

The Foundation for a New Water Culture: Science for a democratic water governance

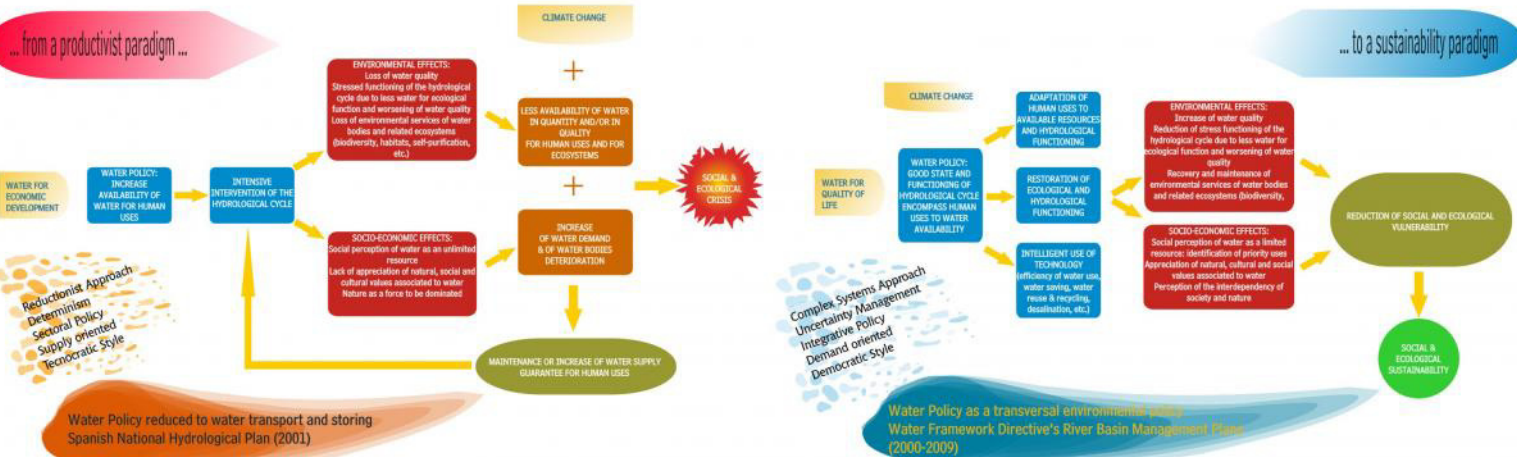
Abstract

Success in achieving the Water Framework Directive's general aim strongly depends on the building of a new water governance process, open to society. For doing it, accurate and intelligible information and knowledge around water issues needs to be available to the wide public in order to guarantee the fairness and effectiveness of participation in the policy making process. In this context, the quality of information and the ways of communication of technical and complex knowledge, in order to allow lay people to take positions and actions, are two central topics.

In this paper we analyse the experience of the Foundation for a New Water Culture (FNCA) in Spain (created in 2000), whose leit motiv is in line with the spirit and the letter of the WFD. We propose to draw conclusions regarding the relationship between the exchange of technical and non-technical information and knowledge on water issues and citizen empowerment for defending environmental values related to aquatic ecosystems, and its impact on the implementation of the WFD in Spain. For getting such lessons, we analyse the role played by the FNCA in three issues: the Ebro's transfer (1998-2004), the Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer (2002-2007) and the observatory on the implementation of the WFD in Spain (2006-2007).

... from a productivist paradigm ...

... to a sustainability paradigm



Water Policy reduced to water transport and storing
 Spanish National Hydrological Plan (2001)

Water Policy as a transversal environmental policy
 Water Framework Directive's River Basin Management Plans (2000-2009)

... this transition means incorporation of NEW VALUES, NEW CAPACITIES and, therefore, needs the active involvement of NEW ACTORS in DECISION MAKING

KEY ISSUE: ACTIVE PARTICIPATION



Year	Key Event / Policy Change
1993	1993 Socialist Party wins national elections
1994	II Draft of National Hydrological Plan (NHP) to the Spanish Congress: river basin intervention at national scale (3000 km ² /year)
1995	Draft of the National Irrigation Plan: 300000 has. of new irrigation
1996	Conservative Party (PP) wins national elections. Start the drafting of River Basin Hydrological Plans (RBHPs), water supply oriented ('sarpas' RB and 'verfict' RB)
1997	Júcar's RBHP includes the Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer (for 2002, 80 hm ³ /year; for 2007, 170 hm ³ /year)
1998	RBHPs are approved and become law
1999	Legal roles of RBHPs are published. Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer project is published
2000	Draft of the New NHP (Water transfer from surplus RB to deficit RB). Ebro's water transfer (2000 hm ³ /year) from Terresana to Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante, Murcia and Almería is the main component of the NHP. Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer project overcomes the EIA procedure
2001	NHP is legally approved and becomes law. Draft of the Ebro's water transfer project is published
2002	Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer starts to be built. Spanish Government applies for EU Structural Funds for the Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer
2003	EU Commission designates EU Structural Funds for the Ebro's water transfer. EU Commission approves EU Structural Funds (80 M€) for the Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer. Spanish Government applies for EU Structural Funds for the Ebro's water transfer
2004	PP is legally approved and becomes law. Ebro's water transfer project is regulated. Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer is built up by a 30 percent. A Parliament's Committee (EU diversion) asks the EC to stop funding the Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer, due lack of achievement of mandatory environmental conditions. RB Authorities start works for implementing WFD (Júcar is designated pilot river basin)
2005	Júcar-Vinalopó water transfer is built up by a 50 percent. Participatory Expert Group concludes that Júcar-Vinalopó project does not meet EC funding conditions. Current construction of the Middle Júcar's diversion is cancelled, the layout is modified: the intaking point is changed to the Júcar's mouth. Spanish RBAs present Reports regarding WFD's art. 5, 6 & 7
2006	Modified Júcar-Vinalopó is approved, including new EC conditional funding (2.5 M€), and start its construction.
2007	Public consultation of documents of WFD's implementation: programme and process, and diagnosis of the RB Director's state

MAIN LESSONS

- Organizing existing capacities for developing new capacities
- Overriding disciplinary barriers is needed for articulating a discourse able to give alternatives to the reality
- Democratizing knowledge is a condition for effective public participation:
 - for improving decision making
 - for public accountability and transparency
- Personal risk of professional veto
- Relationship with information authorities needs to be build up upon mutual trust and quality of information bases, in order to overcome conflicts and inertias
- Relationship with social movement is a basic piece of New Water Culture: it is a main link between science and society
- Social participation in water policy requires strong technical skills, is time and effort consuming, therefore, budget must provided by the public administration for funding participation processes