challenges, but the Danish initiatives are more long-term initiatives to deal with youth unemployment and especially youth employability.

Traceability can thus be found in between the policy ideas and the challenges that they address. However, when I contacted a civil servant that had worked on the implementation of the YEE and asked for an interview, she was unaware of any OECD recommendations. Do to time constraints, she could not give an interview, but the implication I can draw from this, is that policy recommendations from the OECD were not implemented. The traceability between the recommendations and the Danish policy initiatives may more reflect a similarity in addressing the same challenges, where the active labour market policy initiatives in Denmark seem to have a more all-round covering aspect on youth employability, whereas the OECD review has focused more on how the youth unemployment can be fixed right away.

5.2.2. Quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers: *Knowledge & Information, Indirect Contacts and Direct Contacts*

In a written statement on my questions, the Danish Minister of Employment Mette Frederiksen comments on the relations between the Ministry and the OECD.

Knowledge & Information

Frederiksen states that herself and the civil servants are in regular contact with OECD. The contact mainly is of that the OECD makes reports, which the Ministry receives and reads, and then further, they have dialogs with the OECD on the contents of the reports. On the initiation of the Youth Employment Effort, Frederiksen states that the Ministry of Employment consistently monitors the labour market, therein the unemployment trends (Frederiksen, 24.04.14). Policymakers in the Ministry of Employment identified that the age group of 25-30 year olds were the ones with the highest unemployment rate, which was initially what started the need for policy actions on the area (Frederiksen, 24.04.14):

“There was general public concerns for loosing a whole generation of youths, if not there were any actions taken in helping the youth into the labour market or into education. There was among other things a number of analyses from the Economic Council of the Labour Movement¹¹, EU and OECD, which all identified that the youth unemployment was a problem” (Frederiksen, 24.04.14).

As the quotation states, then OECD had played a part in the problem identification that was initially done before the YEE was outlined. OECD’s part was though complementary with the ones of other institutions researching for evidence. However, it must be said that the Ministry and the civil servants on the basis of their own monitoring did the main problem identification, and the reports of other research based institutions added to the certification of the need for policy initiatives.

Indirect contact

The Minister of Employment states that when the policy development of the YEE started, she was very interested in youth unemployment efforts that were being done all around. She discussed it in the arenas she came in, both the EU and OECD – in both instances these were called for actions on youth unemployment (Frederiksen, 24.04.14). She further states:

“Denmark put, among other things, focus on combating youth unemployment during our Presidency of the EU in spring 2012, where I, among others, were hosting a conference with exchanges of experiences regarding what works in getting youths into jobs and education” (Appendices C).

¹¹ Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd

On the YEE, it therefore seems that the EU played a greater part than the OECD in regards to the indirect relations – mainly due the implication of this conference, which are the kind of observations searched for here. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the OECD is indifferent to interact with on Danish employment policies, as Frederiksen explains:

“The strength in having OECD looking at our employment policy lies in (...) that OECD looks at our employment policy from the outside. It is always healthy getting the eyes of others on our policies and get constructive recommendations. It does not mean that I always agree with the recommendations, but it can be useful to note that there is different ways to do things” (Appendices C).

The OECD therefore has an important part on labour market policy development – generally speaking. However, the influence it has on employment policies in Denmark seem more partially and is more of a place policymakers look for inspiration. Anders Eldrup explains:

“OECD have played a big part, especially earlier, and maybe remains to do so, on the field of employment. (...) So there is a great information exchange on the field, and if the OECD makes clever reports, and these do not as such get transferred one-to-one politically (then there is influence)” (Eldrup, 03.04.14).

The relational contact with the OECD considered as indirect is therefore present in terms of its existence, and influential in terms of inspiration and reviews. Nevertheless, indirect contact has not been decisive in the formation of the Youth Employment Effort.

Direct contact

The above observations on indirect contact can also be transmitted into the direct contacts. The direct contact consists mainly of the interaction and dialogs the Minister and the civil servants have with OECD professionals after receiving reports. When then looking at the YEE, the direct interaction with OECD does seem less important for the policymakers:

“When we are developing policies it is important to involve the people, and the knowledge they have, who works on getting unemployed into jobs. I have therefore hosted reform-workshops, where employees and managers from the job centres, institutions and organisations within the field employment have had the chance to make recommendations.” (Appendices C).

On the YEE, direct contact has thus been more proficient with the people dealing with employability and unemployment issues nationally, regionally and locally. As the Minister of Employment states on her general perspective on the working habits within the Ministry of Employment:

“Regularly, I draw on inspiration from professionals all around the country, and there are continually proposals coming into the ministry. Last, but not least, the civil servants consistently work on proposals

on how the existing employment policies can be improved on basis of experiments on Denmark and in other countries, there among, the OECD countries.” (Appendices C).

Consequently, the relations with the OECD has not been intensified more when developing the YEE. Instead it seems that the relational contact with OECD professionals have mostly been observational within the information and knowledge indicator, since reports and reviews definitely have been assessed in the Danish political system and the Ministry. However, further dialogs have been less proficient in regards to how the Ministry seemingly wants to develop Danish labour market policies. Furthermore, there is the fact that EU also seems to play a more decisive role to this policy area. This is pointed out to me by Eldrup:

“It is probably an intermediate position (the one of OECD), since the EU not directly interferes with the employment policy. But they do it indirectly, as it is so important for the economic policy. So we see that there is more and more pointing fingers in regards to what one should do in relation to the labour market.” (Eldrup, 03.04.14).

The intensity of the relations with the OECD is therefore less decisive, as the relations with the EU on employment seem more influential with this indicator. The quality of the relations then consists in reports and reviews made in the OECD, which Danish policymakers do read and assess – however, the policymakers here seem to be more assured on knowing what directions and measures they want to apply on the labour market in terms of solving youth unemployment as Mette Frederiksen finishes off:

“Denmark can be used as an example of how one can have a relative low youth unemployment, even though there is a crisis.” (Appendices C).

5.2.3. Congruence of beliefs among OECD experts and national policy makers: *basic cause of the problem and policy core policy preferences*

The OECD review, which presented the policy recommendations on this case, was first presented in a draft version in 2009 at seminar in Copenhagen, hosted by then Danish Minister of Employment, Inger Støjberg (OECD 2010:3). Støjberg is a member of the Venstre – The Liberal Party of Denmark, whereas Mette Frederiksen, the present Minister, is a representative of the Social Democrats. This could engage certain discussions on how this change affected the reception of the OECD recommendations made in the 2010 Jobs for Youth review. Initially it could indicate that the Minister of Employment at the time when OECD started reviewing was more interested in the results of such a review. However, as observed within the previous variable, the one of relations – the present Minister, Frederiksen do appreciate work of the OECD such reports and reviews and her civil servants do assess them.

Politically the YEE initiatives were agreed upon between the government and Enhedslisten. Venstre, together with the other right wing parties, was therefore not part of the political agreement on the YEE. Looking back, in 2009 the first steps toward a plan for youth employment and education was agreed and made by the then government together with two of the present government parties (Socialdemokraterne & Radikale Venstre) and the Danish Peoples' Party (Dansk Folkeparti) (UVM 2009). The present government was therefore part of the first legislative measures made on employability of youths. It is the local and regional experiences with these previous policy initiatives – both good and bad – Minister Mette Frederiksen referred to when speaking of reform-workshops and inclusion of people that work on daily basis with employment issues. This becomes relevant to the basic cause of the problem indicator.

Basic cause of the problem

As already listed in the introduction of this case, the OECD review team addressed three challenges that the Danish labour market had to meet in order to solve the problems of youth unemployment. These three challenges are generally the problems OECD identified.

These challenges are very specifically identified within the labour market and on the unemployment issues of youths in Denmark. They confine what challenges the Danish labour market, policy-wise, needs to meet in order to overcome issues that are steadily increasing within youth unemployment. The OECD review team state on the Danish labour market there are generally lower costs of firing young workers than prime-age workers (OECD 2010:19). Younger workers usually go first during downturns – even though there is no difference between the legislative employment protection between young and older workers (Ibid). OECD states that this is a result of the Danish “*tradition of labour market flexibility as part of the flexicurity*” (Ibid). This is the cause of the problem of youth unemployment and employability.

OECD's review team furthermore recommends policy initiatives that should help the labour market to then better coping with the economic crisis (Ibid: 20). However, due to the “*lax employment protection legislation framework*”, as the OECD review team puts it, it seems that initiatives on “removing remaining demand-side barriers to promote better jobs for more youth” is just a minor part of the problem. OECD states:

“But it may still make sense to compensate for the disadvantage youth tend to suffer from when labour demand falters. A way to achieve that goal consists of making especially at-risk youth more attractive for private employers *via* temporary and targeted reductions in labour costs.” (OECD 2010:20)

The OECD professionals do provide recommendations of how to better the situation for disadvantaged youths and their employability, however, it does seem that the OECD review team subordinately insinuate that the cause of problems on youths’ unemployment is situated somewhere else in the legislative part of the labour market.

Another problem identification, which the OECD review made, was the one of ‘ensuring that everyone leaving education is capable of gaining the skills needed on the labour market’. Here the review team mostly comments on the educational system and recommends policies to deal with inefficiencies therein – recommendations that have mostly been obliged with the compulsory education reform, as seen earlier. The YEE does not address any of these problems, since they are within the policy area of another Ministry. Even though employability and education is highly interlinked – the policymakers of the Ministry of Employment had less attention on education as the problem – the problem was more creating enough jobs, so that newly educated could get that first and important job. The policymakers were therefore less focused on addressing problems within the educational system of a lack of measurements and assessments. Nevertheless, Danish policymakers were interested in educational aspects of youths’ employability. It was a focus on how make better bridging between education and the labour market, and it was here they found the problems, and the cause of the problem, namely within these two perspectives, as Frederiksen explains:

“Specifically, we worked with two general directions. Firstly, bridging for youths between social benefits, unemployment benefits and the educational system. Secondly, inclusion of youths into the labour market, especially the recent graduates.” (Appendices C).

Commonly, both the OECD review team and the Danish policymakers identified that there were problems of youth unemployment and employability. Danish policymakers identified causes of these problems within the bridging between social benefits and education and also the inclusion of newly graduates. The basic cause of the problem was that the youths had a too hard time gaining access to the labour market. The review team identified somewhat similar cause of the problem, however, the review addressed the very loose labour market legislation as a cause on why youths might have more problems getting into the labour market and stay in employment during economic downturns. This is the where my observations prove that the ‘basic cause of the problem’ is not congruent between policymakers and OECD professionals.

Though they have congruent problem identifications, such as the main one of the economic crisis, they differ in their identification of the basic cause. I will argue that the basic cause is what policymakers generally will aim their policy initiatives at solving, which leads us on to the next indicator of policy core policy preferences.

Policy core policy preferences

The policy core policy preferences address the preferences, which policymakers attend to believe in as policy initiatives to solve certain problems. The observations made above show that many of the problem identifications among OECD professionals and Danish policymakers were similar. However, we know from the traceability indicator that the policy initiatives made in the Youth Employment Effort are not the same as the ones recommended by the OECD review team. The main point of this indicator is to identify why these policy initiatives are not similar to the ones recommended by the OECD.

As explained with the indicator above, Danish policymakers focused on better bridging strategies, as they identified that absence of bridging between youths in education and on social benefits into the labour market was a problem causing youths not getting into the labour market and staying there. The OECD review team here addressed problem with the high-drop rates in VET-programmes – a problem that Danish policymakers, meaning the Ministry of Employment’s civil servants, also acknowledged. The Danish policymakers addressed the high drop-out rate by focusing on better bridging the transfer from compulsory education to VET programmes and as well better ensuring that youths’ stay in education by getting their needed apprenticeship. The need of youths to get an apprenticeship is a problem that is accordingly in line with the OECD recommended on the field:

“Youth guidance centres should better assist young people when they apply for the main course and are seeking for an apprenticeship in a firm. It is important that the PES and youth guidance centres co-operate closely to find more apprenticeship places.” (OECD 2010:18)

However, with the YEE, the Danish policymakers placed much of the responsibilities, which the OECD review addresses in their recommendations, on the inauguration of apprenticeship consultants at VET-programmes. The VET programmes and schools hire these consultants, which is a different solution than what was suggested by the

OECD review team – though they evidently target and supposedly solve the same problem identified.

The beliefs of policymakers and OECD professional seem more different when supplying the above observations with the ones made on the indirect contact indicator from the former variable. Minister of Employment, Frederiksen explained that their policy preferences on policymaking were to include local and regional actors' policy experiences on the YEE. In that sense, Danish policymakers believe in their own practices and knowledge done locally and nationally on what works in reality and not. The initiatives of the YEE are therefore based on own local experiences with youth employment efforts. The difference between the OECD professionals and national policymakers in this case must thus be the difference in their orientation on basic value priorities.

The Danish policymakers are developing policies around a focus on enhancing what they already have made good experiences with, such as their belief in the effect of the Pilot Schemes for academics, which now have been applied on youths with a VET-background. This is a policy initiative that was never mentioned by the OECD review team. It can thus be hard to identify that policy ideas are congruent with the OECD professionals on other matters than an acknowledgement of issues and problems within youth employment, since Danish policymakers prefer to work and elaborate on measures that are based on their own prior work and success. Policy ideas, and thereof the policy core policy preferences, are thereby drawn mostly from local, regional and national experiences from people that work on employment efforts on a daily basis. Whereas the OECD professionals policy core policy preferences are more based on making incentives for youths to get into jobs and enterprises in hiring them. Here the ideas from Danish policymakers are more centred on how we actually contain their employability. The policy core policy preferences between the two are therefore incongruent, since Danish policymakers are focused on the long-term employability of youths, whereas the OECD review team surrounds beliefs that should fix unemployment among youths here and now. Additionally, the OECD review team seem more hesitant in recommending bigger changes on employment efforts in Denmark. Especially when speaking of the employment protection framework, which is legislatively lagging in Denmark compared to other OECD countries. Here, Denmark contains their belief in the concept of flexicurity, where the

government's most important role is to provide the active labour market policies, which eventually can provide the employability of their youth.

6. Discussion of the findings

The objective of this chapter is to test the research hypotheses and to discuss the theoretical and practical implications of the results. The first section of the chapter presents and discusses the findings on the case of the Compulsory Education Reform. The second section discusses the findings on the Youth Employment Effort. Then follows the discussion of whether the hypotheses can be validated in relation to the findings that were done in both cases. At last, the findings will be discussed in respect to their theoretical and practical implications.

6.1. Reform of the compulsory education system

The policy recommendations made by the OECD about the Danish education sector were actually implemented with the Danish Compulsory Educational policy reform. With this reform the compulsory educational system in Denmark gets an overhaul, which changes the focus, so that the educational system now is more concerned of results' dissemination – an aspect within Danish education, which OECD professionals continually have recommended to change. With the reform, an evaluation and assessment framework will be implemented, which is a major policy change in Danish educational policy. This framework will coexist with original Danish policy initiatives of a holistic school, known as 'Ny Nordisk Skole'. With the new reform, Denmark will be implementing evidence based performance measures – policy initiatives that are highly and evidently traceable with OECD's policy recommendations on educational priorities and measures. Policy recommendations were thereby implemented. They were implemented in that way, that policy ideas in the education reform can be traced with the ones of the policy recommendations made by the OECD. Policy recommendations were thus not directly implemented, but rather transferred and adapted into the national context. This, however, does not change the fact that implementation occurred.

When looking at the validation of my two hypotheses on this case, congruent beliefs among policymakers and OECD professionals are found together with a high degree of quality and intensity of relations.

'OECD experts' and national policymakers' beliefs were evidently congruent. National policymakers beliefs were congruent with OECD professionals in their *policy core policy preferences* on evidence based policy development. Furthermore,

national policymakers seemed to draw more inspiration of policy ideas from the OECD relations. These relations therefore seemed to influence policymakers' attention to the necessity of an evaluation and assessment framework, and maybe more important, on how to outline such a framework. The congruence thus exists in the Danish policymakers' and the OECD experts' search for evidence based policies internationally. Both OECD experts and national policymakers have preferences of searching for evidence based educational policies. The focus on evidence and results is an approach, which is very characteristic for how the OECD professionals outlined the review on the Danish educational system. Danish policymakers shared this approach on educational policies with the OECD professionals, and especially the policy ideas of implementing national tests and establishing an assessment culture are highly congruent with OECD professionals' beliefs.

One counterargument though, is that the educational reform contains policy initiatives that were not beliefs of the OECD review team. However, such initiatives, according to Eggert, have not deluded the initiatives inspired by the OECD. Policymakers therefore believe that these policy initiatives can coexist. The observation of other policy core policy preferences in the educational reform does not mean that the policy beliefs in general are incongruent, rather the opposite, since many policy core policy preferences can exist. These observations on the compulsory education reform can implicate that implementation of policy recommendations occurs if policymakers are in extensive search for new inspiration on policy initiatives and evidence.

The first hypothesis must therefore be considered verified, since the congruent beliefs were found, though they seemingly derived from the relations policymakers had with the OECD, as the discussion of the next hypothesis will contemplate. In that sense, I will argue that a probable thesis can be that if a high degree of relations of quality and intensity exists, it can lead to shared policy beliefs, which eventually leads to implementation of OECD recommendations.

Below here, I have placed the Compulsory Educational Reform in a box that outlines the relation between implementation and congruent beliefs. The general validation of my hypotheses depends on the position of my cases within these boxes. I will come back to these in the section on the general validation of hypotheses.

Box 2: Compulsory Education Reform - Beliefs

H1: Beliefs/Implementation	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>No implementation</i>
<i>Congruent beliefs</i>	Compulsory Educational Reform	
<i>Non-congruent beliefs</i>		

The quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers were high and it seems that these relations had a decisive role in whether implementation of policy recommendations occur. The civil servants within the Ministry of Education had certainly gained perspective and quality from the relations with the OECD – perspectives on policy ideas, which were transferred into the reform. The quality and intensity of relations policymakers had with OECD professionals have thus had a big influence on the content and policy ideas of the reform.

Danish policymakers had much focus on evidence based policies and research on education when developing the reform, as the congruence of beliefs also addressed. In their work with the educational reform, national policymakers drew on the experiences that were provided through relations and contacts within the OECD. Particularly, the example of the school system in Ontario was inspirational for Danish policymakers and was obtained through OECD relations. What I observed with my analysis of this case was, that the quality and intensity of relations between policymakers and OECD professionals seem to have impacted the beliefs of national policymakers. The second hypothesis on quality and intensity of relations inducing implementation of policy recommendations must therefore be considered verified. However, it furthermore suggests that the quality and intensity of relations can affect the beliefs of national policymakers. The second hypothesis must be considered verified, as the quality and intensity of relations were decisive to the policymakers in their work on developing the reform. I will here argue that implementation of policy recommendations is induced in regards to the factor of congruent beliefs, which is affected by the relations between policymakers and OECD professionals.

Box 3, below here, shows the positioning of the Compulsory Educational Reform in between implementation and the degree of relations. As with beliefs, I will come back to the discussion of this later in this discussion.

Box 3: Compulsory Education Reform - Relations

<i>H2: Relations/Implementation</i>	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>No implementation</i>
<i>High degree of relations</i>	Compulsory Educational Reform	
<i>Low degree of relations</i>		

6.2. Youth employment effort

The policy recommendations made by the OECD about the Danish employment sector were not really implemented in the Danish Youth employment effort. The empirical findings were much less clear. I observed that implementation of recommendations did not occur in the same manor as with the educational reform. Instead it was possible to see some traits of traceability in between the YEE and the policy recommendations made by the OECD. However, this was mainly present in what problems the policy initiatives should address. The policy measures that were recommended in the OECD review were not the same measures as those initiated with the YEE. Traceability was therefore more deluded, and the policy recommendations made by the OECD review team are hard to consider as implemented. The explanation of why such implementation of recommendations did not occur shall be found in the observations on my indicators for the hypotheses.

On the first hypothesis on beliefs, I found that OECD experts and national policymakers' beliefs were not really congruent. It was observed that policy ideas were seemingly comparable between the recommendations and the Danish policy initiatives in the YEE, but it showed that the Danish policy ideas were more based on policy core policy preferences deriving from local and regional actors within the country and the experiences they made in their work with employment policies. Congruent beliefs were found less proficient. Mostly, shared policy beliefs were found on the problem identifications on youth unemployment within the indicator of

basic cause of the problem. Here it was observed that national policymakers' policy preferences were a different perspective on labour market policy development than the OECD professionals'. Or at least, national policymakers perceive the OECD professionals perspectives to be different than the ones they want to pursue nationally.

The incongruent beliefs were here observed to be of different policy core policy preference. The case is that on employment and labour market policies, it can be argued that Denmark provides their own pioneering examples of labour market policies, e.g. the flexicurity model. Here the OECD review team commented on the problems of youth unemployment caused by the lack of legislative protection of youths on the labour market. Danish policymakers were instead having policy core policy preferences that were based on experiences with their own active labour market policies. Such policies should secure the employability of youths and thereby better the unemployment. The incongruent beliefs between national policymakers and the OECD review team thus resulted in that no implementation of recommendations occurred. The first hypothesis can with this case therefore be invalidated. The Youth Employment Effort will therefore be positioned as seen in Box 4, below here.

Box 4: Youth Employment Effort - Beliefs

H1: Beliefs/Implementation	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>No implementation</i>
<i>Congruent beliefs</i>		
<i>Non-congruent beliefs</i>		Youth Employment Effort

The quality and intensity of relations among OECD experts and national policymakers were found to be quite low. The interactions with OECD professionals were rather low, since national policymakers predominantly consulted their local people working on employment issues. I only found certified proof on the 'information and knowledge'-indicator, thus making the hypothesis on relations invalidated in this case, since no implementation occurred and there was a low degree of quality and intensity of relations.

Observations showed that the OECD professionals were most proficiently used by national policymakers in order to gain an outsiders perspective on the Danish

labour market. This observation tells something about the national policymakers and where they search for inputs and inspiration.

The observations done on these indicators of relations indicate that the quality of the relations were existing, but the intensity of relations was less decisive in the case of the YEE, since policymakers did not use further OECD contacts in their policymaking. Furthermore, it should be added that relational contacts within the EU may have bigger indirect influence on this policy field than OECD contacts, thus delimiting the impact OECD relations can have here.

What can be said though, is that in the case of the YEE, the relations did not affect the policy beliefs in a certain manor. I will argue that most probably this is because of the existence of good evidence and results nationally, whereas with the case of the compulsory education reform, policymakers were more open to new evidence, since results were not as apparent and good when comparing with other countries. The second hypothesis is therefore invalidated with this case, since there was a low degree of quality and intensity of relations along with no real implementation of policy recommendations, as shown in box 5 below.

Box 5: Youth Employment Effort - Relations

<i>H2: Relations/Implementation</i>	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>No implementation</i>
<i>High degree of relations</i>		
<i>Low degree of relations</i>		Youth Employment Effort

6.3. General validation of the hypotheses

The comparison of the two case studies allows to validate the first research hypothesis that shared belief systems between national policymakers and the OECD induce implementation of policy recommendations. Indeed, the observed shared belief system among national policymakers and the OECD within the case of the Education Reform explains that implementation occurred because of this shared belief system, whereas the lack of congruent beliefs within the case of the Youth Employment Effort allows me conclude that implementation of policy recommendations did not occur due to the absent congruent beliefs. The first hypothesis can therefore be regarded as

validated, since implementation occurred when there were congruent beliefs, whereas implementation did not occur when congruent beliefs were absent. To illustrate this, I have placed the two reforms together in box 6 below. The suggested alternative hypothesis of can therefore be rejected since there was found no empirical evidence on that congruent beliefs do not induce policy implementation. The findings of the Youth Employment Effort confirms this further since non-congruent beliefs were found, which have resulted in no implementation of policy recommendations. My alternative hypothesis is thus rejected, since my findings show the exact opposite and my hypothesis is thereby confirmed.

Box 6: Validation of hypothesis 1 - Beliefs

H1: Beliefs/Implementation	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>No implementation</i>
<i>Congruent beliefs</i>	Compulsory Educational Reform	
<i>Non-congruent beliefs</i>		Youth Employment Effort

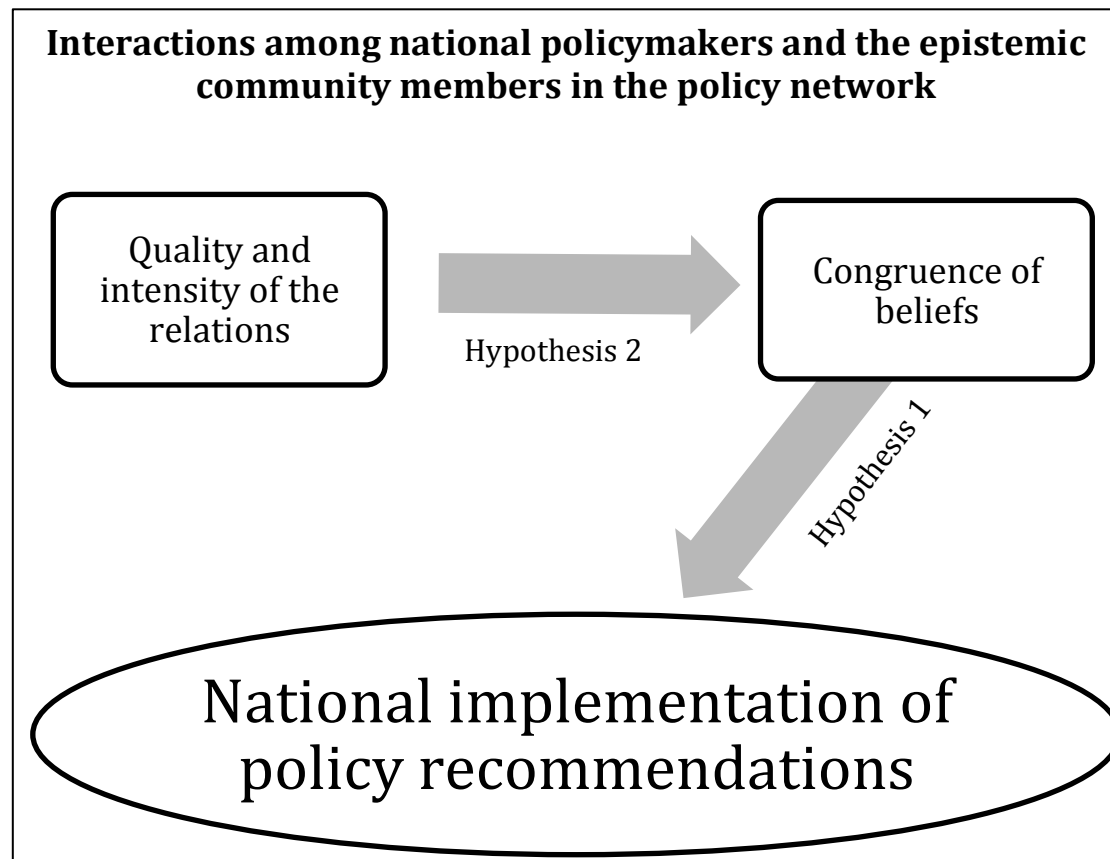
On my second research hypothesis, the comparison of the two case studies also allows to validate that relations between national policymakers and OECD induce implementation of policy recommendations. In the case of the Compulsory Educational Reform, I found that implementation occurred when there was a high degree of quality and intensity of relations, whereas the Youth Employment Effort-case had a low degree of quality and intensity of relations among policymakers and OECD – together with no implementation of policy recommendations. The analysis of these observations allows me to validate the second hypothesis, since implementation occurred as a result of the high degree of relations, whereas those relations were absent in the case where no implementation occurred. The positioning of the two cases can be seen in box 7. As my findings validate the hypothesis, it allows me to reject the alternative hypothesis. The findings showed that high degree of quality and intensity of relations indeed do induce policy implementation and not the opposite way around. Interactions between national policymakers and OECD do induce policy implementation, whereas the alternative hypothesis suggested that interactions did not induce policy implementation.

Box 7: Validation of hypothesis 2 - Relations

<i>H2: Relations/Implementation</i>	<i>Implementation</i>	<i>No implementation</i>
<i>High degree of relations</i>	Compulsory Educational Reform	
<i>Low degree of relations</i>		Youth employment effort

A detailed examination of the results of the empirical analysis not only validates the hypotheses – it also suggests a revision of the original theoretical framework of the research.

Through my empirical observations, I derive that the quality and intensity of relations seem to have induced implementation of policy recommendations. It furthermore seems that in the case of the Compulsory Educational Reform, the interaction with OECD professionals have had an impact on the belief system of national policymakers. In the other case, the policymakers of the Ministry of Employment were less engaged with OECD professionals. Policymakers did indeed interact with OECD, but the interaction did not have an affect on their belief system. However, I would argue that policymakers from the Ministry of Employment were not affected due to the intensity of this interaction, which was found to be low. The less intensive interaction among policymakers and OECD professionals within the case of the Youth Employment Effort therefore confirms my proposition, since policymakers did not get affected in their policy beliefs. Instead policymakers were focusing on their own ‘policy core policy preferences’ that were different from the ones of the OECD review team. The findings of my analysis thus lead to a new proposition of the analytical framework: A shared belief system most probably induce implementation, but the intensity of relations seem to have an impact on how such beliefs are affected, and thereby also an eventual affect on whether implementation actually occurs. The new proposed analytical framework can be seen below here. This new proposition is thus based on the significance that the quality and intensity of relations have on implementation of policy recommendations.

Figure 2: New proposed analytical framework

I must hereby conclude that a high degree of quality and intensity of OECD relations induce policy change on national level, where the quality of relations also seems to affect belief systems of policymakers. A low degree of intensity and quality of relations, seem to have less affect on national policy development and the belief system of national policymakers.

Policymakers' belief system affect whether policy recommendations are implemented. However, most importantly is that policy recommendations are not directly implemented into national policies. They need to be modified and framed into national perspectives, and thereby they mesh up with the national policy networks. My hypotheses are thus validated but they lead to a new proposition on what factors that are actually inducing policy change, and the intermediates of these actors.

6.4. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings

What have these findings then contributed to the theoretical outlining of my literature review? How can the theoretical implications of the interdependence theory and the ACF contribute to the explanatory power of the epistemic communities theory?

The interdependence theory suggests that the goals of network members become interrelated over time and that those actors depend on the resources of each other to achieve their goals (Kickert & Koppenjan 1997:42; Kickert et al. 1997:6). In the compulsory education reform it would be that the network actors were all pursuing better schools – however, they were diverging in how to achieve this goal. The OECD, as an actor, provides a wealth of resources in terms of knowledge and information, and theoretically it would be that the policy network in Denmark needed further validation of policy practices on schools to find the right initiatives fitting their pursued goal of better schools. The same explanation can be applied to the Youth Employment Effort. The difference though is that here, policymakers had sufficient resources within the local policy networks to create further policy points for development. Hence, there was no use for the resources provided by OECD professionals. The interdependence theory can in that regard explain the relations among network actors and how such relations can induce policymakers to consult epistemic communities.

Haas (1992) suggested that policymakers risk making decisions without having adequate information, which could dilute the general aim of policies (Haas 1992:13). Policymakers can therefore consult epistemic communities if they lack resources in their national policy networks on specific policy issues. In the case of the compulsory education reform, the epistemic community within the OECD was an actor with significant resources of knowledge and information, which proved decisive because the national policy network had a need for new inputs and evidence in order to drive their policy development forward. Hence, the interdependence theory shows that epistemic communities can be actors that inaugurate new positions in national policy networks, since they provide new resources of knowledge and information through the direct and indirect contacts, which alter the position of actors within the national policy networks. Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997:6) described this as the dependency on actors' resources policy networks have if the actors are to reach their goals. It also confines Rhodes' (1997) statement on the complexity of policy networks

when resources are unevenly distributed among actors (1997:15). The findings of this thesis showed that there is a higher possibility of implementation of policy recommendations when an uneven distribution of resources (information and knowledge) was present. The interdependence theory thus provides interesting insights about the process that leads policy recommendations to be implemented into national policy outputs, especially in its concepts of resources and the importance of resources in policy networks.

The comparison of the two cases of this research demonstrates that the exchange of resources through relations among international experts and national policymakers is a key factor of the policy process of policy recommendations.

The ACF, the other theoretical explanatory component added to the epistemic communities theory, can in this thesis provide interesting insights on how policies can transform and change because of a change in policymakers' beliefs. On the one hand, the ACF's view on policy beliefs proved very helpful when operationalizing policymakers' beliefs in this research and the effect beliefs have on policies. On the other hand, the ACF theoretically suggests that policymakers' beliefs play a role in policy change when those beliefs change over time (policy learning) (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:123). This thesis shows that policy change can happen without policy learning. Indeed, the implementation of policy recommendations from epistemic communities depends on the compatibility between the beliefs supporting the recommendations made by international experts and the beliefs held by national policymakers. Those two sets of beliefs have to be "congruent" in order for implementation to occur. Thereby is policy learning not necessarily the most prominent factor of policy change. However, as the ACF suggested, the findings showed that interaction between policymakers and epistemic community experts could provide policy learning, which then enhances the possibility of compatible congruent beliefs.

The ACF thus provided explanations of policy actors' beliefs and how policy change occurs when their beliefs change. This is where examples of 'policy-oriented learning' were found. Furthermore it also confirms that policy participants will seek allies who hold similar policy beliefs, as suggested by the ACF (Sabatier & Weible 2007:196). Most prominently, it was observed that policymakers were being affected

by interactions with OECD professionals – in that sense policymakers' beliefs can have changed as result of the interactions with OECD professionals and thereby enhancing the possibility of policy change.

By providing explanations on why policies change due to an interaction with epistemic communities, the ACF have provided a perspective that gives attention to both bottom-up and top-down approaches of policy implementation. For instance, with the detection of quality and intensity of relations influencing policy beliefs of policymakers in this thesis. By applying the ACF to epistemic community theory, it becomes possible to focus on theoretical perspectives that are more characterised within bottom-up perspectives – namely beliefs. Beliefs, as found in the epistemic community, thus become operationalized and capable of explaining policy implementation and thereof policy change happening to reasons that are both top-down and bottom-up. Especially by focusing on beliefs as a variable enforcing policy change. This is mainly what the ACF can add to the epistemic communities theory, that being an explanation of policies changing, when beliefs are changing and beliefs can change when policymakers interact with epistemic communities. Then the policy diffusion occurs, as suggested by the epistemic communities theory (Haas 1992:6).

This thesis can thus provide other explanations to the epistemic communities theory of reasons for policy diffusion other than just the expertise of epistemic communities, thus making other actors than only experts, professionals and top administrators relevant to the theory's explanation on the role of epistemic communities.

The findings of this thesis can be refined into practice with the observance of when relations of high quality and intensity between national policymakers and OECD professionals exist together with congruent policy beliefs, then implementation of policy recommendations is more likely to happen. Practically, such findings imply that national policymakers have sought the expertise and inspiration of the epistemic community within the OECD, and as the epistemic communities theory suggest – then policy diffusion will happen.

The epistemic communities theory states that policy diffusion happens when national policymakers consult these communities as a result of delusion over policy issues and policy ideas due to a more complex and global world (Haas 1992:3;13). Here the epistemic communities hold specified knowledge and information. The

findings of this thesis show such policy diffusion. Practically on the case of the Compulsory Educational Reform, national policymakers engaged and used the network of OECD experts and what knowledge and information that could be gained from this network. This implies that policymakers were in need of new resources in their network of school system stakeholders. The epistemic community within the OECD had such resources of knowledge and information on educational policies. The observations made, do thereby illustrate how policy diffusion occurs when certain organisations with epistemic communities therein produce knowledge and information to which there are a demand. Such policy diffusion can happen when there is sufficient intensity and quality of the relations between national policymakers. Then there is higher possibility of finding congruent beliefs to exist, which is needed for implementation to occur. My findings suggest that congruent beliefs can be the result of the intensity and quality of relations among national policymakers and the community members. However, I must argue that when implementation of policy recommendations occurs, the national policymakers do it deliberately – as my findings proved. With the case of the Compulsory Education Reform policymakers were deliberately searching for new policy ideas and inspiration, which increased their consultation and interactions with the OECD. In the matter of the Youth Employment Effort, where no implementation occurred, it can be said that policymakers were not searching for outsider input and inspiration. There were sufficient knowledge and information nationally to drive the policy development. Thereby there was no implementation of policy recommendations and thereof no policy diffusion. This means that implementation of policy recommendations will not always occur, even though there might be congruent beliefs between the policymakers and the professionals. The policy diffusion produced by international organisations can therefore more be considered the result of absent knowledge and information resources nationally, as well as a need for new inspiration in the national policymaking.

The practical implication to be drawn from this thesis is therefore the important part epistemic communities can play in national policymaking and especially the influence of intensity and quality of relations on national policymakers' beliefs. When policymakers then interact with expert and professionals of international organisations they receive a better understanding of the recommended

policies and thereby it can be argued that their policy beliefs are more likely to change. Practically, these findings therefore illustrate what can happen when national policymakers interact with an epistemic community, which is that beliefs of policymakers can be affected and that diffusion of policy ideas deriving from organisations gets diffused do such interactions.

To sum up, I will argue that the findings of this thesis on basis of the theoretical framework have provided insights on the importance of resources in policy networks, as suggested by the interdependence theory. This has provided the epistemic communities theory with explanations of the relations among policymakers and experts of international organisations. The Advocacy Coalition Framework has in regards to the findings of thesis provided insights on policy beliefs as component of policy change. By adding the contemplations of the ACF to the epistemic communities theory, it became possible to understand and outline a theory of congruence of beliefs among policymakers and experts of international organisations as one of the most important factors for implementation of policy recommendations.

7. Conclusion

The role of international organisations is today becoming more and more dispersed as policy areas are becoming more and more global. International organisations today provide more than just an arena for discussing global policy issues such as global warming and poverty. Today organisations are gaining positions where they can commend on national policy issues more thoroughly and states can use organisations in order to gain inspiration and knowledge on policy issues.

This thesis has sought to explain what factors that decide whether States implement non-binding policy recommendations made by international organisations. Theoretically, the research concerned policy networks and policy change. Two research hypotheses were outlined. First, it was hypothesized that the relations that national policymakers have with experts from international organisations can influence the implementation of policy recommendations. Second, it was hypothesized that this implementation can be induced by the congruence between national policymakers' beliefs and international experts' beliefs. In order to test these hypotheses, the research's perspective has been narrowed down to concern policy recommendations made by the OECD on two policy areas in Denmark, namely compulsory education and youth employment.

As a research topic, policy change is relevant to both peers and non-peers, since it concerns why policies change and where new policy ideas come from. Today, the contemplation of where policy ideas come from has become more difficult due to a more complex linkage of policy issues globally. International organisations, such as the OECD, have a part to play in this globalisation of policy issues. International organisations have big and powerful resources together with certain political interests and visions. This means that when international organisations start to produce knowledge and policies, they produce them within certain paradigmatic ideas. The social relevance therefore exists in the clarification of why policies change and what influence international organisations have on this policy change. This comes together with an increased fragmentation of States, where the lines between formal and informal policy actors have become more deluded. Governing today thus takes place on all levels. Be it local, regional, national or international. By adding that together

with the resources of policy knowledge that international organisations possess, then it becomes rather difficult for the common man to actually comprehend and see through these linkages. Clarifying and investigating the influence of international organisations on national policy change is therefore highly relevant and interesting, and the explanations of why States implement policy recommendations made by international organisations is one of the more interesting parts of this policy topic.

By delimiting the scope of the thesis to the influence of OECD policy recommendations on national policy change, policy change was sought explained through the epistemic communities theory. Two theoretical perspectives that were based on the structure of actors – the interdependence theory – and another one focusing on the beliefs of actors – the Advocacy Coalition Framework – have been added to the theoretical the epistemic community approach.

Two Danish reforms were compared (most similar systems design). One regarded compulsory education and the other related to employment efforts for the youth. In both cases, the OECD had made recent policy recommendations. These policy recommendations were traced to check whether or not they were implemented with the two Danish reforms.

In the case of the educational reform, it was found that implementation occurred. This was due to shared beliefs among policymakers and the OECD experts who carried out the review. Furthermore, it was detected that the quality and intensity of relations that national policymakers had with the OECD experts were decisive and might influenced policymakers' beliefs.

In the other case, no implementation of recommendations occurred. Here, it was found that the quality and intensity of relations were less proficient. Congruent beliefs were not found. The two cases were very similar in context (most similar system design). Hence, it could be concluded from the analysis that the implementation of recommendations made by international organizations depend on the intensity and quality of the relations between national policymakers and international experts as

well as the congruence of their policy beliefs. This is a validation of the two research hypotheses.

A detailed examination of the results suggested a revision of the theoretical framework. It was proposed that the quality and intensity of relations can affect policymakers' beliefs, and thereof implementation of policy recommendations might happen. The observations suggested that when the degree of relations is high, the congruent beliefs were also present. Whereas when the degree of relations was low, policy beliefs were observed to be rather incongruent, thereof no policy implementation occurred. Of course, further research should confirm that relations among international experts and national policymakers are well a factor and not a result of the congruence of their policy beliefs.

The findings of the thesis complete the explanatory power of the epistemic communities by adding theoretical components from the Interdependence theory and the Advocacy Coalition Framework. On the one hand, the relations among national policymakers and international experts may be considered from the point of view of resources. National policymakers will consult international experts only when they lack the information and knowledge to perform a policy reform at the national or local level. On the other hand, the compatibility between national policymakers' beliefs and international experts' beliefs may be viewed as a condition of policy recommendations made by international organizations to influence national reforms. This confirms the ACF contention that policymakers' beliefs are less a driver for change, when they evolve (policy learning) than a factor of stability, because they reduce the number of options that international experts may present to national policymakers to change policies.

Practically speaking, the thesis also shows that the consultation of international organizations' epistemic communities by national policymakers depends on the availability of policy evidence at the national level. When such evidence is available, the consultation is less spontaneous. The epistemic community approach proposes that policy diffusion happens when policymakers consult epistemic communities. This proposition must be considered valid with the empirical findings made in this

thesis. Nevertheless, the findings here do elaborate on reasons behind policy diffusion. The diffusion of policy ideas seems to depend on the quality and intensity of relations that national policymakers have with international organizations' experts. The thesis thus provides practical implications of why policy diffusion might take place. National policymakers open their scope and search for policy ideas internationally, which implicates that an information and knowledge institution such as the OECD can play a part in the national policy development and thereof influence national policy ideas because of their resources and relations with policymakers.

The limitations of the research mainly related to the generalizability of its findings. The research is based on a small-N case study design, and findings can thus be difficult to transfer. Future tests of the revised analytical framework that is provided would be able to determine if such assumptions are general. This is important because it will further validate the hypotheses and elaborate on the quality and intensity of relations and as well beliefs as factors that induce implementation of policy recommendations, which thereof produces policy change. Further validation and research on these hypotheses with inclusion of more countries and other organisations will enforce the explanatory power of the theoretical propositions. All this will provide better explanations and clarity of the linkages between national policymakers and professionals of international organisations, and thus provide us with a better contemplation of how certain policy ideas are produced and diffused, when other policy ideas are not. This helps us to understand the globalisation of policy issues and the role of international organisations therein.

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Appendices A

TABLE A1: The evaluation and assessment framework (OECD, 2011: (41-44)).	Implemented policies (UVM, 2013)	Traceability
Develop a strategic plan to complete the evaluation and assessment framework;	An overall implementation a yearly evaluation and quality assessment of all schools through a yearly quality-report on each school (pp.23;31). This is combined with national tests for all students to be done and assessed on both national, regional and local level.	A strong focus on operationalizing national tests on Forms 2., 4., 6., & 8., to determine the skill-level across the country. The results and progression of national tests will be compared with PISA-surveys.
Improve the integration of private schools in the evaluation and assessment framework.		Private schools are not mentioned in the agreement text.
Strengthen central support and clarify key purposes and objectives of evaluation and assessment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of a central expert-group that supports schools and municipalities with methods, tools and knowledge. - A resource centre for compulsory education, which assessed existing and new knowledge along with clarifying best practice methods. (p.21) 	OECD states the importance of developing evidence based teaching standards, which should be based on effective assessment of classroom practices (OECD, May 2011:42). The establishment of a research centre and an expert group should collect and assess the national test results and provide actors around the school with such knowledge.
Significantly invest in evaluation and assessment capacity development across compulsory education.	500 mi. DKK will be used from 2012-2015 on developing digital teaching tools, along with a digital portal for all actors involved in compulsory education (p.10f).	OECD commends that investments in evaluation and assessment tools be implemented so that stakeholders such as teachers, principals and municipalities better can obtain knowledge and assess student progression. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The investment in digitalising, not only teaching, but also a portal and database for teaching tools that should increase teacher capacities along with the principals and municipalities possibility of assessments.

TABLE A2: Student assessment (OECD, 2011:59-69).	Implemented policies (UVM, 2013)	Traceability
Collaborate with educators to develop performance standards for the Common Objectives	Three national common objectives have been clarified: 1) The school shall challenge every student, so that they become as skilful as possible. 2) The school shall diminish the affect of social background relative to learning achievements. 3) The trust and well being in schools should be strengthened inter alia through respect of professional knowledge and practice. (p.31).	In order to obtain these common objectives, specific national goals of results have been made. The OECD proposed a set of performance standards to be developed for the Common Objectives. This was implemented in the new reform with specific performance standards made for each of the common objectives along with an assessment of the current standards.
Conduct research on effective assessment practices in the classroom	The central resource centre will be in charge of conducting research on best-practice teaching methods. This information will be assessed with help from universities and applied sciences schools (pp.21f).	OECD emphasises the importance of guiding teachers knowing how to assess and use information. This should be based on a theoretical grounding (OECD, May 2011:63). The reform acknowledges the need for an increased effort on research and information on practices in schools.
Develop teacher assessment literacy and competencies	The establishment of a central resource centre, an expert groups of professional teachers, a digital teaching portal along with an increased inclusion of knowledge and information institutions such as universities and educators should support the development of a decentralised evaluation culture across schools and teachers. (p.21).	OECD focuses on establishing clear methods of assessing student learning for teachers. Teachers should see this purpose as integral to their job (OECD, May 2011:64). The reform will establish this through a network of different actors that support the development of more knowledge. Most central is the probably the expert group, who serve to inform and consult teachers on new assessment and teaching capabilities.
Ensure students are actively engaged with and proficient in assessment.	The already existing student-plan shall be further developed and simplified, so that it becomes a relevant tool in student assessment. It should secure a holistic assessment of each student and their capabilities.	OECD highlights examples from Sweden and Finland on their approach towards increasing learning capabilities. The Swedish example is the individual development plans (IDP) (OECD, May 2011:66). Which is similar to the already existing student-plan. Through involvement of the teacher, student and parents individual goals should be set and thereby encourage students to partake in their own learning.
Maximise the	The reform sets national	OECD states the discourse on

<p>pedagogical value of national tests</p>	<p>criteria for the skills expected in on the different levels throughout schools. The criteria describe when students read or calculate well. The criteria will be based so that they are equivalent to PISA categories (p. 23).</p>	<p>national tests have overshadowed their pedagogical value. By adding more national tests, and making them similar, the ministry expects that the diffusion over tests and exams will be decreased, and student thereby obtain better assessments.</p>
<p>Further validate and develop national tests</p>	<p>National tests will be technically reformed, so that teachers can utilize them as pedagogical tools in assessing student capabilities and progression. National tests will form basis for result management of schools and assessments for further initiatives. (p.23).</p>	<p>Validation is a long process, says the OECD, but the national tests in Denmark need to be refined with both short and long-term strategies (OECD, May 2011:67). The implementation in the reform is the reformation of national tests on all levels and they should be validated through clear, simple and measurable goals.</p>
<p>Review the purpose, procedures and content of the final examinations in Forms 9 and 10.</p>	<p>The final exams in Form 9 & 10 will be reformed so that they have more importance on following education. A clear goal is that all students graduate with at least the grade of 2 in Danish and Mathematics. An analysis will be made on how exams should be generated and conducted, so that it rightfully assesses the capabilities of student (p.14).</p>	<p>OECD suggested that considerations should be given the procedure of changing exam subjects, and that it should be ensured that student are able to sit all subjects. The reform contains a proposed assessment with the purpose of clarifying how to obtain a better and more effective examination system with more focused censorship.</p>

TABLE A3: Teacher Appraisal - (OECD, 2011:82-88).	Implemented Policies (UVM, 2013)	Traceability
Develop teaching standards to guide teacher professional development and appraisal	A goal of full competence coverage in teaching. Meaning that all teachers should have the right education in the subject, which they are teaching. 1 bi. DKK will be used in the next five years on strengthening the post-education of teachers and educators in public schools.	The OECD emphasise that the teachers' capabilities must reflect the Common Objectives set (OECD, May 2011:82). By assuring that all teachers have the necessary education and tools, the ministry seeks higher appraisal of teachers. Teachers that are better educated and have specialised knowledge on their subjects will secure that student receive lessons of higher professional and pedagogical quality.
Create a career structure with key stages.		No career structure is implemented in the reform. However, the increased attention and possibilities of post-education and retraining of teachers do provide some further career option.
Introduce a system of teacher certification to determine career progression.		No certification of career progression is done beyond education and re-education of teachers.
Introduce a mandatory probationary period for new teachers;		No mandatory probationary period for new teachers is mentioned in the reform.
Strengthen developmental teacher appraisal and hold school principals accountable for this.	A national program is established that will educate school principals and leaders in planning, lead and organise the schools. It will give the principals new ways to utilise their resources (p. 20). Leaders and principals will be better suited for goal management and in the use of evaluations, and furthermore in utilising re-education of teachers and educators strategically.	In the reform the increased appraisal of teachers will be done through re-education of teachers. However, the additional focus on re-educating and optimizing the skills of school leaders and principals should make them better able to plan, organise and appraise the teachers. Strengthening the teachers' appraisal will be done through this.
Ensure links between developmental appraisal, and appraisal for certification.		No implementation in this reform. The teacher appraisal and their education was part of an earlier reform only focusing on the education of teachers.
Reinforce linkages between teacher appraisal, professional	The above-mentioned investments in national programs for school principals and leaders' education and retraining.	OECD states that the recruitment, training, professional development and evaluation should have great

<p>development and school development.</p>	<p>The national program of educational training for school is to be carried out and programmed together with the municipalities. Leaders are should be better able to manage through goals and evaluations. (p.20).</p>	<p>importance. Especially the pedagogical value and assessment qualities of school leaders are important because of the decentralised system in Denmark. (OECD, May 2011:87f). The school reform clearly acknowledged the fact of school leaders' need for re-education to conform to new demands and goals of the school system.</p>
<p>Ensure appropriate articulation between school evaluation and teacher appraisal.</p>	<p>An increased focus on developing knowledge and transforming this knowledge into practices at schools. A cooperation between education institutions, researchers, teachers and administrators on producing more knowledge, which then should be included in the further development of the school system, as the new way forward. (p-20). Also a yearly self-evaluation report, which municipalities can target performance measures towards.</p>	<p>Again, the OECD focuses on increasing the role of teacher appraisal, so that school leaders and administrator can assess and evaluate the progress of students, and teachers as well. They suggest both self-evaluations at schools, together with more external validations of processes (OECD, May 2011:88). Both the internal and external validation processes have been implemented. Internally, the yearly assessment report on performance standards, and externally, by following up on such standards and goals for schools.</p>

TABLE A4: School Evaluation - OECD recommended policies. (OECD, 2011:99-107)	Implemented Policies (UVM, 2013)	Traceability
Define formal criteria of school quality	Standard performance goals have been defined as; 1) Minimum 80 % of students shall be good at reading and mathematics in the national tests. 2) The share of very finest students in Danish and mathematics shall increase year by year. 3) the share of student with bad results in national tests within reading and mathematics shall decrease year by year. 4) The well-being of students must be increased. These four operational performance standards shall be based on the national tests that are also implemented, which make school assessments better possible (p. 23).	One of the clear challenges OECD stated on Danish compulsory education was the lack of a clear definition on what makes a good school (OECD, May 2011:95). The Common Objectives are the general aims of the compulsory education. However, the implementation of performance goals measured through national tests and evaluations are clearly criteria for school quality that are measurable.
Radically improve the value of quality reports to school self-evaluation and improvement.	The quality reports shall now function as performance and result tools, and support a systematically evaluation of performances on schools by the municipalities (p.27). This quality report shall increasingly be used as a tool in establishing dialogue between the municipality and the schools leaders, and form supervision on the development of the school.	This implemented policy initiatives are clearly in line with the commended policies by the OECD. The reports are sought improved by giving them more focus and importance in the relation between school leaders and municipalities, and the way which municipalities monitor the schools.
Review the role of school leaders and select, train and retrain them for that role.	The aforementioned re-education of school leaders. The education now will focus on school leaders' capabilities to lead, plan and organise a school day. School leaders will therefore focus more on the pedagogical value and direction of the school, and that students improve as wished. (p.20).	OECD focuses on two aspects; a leadership that is focused on teaching and learning, where people are critically engaged in the future of the school. Secondly, school leaders should be focused on more instructional leadership and development of teacher (OECD, May 2011:103) The initiatives taken in the reform oblige these measure, where school in Denmark now get retraining and a more focus on the pedagogical aspects of the school.
Identify the change of leaders and replicate their practice	An establishment of a consultative group of 40 proficient teacher and school leaders, that should advice and help both municipalities and local school in increasing the capabilities and new methods of leadership (p.21).	Effective leadership examples should be found and made examples for other schools, says the OECD (May 2011:105). The implementation of this group should secure that school leaders across country get the

		necessary knowledge and exercise it in the right way.
Strengthen the follow-up on school evaluation results.	The yearly quality reports between schools and municipalities will be used as performance indicators for schools internally. The national tests will be collected in the new national resource centre along with a common database for all stakeholders.	OECD states that the evaluation culture will not spread until it is followed up both internally by schools and externally by municipalities (OECD, May 2011:105). Both of these perspectives have been strengthened, especially the external part by creating a resource centre in charge of collecting results from national tests. Here school leaders and municipalities can easily access information and knowledge on their own progress in relation to the rest of the country.
Promote and support capacity development in the external and internal evaluation of schools.	Full competence coverage of teachers in compulsory education. National program for school leaders and their re-education to the new standards expected of the compulsory education. (pp.19f). Increased promotion of knowledge and information results: expert group of teacher and a resource centre collecting and assessing data.	Similar to above. In addition, OECD suggests the Ministry of Education could draw competence profiles for stakeholders in compulsory education (OECD, May 2011:106). This has been done through the initiate plan of having full competence coverage, so that all teachers and school leaders are educated in the subject that they teach. Furthermore will the school leaders be better able to comprehend newer information and assess results derived from evaluations

TABLE A5: System Evaluation- OECD Recommended Policies	Implemented policies (UVM, 2013)	Traceability
Optimize the reporting and use of system-level data.	Implementation of national tests that are comparable to PISA standards will lead to national data comparable over years, which can increase evaluations on school, student and teacher performances.	OECD suggests that national tests should be able to monitor progress in more discrete areas across the country (OECD, May 2011:121). The implementation of national tests serves not only the purpose of internally evaluation. One of the Common Objectives is the compulsory education shall decrease the infliction of social backgrounds. With the national tests data can be collected accordingly across the country.
Consider ways to further complement the new national monitoring system.	Danish Centre of Learning Environment should work on indicators for students learning environment, well-being, peace and order in the classroom. Municipalities and schools can work systematically and determined on enhancing the students' wellbeing together with their literacy development. Best practices and good examples shall be collected and pioneer the development of methods and tools in raising the quality of the learning environment in schools. (p. 17).	OECD suggests that measures on teaching and learning quality should be developed (OECD, May 2011:123). With the reform, such recommendations have been followed up. OECD suggests a model focused more on evaluation and assessment collection of data. The Danish Centre of Learning Environment is to collect the data, and develop indicators that are clear and mandatory, so that schools and municipalities can work with in their self-evaluation of the learning environment at their schools.
Further validate and clarify the monitoring role of national tests.	National tests' results are measured on national level, municipality level, school level, class and individually for each student. This is placed centrally so that all levels' progression can be seen in terms of students' proficiency and literacy improvements. Tests will also be used as a pedagogical tool for teachers that now will compare test results with the national criteria based on PISA categorisations. Teachers can thereby measure the progression of students in relation to what is expected of the student. (p.23).	OECD suggested that the Ministry of Education should make the results of national tests externally available for all key stakeholders in compulsory education. Before these results was kept internally for management and improvement purposes (OECD, May 2011:124). The reform contains the widened usage of national test results to now relate to all key stakeholders. They can now access the data and the national performance standards set by the ministry will be used as performance management towards schools, so that results will be followed up in order to decide whether increased actions are needed.

<p>Strengthen efforts to both monitor and promote municipal evaluation capacity (pp. 121-128).</p>	<p>The municipalities shall conduct the new quality report. The quality report will form the basis for dialogue between the municipal council, the municipal administration, and further between the municipal administration and each school principal. Furthermore, the report will be used between school principals and teachers. In all instances and relation, the quality report is the tool of the municipality in monitoring schools and the school principals' job. The principals can use the reports for self-evaluation and school progression.</p>	<p>Through the increased importance of this quality report, municipalities will gain a similar tool to monitor each of the schools within the municipality, and the evaluation capacity is sought increased. The OECD recommends this. The municipality level should have better capabilities of monitoring the schools, and the school principals' work. Through a better and more classified report, this is attempted solved in the new compulsory education reform.</p>
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Appendices B

<p>TABLE B1: OECD - Jobs For Youth, Denmark 2010 General challenge: Ensuring that everyone leaving education is capable of gaining the skills needed on the labour market</p>	<p>Danish Ministry of Employment - Youth Employment Effort, 2012 (BM, 2012)</p>	<p>Traceability</p>
<p>Policy Recommendation: In primary and lower-secondary education, enhance the National Test Reform and make sure schools are more accountable.</p>		<p>Not targeted in the Youth Employment Effort. However, this recommendation have been implemented and envisioned in the compulsory education reform.</p>
<p>Policy Recommendation: Tackle the high drop-out rate in VET programmes.</p>	<p>Bridging education initiatives, so that young people enrolling in VET programmes actively get a good start and a positive affiliation with the programme. 71 mi. DKK is used on enhancing the bridging initiatives. The initiative is targeted for young people on benefits without competency education. VET-programme schools and institutions employ internship consultants with the general task of helping and assisting students in acquiring an internship. Furthermore, they facilitate the above incorporation of new students. 16 mi. DKK is devoted for internship consultants.</p>	
<p>Policy Recommendation: Invest in a fully-fledged activation strategy aimed at reducing the overall time to graduation.</p>		<p>Not part of the Youth Employment Effort. It is however targeted by the Ministry of Higher Education and Science with new rules and demands for young peoples' education after their secondary education.</p>

<p>TABLE B2: OECD - Jobs For Youth, Denmark 2010 General challenge: Removing remaining demand-side barriers to promote better jobs for more youth.</p>	<p>Danish Ministry of Employment - Youth Employment Effort, 2012 (BM, 2012)</p>	<p>Traceability</p>
<p>Policy Recommendation: In a period of faltering labour demand, social partners should explore ways of temporary reducing the cost of employing low-skilled youth.</p>	<p>1) Profession Pilot Scheme (Fagpilotordning): Scheme addressing young, newly educated people with vocational training. Small and medium enterprises can get grants for 6 to 12 months for employing craftsmen under the age of 30. The objective is that newly educated people shall test and try out new knowledge in form of materials or technology.</p> <p>2) Enhanced Knowledge Pilot Scheme (Videnpilotordning). In general the same principles as above. However, this is targeted on young people with an academic background. The current scheme is broadened, so that enterprises now can hire two 'knowledge pilots' for a period up to three years.</p>	
<p>Policy Recommendation: Alternatively, the same effect on the youth labour demand could be achieved by more generous hiring subsidies in the private sector for disadvantaged youth.</p>	<p>272 mi. DKK are devoted to job rotation schemes, so that 2100 unemployed can get access to the labour market The schemes are furthermore expanded to also covering people with higher academic education in a two-year experimental period.</p>	

<p>TABLE B3: OECD - Jobs For Youth, Denmark 2010 General challenge: Strengthening activation to better help all disadvantaged youth.</p>	<p>Danish Ministry of Employment - Youth Employment Effort, 2012 (BM, 2012)</p>	
<p>Policy Recommendation: Extent stronger financial incentives in moving out of welfare benefits to low-educated youth aged 25-29.</p>		
<p>Policy Recommendation: Make sure that the skill-upgrading services offered are tailored to the profiles of jobless youth and in particular to school drop-outs resuming education.</p>		
<p>Policy Recommendation: Develop a residential option as part of the arsenal of measures aimed at helping very disadvantaged youth.</p>		

Appendices: Interview guide – General overview

This thesis has the purpose of investigating and clarifying what factors that are deciding in whether policy recommendations from the OECD are implemented on national level. An implementation can be defined in various ways and have many aspects. I therefore apply a broad understanding of implementation; an implementation is in this context a transformation of policies from either OECD analyses or reports that are turned into a policy output on national level.

Through the use of hypotheses, I assume values and norms are common between national policy makers and the OECD as an institution induces more implementation of recommendations. Furthermore, I test whether interaction between policy makers and the OECD also leads to implementations. If there on certain policy areas does not show clear indications of implementation or transfer of policy from the OECD to Danish policy, information and knowledge of why this is not occurring will still be highly valuable for execution of this thesis, since it can lead to explanations of why policy makers are not looking towards the OECD and the knowledge within this institution.

The analysis will be executed as a case study in which OECD research and policy recommendations within the area of employment and education will be comparatively analysed and traced in two recent Danish reforms, respectively 'Ungepakken' from the Ministry of Employment and 'Folkeskolereformen' from the Ministry of Education. What is relevant and interesting in this matter is the relationship between national policy makers and an international knowledge based organisation such as the OECD, and furthermore what such an institution adds to national policy making. Through interviews, reports and government documents I seek to clarify the principles, values and norms that are inherent for policy making in Denmark, and thereby being able to understand the relation to the OECD.

Questionnaire

The problems which the reforms are supposed to solve, how was they identified?

- How did they come unto the political agenda?
- And how was the reforms thereby initiated?

How were the policies within the reforms developed?

- Which solutions were especially put emphasise on in the policy process?
And which ones were excluded?
- Did the policy development take a specific route in matters of the instruments that were being applied in the policies?

How would characterise the way in which the Ministry is working with policy development?

- What principles are characteristic for the way which the Ministry are undertaking the development of policies?
- Are there any common values which policies should be undertaken on?
- Are there any boundaries to which policies cannot be undertaken and further developed, other than financial restrains?
- Do you include outside actors in the policy development? And which have you included in this reform?
- Which actors then had most influence on how the final policy output?

How would describe the workflow in the ministry on the reform?

- What was most important in achieving the best policy output?
- What was the biggest hurdle(s) during the policy process? Both politically and administrative?
- What values would you say the reform is based on?

What is your opinion on the OECD?

- Do you think that the ministry should be more or less engaged with the OECD?
- Do believe that what the OECD does is relevant for Denmark and the development of policies in Denmark?
- How can Denmark contribute to the OECD, in your opinion?

What kind of contact does the ministry have with the OECD?

- How is the interaction between the ministry and the OECD arranged?
- Has there been clear inspiration from the OECD in the development of this reform?
- If yes, how?
- If no, why not?

Thank you for your time and participation.

