

LIFELONG LEARNING AND CHANGES OF THE UNIVERSITY

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Summary In the article the author analyses how lifelong learning as a new idea in education policy is related to institutional changes in higher education. The primary emphasis in the study is on the role of ideas, interests and intuitions in changing education policy. Institutional change and new ideas in higher education policy are explained through the implementation of the lifelong learning concept in Olsen's four models of the university. The article describes lifelong learning as a new policy idea which brings fundamental change from *education* to *learning*, and bridges the distinctive positions of academic and vocational tertiary education. The article suggests that actors from the political and economic environments determine changes to the university. In this context the influence of lifelong learning on the understanding, prescription and implementation of institutional changes in education policies is analyzed and political justifications of these changes are addressed. The author analyses changes in governance, curriculum and funding influenced by the lifelong learning concept. The article describes changes in the university curriculum and funding as a result of non-traditional students' entrance. The justifications for the autonomy of university governance are stressed as well as access, recognition, modularisation and vocationalisation of the curriculum. A qualification framework is identified as a part of curriculum reform, but also as a policy instrument for national and European political and economic goals.

Keywords university, lifelong learning, ideas, institutions, Bologna process

1. Ideas and Institutions in Policy Change

This paper explores the relationship between changes in educational policy and the spreading of the lifelong learning concept. Lifelong learning (LLL) as a new idea in education policy has an impact on worldwide changes in higher edu-

cation (HE). At the same time, HE policy in Europe is determined by EU and national politics, path dependence and interests of stakeholders inside and outside of HE. The whole process will be analysed within the European context and with particular reference to the Bologna process. Policy changes in relation to HE

will be analysed, and universities as the most important HE institutions will be the points of assessing the character of these policies. Therefore, the following question will be discussed: how do new ideas change higher education policy? In this paper the relationship between ideas and institutions in educational policies and changes of HE institutions will be analysed on the national and international levels.

LLL policy has been analysed as a policy process (Birkland, 2011: 26) which includes the emergence of this issue, setting of LLL on the agenda, alternative selection, enactment, decision making, and implementation and evaluation of these decisions. At the same time, the intention was to avoid limitations of the policy stages framework where policy would be understood only as a linear process of hierarchical decision making and top-down implementation. This is especially important because of a European dimension of the process of changing HE policies. Changes occur within the EU which officially doesn't have a single educational policy, but in the course of the last decade, through the open method of coordination, its programme, organizational and financial foundations are being created (Žiljak, 2008). Because of that, the process of changes has been situated within the context of Europeanization, which has been analysed as context and not as cause of changes.

Instead of the classical stages heuristic framework, Hill and Hupe's policy formation approach has been applied, where interaction between the stages is recognized (Hill and Hupe, 2006: 558). They have analysed different layers and levels. In this case, that would be the European, national and region-

al layers, which they define as the formal, legitimate political-administrative institutions, including representative organs, with a certain territorial competence (*ibid.*: 563). Their framework is applicable because they analyse constitutive, directive and operational levels of governance that refer to structure, content and process of activities (*ibid.*: 561). This makes it possible to focus on different dimensions of influences and changes. In this analysis, the focus is on two layers (European and national) and multiple levels. The level where "fundamental decisions about the content of policy and about the organisational arrangements for its delivery" (*ibid.*: 560) has been analysed. This is followed by an analysis of formulation and decision making about desired outcomes, and "... the actual managing of the realisation process" (*ibid.*: 561).

New institutionalism in education policy has emphasized the spreading of ideas from international organizations, and has underlined how and when changes have happened, it has analysed different meanings and understandings of key education instruments, and policy impacts on key institutional dimensions (Jakobi and Rusconi, 2009; Corbett, 2011; Olsen, 2007). What is the meaning of idea in public policy? For Béland, ideas are causal beliefs. As beliefs, ideas are products of cognition; they posit connections between things and between people in the world and provide guidelines for action (Béland and Cox, 2011: 3, 4). Béland specifies certain types of ideas which are commonly analysed: policy prescriptions, norms, principled beliefs, cause-effect beliefs, ideologies, shared belief systems, and broad world-views, from specific, concrete, programmatic ideas to broader, more general

ideas (*ibid.*: 6). In policy change, ideas might be reactive to changing circumstances, but on the other hand they are a proactive effort developing new approaches (*ibid.*: 11). In this analysis of LLL in HE, Béland's explanation of idea in public policy will be used.

Peter Hall stresses the interconnection between ideas (social learning) and interests (politics as struggle for power) in the policy process. To produce changes, ideas have to fit with economic circumstances and be to the advantage of dominant political actors and their interests and administrative viability (Hall, 1993: 292).

Hecló underlines the interactive force of ideas and institutions which "... acquire their importance not by virtue of anything intrinsic, but rather from their utility in helping actors achieve desired ends under prevailing constraints" (Hecló, 1994: 381). He describes co-dependency among ideas, institutions and interests in policy change, in which ideas prompt the actors' action to change. In this regard, Lorraine McDonnell's research based on Hecló's finding is useful in education policy analysis. McDonnell's analytical framework also claims that in educational policy, interests and ideas should be analysed as important elements of the development, stability and change of education policy (McDonnell, 2009: 57). It would be important to explain under which conditions some policies are kept stable, and why some others change, how some questions enter the area of interest of key actors, and why those changes occur? Ideas are important for setting key objectives of national education policy, but those objectives vary from one state to another and change with time (*ibid.*: 62).

2. Olsen's Four Models of the University

Various actors define the university's mission in various ways and they have various visions of the university's development. This is why in this article, for the purpose of explaining institutional change and new ideas in HE policy, a variety of university models is taken into account.

The starting point will be Olsen's four visions or models of the university (Olsen, 2007: 26). The first is the university as a rule-governed community of scholars, the second is the university as a representative democracy, the third is the university as an instrument for national political agendas, and the fourth is the university as a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets (*ibid.*). Olsen has analysed the university as an organisational instrument for the achievement of objectives and interests.

An Institution, according to Olsen, has constitutive rules and practices, structures of meaning embedded in identities, and structures of resources which create capabilities for acting. He describes the relationship between an institutional perspective and an instrumental perspective as follows:

The degree and form of institutionalization impact both motivation and capacity to follow institutionalized rules and codes of behaviour. In contrast to an instrumental perspective, an institutional perspective assumes that constitutive rules and practices have a value in themselves and that their immediate substantive effects can be uncertain or imprecise. (*ibid.*: 27)

The key question is: whose instrument is the university, that of nation-

al states, consumers, entrepreneurs, or scientists and various groups within the university? Within those four models, Olsen has analysed interests (whose instruments are the universities) and institutions. In the first two models, the dynamics are based on internal factors of the university, i.e. they are instruments of internal actors.

The first is the university as a “republic of science” whose dynamics are governed by internal factors, and in which actors have common norms and objectives. Identity is based on free inquiry, truth finding, rationality and expertise (*ibid.*: 30). In the second model, the university as a “Representative democracy”, the dynamics of the university are again governed by internal factors, but actors have conflicting norms and objectives. Interests are articulated through democratic discussion within the university (*ibid.*). This model is closest to the ideas of the 1960s student movement.

In the remaining two models, the university is determined by interests and demands that come from the outside. In the first of the two models, the university is an instrument for national political agendas. Autonomy is limited because the dynamics of the university are governed by environmental factors. The constitutive logic is administrative, related to implementing predetermined political objectives (*ibid.*), and the efficiency of the university is assessed on the basis of effective and efficient achievement of national purposes. In this case, the Government sets the basic objectives of development, and the university needs to be an instrument of implementation (e.g., solving problems regarding defence, industrial and technological development, health, or education).

In the second model where the environment determines the key vision of the university, the latter is a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets. The university is part of a system of market exchange and price systems, and it is successful if it meets market demands: if it is economic, efficient, flexible and capable of survival. Autonomy is based on responsiveness to stakeholders and external exigencies, and the ability to survive. Olsen’s last model could be analysed, in other words, as “... a corporatization of the university”, meaning both that the university has to operate with more of a market logic and that it has become more corporate in its own structure and procedures. Administration has become more bureaucratized and also more professionalized; the control and the autonomy of the faculty are reduced or threatened; teaching becomes more and more undertaken by non-permanent and non-tenured hired staff; and the contributions to the university that are most valued are those that contribute most to its economic stability. Corporatisation means external influences of corporate sponsors on curriculum and research (McHenry, 2007) and internal changes in process, decision criteria, expectations, and organizational culture operating processes that are taken from business corporations (Steck, 2003: 74). Universities have been changed from a loosely coupled actor characterized by an internal fragmentation to a complete, effective and efficient organisation (Enders, De Boer, Leisyte, 2008: 118).

Olsen has warned that none of these models excludes the others, nor is any one of them comprehensive. The models can exist in sequence or can be the object of competition and bargaining

between different policy actors. In his institutional analysis, Olsen has paid special attention to the relationship between the internal dynamics of the institutions and their environments. The environment can eliminate institutions which are no longer optimal, that is, those that do not adapt to the environment. The environment is becoming more complex and sets more demands, and universities do not have complete control over the course, speed and content of their development.

But the university is not helpless; it can also influence changes and respond to the environment.

Change, then, is affected by how strong the University is as an institution. Does the University have an integrating self-understanding and shared sense of purpose, an organization and resources that make it motivated and able to impact the multitude of processes potentially affecting its future. (Olsen, 2007: 46)

Therefore Olsen has noticed that universities themselves have difficulties regarding the definition of their internal strength and internal coherence (*ibid.*: 47). Internal tensions and conflicts are necessary and useful, but at the same time they weaken the internal logic in relation to external interests and influences. The question is, of course, how to balance the internal and external initiators of changes?

There is a potential risk in using Olsen's model for the analysis of changes to HE policies if all the empirical complexity of individual national policies and their connection to other national policies and the EU Lisbon process in general is not taken into account (Gornitzka *et al.*, 2007: 182). This complexity can be understood only within the

process of Europeanization of education policies, but Olsen himself is aware of that: he was one of the first to write about the five faces of Europeanization (Olsen, 2002). Three of the five faces are important in this analysis: Europeanization as the development of institutions of governance at the European level, Europeanization as central penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance, and Europeanization as a political project aiming at a unified and politically stronger Europe (*ibid.*). Because of different concepts and meanings of Europeanization, and because of intricate ways of interaction among global, European, national and sub-national processes, the key question for Olsen is *how* Europeanization takes place, and not *why* (*ibid.*).

So, in addition to examining the ongoing institutional changes in the role of the university, it is important to define LLL and to look into regional processes such as Europeanization, as well as the relationship among institutions, interests, and ideas.

3. Lifelong Learning Policy Formation

3.1. Formation and Emergence of the Idea

If we want to understand how meanings have changed in public policy, then we should start by looking at how those meanings were originally formed in public policy. It is important to show how a new policy idea is created and how it affects the fundamental formation of the model. Does the LLL idea already contain something that affects models in which it is implemented?

It is important to note that LLL emerged as a normative concept through the work of authors who are experts

from international organizations (Tuijnman, 2002: 12). This can be explained by looking at the process of development of the idea of LLL within a wider international context that includes UNESCO and OECD.

It can be said that the LLL idea emerged within a specific epistemic community (Haas, 1992: 3) of international experts and leading persons in international organizations. It is a network of educational experts, mostly specialised in adult education with authoritative claim to knowledge within that domain of international trends in education, education policies, and correlation between social changes and educational needs. An initial concept was developed in the UNESCO Institute for Education (Tuijnman and Bostrom, 2002: 95), which changed its name to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in 2006. Further expansion took place, above all, within UNESCO and OECD. Transfer to national educational policies has resulted in various domestications, adaptations and exchanges (Green, 2002), and this expansion was a consequence of social and political pressures for its implementation. Above all, there were economic pressures, i.e. the need for competitiveness and pressure of entrepreneurs on the national creators of educational policy. The other form of pressure came through international organizations where the implementation of this educational initiative began (Jarvis, 2008: 35). Although this form of pressure is not a direct one, it is combined with the symbolic and persuasive power of these organizations, which enables them to exert a great influence on national, local and regional policies.

Differences regarding the discourse with strong institutional consequences

for the implementation of the LLL idea have led to differences regarding the implementation of identical global objectives. For example, it was impossible to implement LLL in the same way in Nordic countries (with almost one hundred per cent literacy rate and the majority of the adult population participating in additional education) and in developing countries, where the majority of the population is illiterate or without basic education. For those implementing educational practice under the influence of Paulo Freire, an expansion of education throughout one's lifetime is seen as having strong potential for the liberation of oppressed individuals and groups (*ibid.*: 163). For developed countries, this is an economic solution in circumstances characterized by new technology and global interconnectedness; for countries in transition, this is a way to move away from a socialist heritage and catch up with developed countries, in a process which is understood as modernisation. It could also be possible to show differences in emphasis in different social groups: for entrepreneurs this is a managerial approach, for disabled persons this is an inclusive approach. Therefore, this concept does not have a unique meaning; instead global objectives have been formed on national levels and within competitive or complementary discourses (Prokou, 2008: 124). Hans G. Schuetze and Catherine Casey have listed four policy models which include the term lifelong learning:

- An emancipatory or social justice model which pushes the notion of equality of opportunity and life chances through education in a democratic society ('LLL for ALL');
- A cultural model where LLL is a process of each individual's life itself,

- aiming at the fulfilment of life and self-realisation ('LLL for self-fulfilment');
- An 'open society' model in which LLL is seen as an adequate learning system for developed, multicultural and democratic countries ('LLL for all who want, and are able, to participate');
- A human capital model where LLL connotes continuous work related to training and skill development to meet the needs of the economy and employers for a qualified, flexible and adaptable workforce ('LLL for employment'). (Schuetze and Casey, 2006: 282-283)

LLL started from an emancipatory approach in the 1970s, understanding education aims as creating self-awareness and changing the learner from an object to a subject (Faure *et al.*, 1972). In the contemporary world, with demographic transformations, new technologies and internationalisation, this approach has been transformed to a dominant human capital model (Liessmann, 2006: 133), mostly developed by the OECD, but accepted worldwide.

Schuetze concludes that LLL "has changed its meaning from a somewhat idealistic and elusive social justice reform model to a more utilitarian, human capital based model a generation later" (Schuetze, 2006: 303). Amartya Sen questions the human capital based model because it reduces a person only to his/her producing function and hampers his/her free development. He says that "Human capital tends to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting production possibilities" (Sen, 1999: 293), which he contrasts with the capabilities approach that is based on "ability – substantive freedom

– of people to lead the lives they have reason to value to enhance the real choices they have" (*ibid.*). He concludes that, in these two examples, the focus on different human capabilities is visible, but focuses on different achievements. Sen's concept would then be close to Olsen's first model, where he defines the primary role of the university to be "... shaping individuals with character and integrity and ... developing and transmitting a culture distinguished by humanistic Bildung, rationality and 'disenchantment of the world', enlightenment and emancipation" (Olsen, 2007: 29).

Universities whose primary objective is the development of human capital are closer to Olsen's models in which the university is determined by interests and demands that come from the outside (as an instrument of political agendas and enterprises service), and in which it is most important for every person and institution to be flexible and capable of survival. The efficiency of the university is assessed on the basis of effective and efficient achievement of national and European purposes, and the purposes are mostly economic.

3.2. Policy Talk and Setting Up

The foundations of the contemporary European LLL policy go back to the 1970s. The criticism of many theoreticians regarding school systems and affirmation of out-of-school forms of learning were then accompanied by proposals to expand learning throughout the life course. Demands were made to remove walls between school and work, between school and other parts of human life. Learning and education throughout lifetime was accepted as an understandable consequence of the learning- or knowledge-based society. The starting point

was an assessment that society, because of its social, economic and technological characteristics, demands constant acquisition of new knowledge and skills throughout lifetime.

What began in Europe in the 1970s as recurrent education, continuing education or permanent education, life-long education – was finally shaped at the end of the 1990s as LLL discourse in a knowledge-based society. We may conclude that what happened was the creation of a narrative grounding the persuasive power of international organizations and epistemic communities that promoted LLL (Nicoll, 2006; Žiljak, 2008). Through promotion of the idea, they wanted to domesticate it into national educational policies.

A starting point is that HE has been discussed within educational policy, and the LLL concept emphasizes a view of HE's educational activities as an integral part of a comprehensive field of LLL, including all levels of education and all educational sectors. As a principle of key importance for current common European educational projects, the concept of LLL has been spreading through national educational policies. This is not a one-way process, it does not relate only to state and interstate actors, nor is it limited to only one level of implementation. LLL is becoming a dominant educational concept on the national, European and global levels.

Understandings of LLL in Europe are determined by European and national levels of work on educational policies. An analysis of European Union documents since the mid-1990s (when the term LLL was clearly defined) shows how this approach to education has been understood and the objectives defined for its use within the EU by a process

of Europeanization of education policies. That kind of starting point would perhaps suggest that Europeanization is perceived only as a top-down process (transfer of ideas and solutions from the European Union into national educational policy). It is clear that working on this segment of public policies is much more complex than a one-way influence from top to bottom, but it is necessary to start with the object of the research and to analyse the understanding of key terms on one (European) level in order to become aware of changes, mutual influences and understandings on the second (national) level. In the process of Europeanization, it is not a one-way top-down process shaped by decisions of national educational authorities which have an influence on the implementation of educational policies and whose initiatives change common visions and implementation.

Since working on policy is not only a matter of states and their integrations, documents and public statements of other actors who take part in their creation and implementation are important in order to analyse educational policy and common European educational initiatives. A number of non-governmental organizations and European associations are influential, and their analysis has a significant impact on the definition and implementation of educational objectives. That is very clear in the case of adult education policies where the analyses and opinions of the European Association for the Education of Adults are very influential, or in the case of the Conclusions of the European University Association regarding the implementation of the Bologna process. Also, organizations of economic chambers or international unions' associations have

an influence on the formation of these policies. Students' protests also should not be disregarded.

The creation of European documents is greatly influenced by reports and analysis of international organizations (Reischmann, 2005: 138, 139), which are often made by experts who work on European educational policies (Tuijnman, 2002). The process of defining LLL within the EU is a continuation of previous discussions about LLL started by the European representatives in UNESCO, and of European discussions about permanent education.

Changes to European educational policies towards LLL in the 1990s have included connecting general education policies and vocational education policies. The two separate policies were merged only after LLL appeared, and the inclusion of general education in EU documents was a positive result of the process.¹

¹ European policy has been integrated on the level of vocational training from its beginnings, and only after the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 was education explicitly included in the harmonization of policies. Regarding vocational education and training, the cooperation of European countries began in 1951, and was formalized by Article 56 of the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, in which countries from the community have obliged themselves to provide financial assistance for the retraining of workers. In the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, the European Community included the development of training programmes and centres for the employed and the foundation of the European University (which was not accomplished). In the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, only vocational education was mentioned (for example, in Article

The convergence of vocational and academic tertiary education has increased through this process. LLL is the umbrella concept which has covered both sides – general education and vocational training (Maclean, Wilson, 2009). In the context of European economic needs and political goals, the university has become more vocationalised, and vocational higher education programs less distinctive from universities. Dunkel has analyzed this process of convergence of HE structures in three ways:

1. a greater similarity in the formal structure of university and *Fachhochschule* (HE vocational school) degrees is emerging;
2. a greater overlapping of the functions of the two types of higher education institution can be observed;
3. an increase in the vertical differentiation with regard to quality and reputation is to be expected. (Dunkel, 2009: 190)

HE and vocational education and training must react to global pressures and European standardization, and the result is the hybridization of these sec-

41), which gains importance within the context of free movement of labour (Article 48). Article 118 envisages ensuring provision of availability of vocational education, and Article 128 stresses the need for a common policy regarding vocational education on the common European market. The treaty of Maastricht in 1992 had for the first time, in Article 149, explicitly mentioned general education, beside training (Article 150), which had until then absolutely dominated European educational documents. Measures for supporting the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation, while respecting the responsibility of the Member States, are listed (The Treaty on European Union, 1992).

tors (Powell and Solga, 2010: 718). It is a process of bridging a gap between universities and vocational institutions of tertiary education. For external needs in tertiary education, less important are the learning paths or type of institution, and key issues are learning outcomes under a single LLL umbrella.

3.3. Fundamental EU Decisions about LLL

Fundamental decisions were made only with the strengthening of the LLL concept in the 1990s, so that connecting education and training could begin. New LLL policy in Europe was announced in two European white papers. They had influence on which visions of university became dominant, i.e. which was closest to the dominant discourse of educational policies.

For this purpose, the first significant document was the 1993 European Commission's White Paper on growth, competitiveness, and employment (Commission of the European Communities, 1993). This document was a result of a personal initiative of Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission from 1984 to 1994. His efforts were aimed at finding an answer to economic and political challenges, while at the same time strengthening the European unity and community. The second was the 1995 European Commission's White Paper "Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society" (Commission of the European Communities, 1995), which identified the dominant influences on changes to educational policies. This is a document that does not separate education from training, subsuming everything under the term learning, which is described as lasting the entire life (Pepin, 2007: 126). Ac-

ording to this document, key changes have occurred because of the impact of the information society, internationalisation, and scientific and technological knowledge (Commission of the European Communities, 1995).

Aspin and Chapman (2007: 34) have shown that, despite this document's similarities with previous documents made by UNESCO (Faure *et al.*, 1972), there are significant differences between them reflecting the European LLL discourse that was conceived in this document. UNESCO's starting point came from humanistic principles and an Enlightenment-like understanding of education, with global aspirations, references to solidarity and a belief that science and technology, together with democracy and education, can contribute to global development (Wain, 2007: 46). The White Paper, as a European response, places emphasis on self-directed learning and a learning society, as an optimal framework for LLL, where economic development is the main objective of learning. The European process has been initiated by problems of employment and economy, with efforts to be pragmatic and to leave discussions regarding principles of education behind in order to act quickly and efficiently (*ibid.*). Both white papers were of key importance for the further development of the LLL concept and educational changes in Europe (Pepin, 2007: 126; Jarvis: 2008: 45). The development of European changes was happening at the same time as the development of LLL within UNESCO, which is understandable, because the making of UNESCO's document "Learning: the Treasure Within" was led by Delors (hence it is often called the Delors Report). These documents clearly stressed the discourse of a knowledge-based so-

ciety in relation to LLL, which has become the dominant discourse in European educational policies.

The Lisbon Council conclusions from 2000 set the main current tasks for European educational systems as: better (lifelong) participation in education, increased investment in human resources and especially in education, promotion of new basic skills with the use of new technology, and the increase of transparency of qualifications. The connection of the knowledge society with LLL is a dominant theme, and this is translated into the key discourse of educational policies (Lisbon Council, 2000: 10). With the Lisbon process, LLL has become an important part of European economic and political objectives and has moved from the phase of discussion or policy talk, as Tyack and Cuban (1996) would call it, to the phase of decision making. Thus, the next phase of policy activity has begun, namely making documents, regulations or other decisions in which the role of lifelong education is clearly embedded in common European policies. Within the Lisbon process, a third level of change has been realized, where reform is translated into practice, with continuous discussion and question-raising.

The European Commission has given a key incentive for the affirmation of the LLL principle through the 2000 Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (Commission of the European Communities, 2000). The Memorandum clearly states that different forms of learning are equally valuable, and stresses employability and active citizenship as results that should be achieved through the implementation of LLL policy. Also, the Memorandum defines individual, social and economic objectives of learning and

clearly stresses the potential of informal learning, seeing it as important to “guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society” (*ibid.*: 4). The objectives of the knowledge-based society and knowledge-based economy are clearly intertwined in the document. Jarvis establishes a clear link between the political and economic goals in this document, and explains the Memorandum through the desire for a united Europe and a qualified labour force necessary for economic development (Jarvis, 2008: 46).

For Mark Olssen, the Memorandum promotes LLL as a “neoliberal art of governing” where the basic focus is on the individual and an embedded technology of control. Individual responsibility for education and the waiving of the new welfare state’s responsibility are highlighted (Olssen, 2006: 221). This governing mode, which Olssen labels as neoliberal, emphasizes individual responsibility connected with new modes of accountability (managerial control, planning and reporting, with teachers who are workers and not professionals). And this explanation shows exactly the process of European education shifting towards education as an instrument for (Lisbon) political agendas, a service for competitive markets, and as a process of creating economic, efficient, flexible and capable workers and citizens.

Through this process of agenda setting and decision making in which LLL became a key part of the European education issue, all parts of education systems are driven by external economic and political needs and constraints which determine their visions. This idea of LLL should help actors to achieve the

desired political and economic ends under prevailing constraints. What are the consequences of this process in terms of institutional changes to the university?

3.4. *What is New in LLL?*

Before moving on to the description of how the LLL idea is embedded in certain domains of HE policies, it is necessary to determine what is new in this idea and then check whether we can find influences of this new idea in HE policies.

A key question is: is the LLL concept a new idea in HE policy, and how does this idea affect institutional changes? For which of the four university models is the idea of LLL the most appropriate or can help actors achieve the desired goals? The paper examines key understandings of LLL as an important part of the *knowledge society*, in which knowledge is a key resource for development, with an individual acquiring knowledge throughout his or her life, and taking responsibility for his/her personal development, competitiveness in the labour market, and active civic engagement (Žiljak, 2008).

A difficulty lies in the fact that there are ambiguous definitions of LLL and different meanings of knowledge-based society (*ibid.*: 26). It is possible, however, to find common elements which characterize LLL within different educational policies, and this makes it possible to analyse the differences and influences in the shaping and understanding of the concept.

The following elements show the specific characteristics of LLL:

- A fundamental change from *lifelong education* to *lifelong learning*. LLL is defined as a purposeful learning activity through three possible learning

paths. "Formal learning takes place in education and training institutions, leading to recognised diplomas and qualifications. Non-formal learning takes place alongside the mainstream systems of education and training and does not typically lead to formalised certificates. Informal learning is a natural accompaniment to everyday life... informal learning is not necessarily intentional learning, and so may well not be recognised even by individuals themselves as contributing to their knowledge and skills" (Commission of the European Communities, 2000: 8). Informal learning is seen as a key addition to non-formal and formal education (Hager and Halliday, 2006: 27). This means not only self-directed education, but also an individual who learns in different circumstances.

- A prolongation of the period of learning as a result of demands for new knowledge and skills. Those skill and knowledge sets change during a lifetime, and therefore it is necessary to learn through the entire life (Field, 2006: 49; Evans, 2003: 282). This makes a key distinction in relation to school or university regular education.
- Implementation of the principle of flexibility has become one of the key contributions and demands that are placed on LLL (Nicoll, 2006: 136; Field, 2006: 100). This implies a balance between personal economic and social educational objectives, which are in turn connected with new demands of the labour market, democratic processes and other changes demanding flexible education and changes of programmes, organization and governance.

The three factors are connected within a fundamental understanding of LLL as a concept where the emphasis is put on the individual and different places, ages, ways and contents of learning. The student is defined in a new way, as a non-traditional student and lifelong learner (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002) who needs to constantly adapt to new demands of the labour market and new learning opportunities. Non-traditional students are defined in various ways, but all approaches are connected by an agreement that they are adult, part-time learners. The other group of non-traditional students are those who are “educationally disadvantaged” because of their socio-economic status, previous education (vocational stream in secondary education) or cultural obstacles (Rau, 1999: 375; Schuetze and Slowey, 2002: 313; Kim, 2002). This paper is primarily focused on adult, part-time learners. It is however difficult to separate these two groups because socio-economic and cultural obstacles are the most common reason why adult students join the university later.

Flexibility is a key word with reference to the labour market, but outcomes are also key in both the educational process and educational policy. In this line of thought, it is possible to learn in a formal, non-formal and informal environment, but it is also necessary to create institutional foundations so that all forms of learning are embedded in one framework.

Konrad Liessmann concludes, a bit bluntly, that this relationship between learning, flexibility and adults takes the form of an LLL ideology which serves to simply transfer developmental risks to individuals who, according to this, have never been sufficiently educated (Liess-

mann, 2008: 30). This statement has reduced the role of ideas to an ideology in which ideas serve only as an instrument of state and enterprises against the interests of individual citizens. Other policy roles and features of ideas as causal beliefs should be added for a more accurate approach (Béland and Cox, 2011).

4. Lifelong Learning in European HE

4.1. LLL as Institutionalized Rules

Analysis of incorporation of LLL ideas in university policies builds on the same question Olsen asks in his models: how are dominant interests formed within institutionalized rules and codes of behaviour? Are interests also visible in the process of implementation of ideas?

Anne Corbett concludes that LLL in relation to HE appears in three forms: as a system of governance (focused, above all, on the autonomy of the university), as a curricular reform (three cycles system), and as a programme (funding) (Corbett, 2011: 38). Jakobi and Rusconi underline two dimensions of lifelong learning in the Bologna process: access and recognition (Jakobi and Rusconi, 2009: 53), which could be added as part of curricular reform. Access issues are focused on HE entrants (non-traditional students) and new possibilities for learning “from the cradle to the grave”. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) offers the possibility to recognize the academic value of learning obtained outside academic institutions (*ibid.*: 55). An important part of curricular reform is also modularisation (Powell and Solga, 2010) and vocationalisation.

Governance, curriculum and funding of HE should be analysed in co-dependency with the ideas and interests of actors and policy phases. This process

cannot be described and understood out of a political context of the Bologna, Lisbon and the Post-Lisbon processes, in which LLL is a key feature of educational policy in the European Union.

Through the creation of a common LLL programme, and through the results of Copenhagen (common education and training policy in vocational education and training) and the Bologna process, LLL has come out of the narrow field of adult education and has been more clearly related to all educational levels. LLL strategies have been implemented as an important part of the Bologna process, with the objective being to develop a Europe of knowledge. In the beginning, LLL was understood as something that comes after regular education, as credits which could also be acquired in non-HE contexts, including LLL recognised by the receiving universities concerned (Bologna Declaration, 1999: 8). By the Prague Communiqué, in 2001, this principle had been clearly accepted and LLL had been incorporated as an important part of the Bologna process:

Lifelong learning is an essential element of the European Higher Education Area. In the future Europe, built upon a knowledge-based society and economy, lifelong learning strategies are necessary to face the challenges of competitiveness and the use of new technologies and to improve social cohesion, equal opportunities and the quality of life. (Prague Communiqué, 2001: 2)

It is indicative how the Bologna process has been transforming from voluntary action to a group of obligations with concrete objectives and tasks for education systems, and the area of common activity is expanding together with

the number of actors (Jakobi and Rusconi, 2009). Through inclusion of vocational and higher education, all phases of education have been brought together and LLL has been finally placed in the centre of European educational policies with supranational characteristics.

It is possible to show how key actors determine the objectives of educational policies by including LLL and showing what kind of curricular reforms and wider educational changes and programmes this includes.

Here it has to be mentioned that various actors are involved, and beside the Bologna Follow-up group (conferences from Prague to Vienna), the role of the European Commission is becoming more prominent, as is that of the representatives of the 47 countries belonging to the European Higher Education Area. Eight consultative members are also included, namely the Council of Europe, UNESCO's European Centre for Higher Education, the European University Association, the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, the European Students' Union, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, the Education International Pan-European Structure, and BusinessEurope. This creates a complex structure of implementation of HE reform in Europe.

In this context it is possible to analyse the presence of LLL characteristics in operational governance, curriculum and funding of European HE.

4.2. Governance

Regarding governance, the Commission wants to see the university as an autonomous organization, backed by effective quality assurance (Corbett, 2011; Maassen, 2008: 101). Traditional Euro-

pean state regulation, usually referred to as continental (Corbett, 2011; Maassen, 2008), should be replaced by an administrative accountability (Corbett, 2011: 35), and there is an importance of new agencies and a partnership between HE institutions and the private sector. The demands and needs of the private sector (enterprises) and labour market are more important than or equal to state interests and regulations. It is a suitable framework for non-traditional students, who should change professions and promptly react to labour market needs. Building the university as a complete and corporate organization is an institutional response to these political and economic demands. The autonomy of the university is enhanced with certain political and economic expectations about its use (Maassen, 2008: 104). Universities have autonomy from the state, but they work under the strong influence of regulatory agencies (on the national and European levels) and market pressure. In this context the development towards corporatization which is recognised in the USA, Australia, etc. becomes real in the European Higher Education Area.

A review of these objectives shows that the issue is not only about accepting principles, but also about operative incorporation of these principles. This is no longer a discussion about objectives of education, types of knowledge that are being developed, or dilemmas about equity, but a practical set of changes in universities. Of course, this approach is not universally accepted, but it is understandable in this phase, when an accepted model is being implemented. Liessmann comments that it is “stunning how scientists, who believed a few years ago that they can critically grasp developmental tendencies of societies through

concepts, have almost without resistance capitulated before the dull empty phrases of the New management jargon” (Liessmann, 2008: 104).

Beside key actors (EC and national ministries), non-governmental organizations and associations have also been important to these developments in governance processes. In 2008, the European University Association adopted the European Charter on LLL. The development of the Charter was initiated by the French Prime Minister François Fillon, during preparations for the meeting at the Sorbonne in 2007. It was, therefore, a political initiative aimed at implementing this key European educational principle. The initiative was also further developed by the European University Association, with acceptance of the following related objectives for universities:

1. Embedding concepts of widening access and LLL in their institutional strategies.
2. Providing education and learning to a diversified student population.
3. Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners.
4. Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services.
5. Recognising prior learning.
6. Embracing LLL in quality culture.
7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of LLL.
8. Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students.
9. Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international

levels to provide attractive and relevant programmes.

10. Acting as role models of LLL institutions. (European University Association, 2008)

The complexity of institutional changes of LLL is clearly visible in these objectives: learning outcomes are of key importance (that is why RPL, quality control and flexibility are important). Governance, which relates to the inclusion of all those who take part in education and other forms of learning and the creation of prerequisites for the use of learning outcomes, is a change that is not exclusively tied to LLL. Therefore this process fits into the trend of educational policies that deal with outcomes and quality assurance. Special emphasis is placed on the European Qualification Framework, in which learning outcomes are set in a certain framework, i.e. the complexity of learning is ranked so that competences acquired in different ways could be recognized and made "visible". RPL, which is also related to this process, enables learning and recognition of learning results from outside of the educational process. These forms are more often related to vocational training than general education. For this reason, these forms of education strengthen different forms of learning and HE in general, but not specifically universities. The European Qualification Framework is not only a neutral part of curricular reform, but also an instrument of education and labour market policy, which is constructed to fulfil external political and economic goals (transparency, comparability and portability of qualifications in the European Union) (Žiljak, 2007).

The students themselves are important initiators of change. Social criticism of the implementation of the Bolo-

gna process, as well as of other policies, has been expressed through educational protests in Germany, reaching students and pupils who are not satisfied with the commercialization of public education and see the Bologna process as a mere prolonged secondary schooling in which students cannot satisfy their desire for knowledge (Bildungsstreik 2009). Similar views have been expressed through protests in London (National Campaign against Fees and Cuts in London 2010), and also at Croatian universities (especially in Zagreb).

4.3. Curricular Reform

Curricular reform is the most important part of how LLL influences the HE structure. Besides three cycle studies, an RPL and an access key feature of LLL is modularisation. In an independent assessment of the Bologna process, modularisation is stressed as a key element of curriculum reform. From the Prague Communiqué (2001) modularisation is understood as a precondition for the establishment of ECTS, breaking programmes down into smaller units which could create opportunities for flexible learning paths and aggregation of credit points (Westerheijden, 2010). Modularisation enables students' mobility, but also lifelong accumulation of credits, ensuring the students' lifelong participation in HE (Hanft & Knust, 2009: 53). Without modularisation, this concept of lifelong learning in HE could not be enforceable. Modularisation means fragmentation of knowledge, and universities have become more similar to schools than traditional academic institutions. If they contain properly defined learning outcomes with the implementation of a national qualification framework, they enable RPL, because it enables aggre-

gation competencies defined as a credit transferred in learning module.

After Prague, the Berlin Communiqué of 2003 stressed the RPL as a part of, but also as curricular reform which is important because of transparent and flexible admission. But despite this priority, the proportion of students accessing through RPL is still low, and in nine European countries it is 0% (Westerheijden, 2010: 60). Flexible study paths mean part-time studies, weekend and evening courses, distance learning, short-cycle degrees, modularisation of the study programme, elective courses. But only one third of European education systems includes this model of learning in the Bologna process (*ibid.*: 55).

In the Bergen Communiqué (2005), the European Qualification Framework is introduced as an important element for changes to educational policy on the basis of learning outputs and with the goal of promoting mobility. The London Communiqué (2007) again stresses the importance of LLL, and LLL had an especially important place in the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009), which determined the role of LLL in plans up to 2020. RPL and the European Qualification Framework have again been stressed as important parts of implementing LLL policy. This importance of LLL has been confirmed by the strategy for future development, again up to 2020 (The Council of the European Union, 2010).

4.4. Funding

Funding is one of the most important and debatable parts of HE policy change. The role of the LLL idea in funding HE could be analysed on organizational, European and national levels. In Europe, there is a wide variety in the provision of

financial aid to students. Tendencies are to redistribute public funds on the basis of performance or other non-traditional criteria (Maassen, 2008: 105). On the organizational level, the key issue has to do with tuition fees, and a process of university corporatisation in which most non-traditional students pay student fees and are thus distinguished from regular students. That is the reason why LLL is a discursive entrance for pro-profit tertiary education. The expansion of the pro-profit tertiary education sector is connected with non-traditional students, mostly vocational-oriented institutions, in part-time study for adults and non-degree programmes (Santiago, Tremblay, Basri, Arnal, 2008: 75, 137).

That means that it is easier for adults to attend continuing vocational education (vocational higher education) than universities, and these institutions are for the most part financed by tuition fees. The Croatian example shows that 27 out of 32 colleges are private ones, where students must pay tuition, and that there are 1862 students in public colleges and 8875 students in private ones (AZVO, 2012). Precisely in these schools classes are adapted to adult and part-time students. This situation is not specific only to Croatia, since the number of programmes intended for part-time students has increased everywhere (Eurydice, 2011: 29, 31).

On the European level, LLL is a key idea under which all fragmented EU education funds within the common European programme have been aggregated. In 2004, the European Parliament and Council began creating a framework for LLL that mandates the inclusion of various programmes – from general educational programmes for elementary, secondary schools, HE, and vocation-

al education to adult education. A proposal for an integrated action plan for LLL has also been made (Commission of the European Communities, 2004). The realization of the idea of such an integrated programme began in 1987, when the Socrates programme was initiated, aimed at school and higher education, which encouraged an exchange of pupils and university students, as well as the creation of networks and common programmes of universities in Europe. At the same time, the Leonardo da Vinci programme was developed, which was focused on vocational education and training. Before the development of the integrated programme, there were programmes such as Comenius, Lingua, Minerva, Grundtvig and Erasmus, grouped under the name Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci. Through integration into the LLL framework, these programmes were transformed into 4 sector programmes – Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus and Grundtvig, each focused on a specific part of education and training – Comenius for preschool and school education, Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training, Erasmus for HE, and Grundtvig for adult education.

After two years of preparations, in 2006 a Decision establishing an action programme in the field of LLL was made (European Parliament and Council, 2006). During the development it changed its name, and instead of an integrated programme, it is now referred to as an action programme. This change of name indicates an effort to show that this was not just a mechanical merging of well-established programmes, but a new activity aimed at building a new approach to European education. Previously independent programmes

have been integrated into a unique programme – the Lifelong Learning Programme. Their integration on the basis of the same principles stresses the interconnectedness of different parts of education, from preschool age to third age – that is, the LLL principle has been stressed. The basic priority of the programme is the improvement of the quality of education and training, and, ultimately, LLL.

The Lisbon objectives, which put LLL in the centre of the knowledge society, have been maintained in these developments:

A Lifelong Learning Programme will contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations. (European Parliament and Council, 2006: 4)

The Lifelong Learning Programme has been financed by the European Union using funds of the member countries and candidate countries, and it covers the whole field of education and training. The distribution of financial resources also indicates the priorities of common policies. While the budget has been increasing, the proportions given to sector programmes have remained the same: Comenius 13%, Erasmus 40%, Leonardo da Vinci 25%, Grundtvig 4% (European Parliament and Council, 2006a).

5. Conclusion

Simultaneously with the incorporation of LLL into HE within the Bologna process, the area of common activities in

HE and the number of involved actors have been increasing. LLL has turned out to be an important idea that brings changes to HE.

Regarding changes, the relationship between the EU, national states and other actors (universities and their associations) is important. This is, as Anne Corbett has observed, a kind of table tennis – who is responsible and who should decide about this problem (Corbett, 2011). Through the Lisbon process, the EC imposed itself as a key initiator of changes. We could conclude using Kingdon's (1984) policy streams model that windows of opportunity have been opened with the Lisbon process, because – together with the problem (insufficient efficiency and efficacy of HE regarding European economic competitiveness) and a policy solution (Sorbonne and Bologna declarations) – policy turnover took place (Lisbon process in EU) which wants Europe to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world by 2010, and European education and training systems to become a worldwide reference for quality and excellence by the same year. LLL has been incorporated as a policy that meets such demands.

Stimuli for these changes come from outside HE, and they have an impact on institutional changes in HE and universities through the ways objectives are formulated (HE as the development of a competitive economy and production of employable citizens). The LLL concept, an idea that came from international organizations and has been expanding within the Europeanization of educational policies, has experienced wider implementation with the support of the EC. Educational policies and curricular reforms have been adapting to this

process. With unequal distribution, the number of non-traditional learners has increased (Jakobi and Rusconi, 2009), RPL is being introduced, the European Qualification Framework is one of the priorities of European educational policies (Žiljak, 2007), and a common European programme that connects all levels of education has been developed. The source of these changes is not LLL, but LLL has been incorporated into the basic processes that were initiated by policy actors (above all, EC and national policy entrepreneurs) (Corbett, 2011).

Applying Olsen's analysis, the idea of LLL is embedded in an outside influence on the institutional role of the university, because the key actors (the European Commission, enterprises, and ministries) help to solve problems and achieve the desired goals. The key political and economic goal is to increase knowledge which the labour market demands, but within these models the university as a source and place of expansion of that knowledge loses its traditional importance. In this model transforming knowledge into outcomes combined in modules can be learned through different learning paths, not only in the university. A lot is expected from the university, but only rhetorically, and its role is being reduced. The importance of learning is growing, together with tertiary level education, but the university's role is potentially being weakened. Other forms of tertiary education (above all, continuing vocational education) have much more chance because they are more open to non-traditional learners (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002), they encourage fragmented educational modules and flexible financing models. Through the adaptation of LLL, the university has been increasingly leaving its internal consti-

tutive logic and has become an instrument for political and economic objectives and interests (employability, active citizenship, competitiveness of the European economy). By meeting these objectives, it is weakening its specific position because in these areas, other sectors of education have more experience, potential, chance and institutional opportunities. Consequently, the internal coherence of the university is important (the balance between internal strength and the environment), in which the university adapts to the environment, without equating its function with that of continuing vocational education. Viewed from the path dependence perspective in Europe, policies regarding education and training have been separated, and in the LLL concept, this difference has lost a constitutive importance for education policy. So it is clear that through these changes, the convergence process of education and training policy strengthen, and the idea of LLL (in which the word *learning* is stressed) is a concept which bridges two different approaches in

building human capital. Insistence on learning outcomes regardless of whether the knowledge, skills and competences were acquired, linked with a process of vocationalisation, is weakening the university's internal strength, coherence and distinctive advantages compared to other learning paths. The strengthening of connections between education and research is probably a strong point. It enables the strengthening of internal university initiators of changes (the university as a "republic of science"), but regarding the relationship between teaching and research, the policy process is still in the phase of policy talk (what is the constitutive logic there and what are the foundations for identity and autonomy?) (Gornitzka *et al.*, 2007). The implementation of the LLL idea in contemporary political, economic and administrative circumstances is still not in favour of models in which the university is governed by *internal* factors (republic of science and representative democracy) distinctive from present models governed by environmental factors.

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Cjeloživotno učenje i promjene sveučilišta

SAŽETAK Autor u članku analizira odnos cjeloživotnog učenja kao nove ideje u obrazovnoj politici i institucionalnih promjena u visokom obrazovanju. Osnovni naglasak u istraživanju je na ulozi ideja, interesa i institucija u promjeni obrazovne politike. Institucionalna promjena i nove ideje u politikama visokog obrazovanja su objašnjene implementacijom koncepta cjeloživotnog učenja unutar Olsenova četiri modela sveučilišta. Članak opisuje cjeloživotno učenje kao novu ideju koja donosi temeljne promjene s *obrazovanja na učenje* i premošćuje različite pozicije akademskog i strukovnog tercijarnog obrazovanja. Članak sugerira da promjene sveučilišta određuju interesi iz političkog i ekonomskog okruženja uz ograničeni utjecaj aktera iz akademske zajednice. U tom kontekstu analizira se utjecaj ideje cjeloživotnog učenja na razumijevanje, preskripciju i provedbu institucionalnih promjena u obrazovnoj politici te političko opravdanje tih promjena. Autor analizira promjene u javnom upravljanju, kurikulumu i pribavljanju sredstava pod utjecajem cjeloživotnog učenja. Članak opisuje promjene koje u kurikulumu i pribavljanju sredstava nastaju ulaskom netradicionalnih studenata. Naglašena su opravdanja za autonomiju sveučilišta, pristupačnost, priznavanje rezultata učenja, modularizaciju i poststrukturalno učenje u kurikulumu. Kvalifikacijski okvir naznačen je kao dio reforme kurikuluma, ali i kao instrument javnih politika za nacionalne i europske političke i ekonomske ciljeve.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI sveučilište, cjeloživotno učenje, ideje, institucije, Bolonjski proces