WATER GOVERNANCE IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

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It is widely acknowledged that the world water crisis is primarily a crisis of governance. However, there is no common understanding of what "governance" actually means, how it works, who are its players. The prevailing conceptions of governance in mainstream water policy documents tend to be instrumental and idealistic. Perhaps the most important consequence of instrumental and idealistic understandings of governance is the rhetorical depoliticization of what is, paradoxically, a political process. The main mechanism of this "depoliticization" of governance" is the exclusion of the ends and values informing water policy from the debate. Instrumental and idealistic understandings of governance constitute a major obstacle for the scientific comprehension of the process and for achieving success in policy interventions directed at tackling the water crisis. The paper reasons for the development of a balance between the techno-scientific, socio-economic, political, and cultural aspects of water management activities, which may help in superseding the artificial separation of water research and practice in disciplinary and corporatist feuds.

Keywords- Water governance. Citizenship, water inequality, water injustice, water crisis, water conflicts, water and sanitation.