Working With People (WWP) in Rural Development Projects: a Proposal from Social Learning

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Abstract:

This paper shows a conceptual framework which synthesizes the evolution of the "modern project" and its dominant values, reaching to a new approach for the planning of rural development projects in the post-modernity: Working With People (WWP). The WWP model proposed is integrated into international discussions of "social learning" and it incorporates key elements of planning as social learning, collaborative participation theory and project management models. WWP is the result of 25 years of experience from the research group GESPLAN in several European contexts and emerging countries. The WWP implementation has led to different methodologies and applied research. This new way of thinking opens up new fields of research in rural development projects planning, evaluation and management.

Keywords author:
Working With People, rural development, planning, project management, social learning.

Keywords plus:
Rural development, rural planning, rural development projects, sustainable development, rural development methodology, friendly visiting.

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Trabajando con la gente en proyectos de desarrollo rural: una propuesta desde el aprendizaje social

Resumen

En este artículo se muestra un marco conceptual que sintetiza la evolución del "proyecto moderno" y sus valores dominantes, hasta llegar a un nuevo enfoque para la planificación de los proyectos de desarrollo rural en la posmodernidad: trabajando con la gente" (Working With People, WWP). El modelo WWP se inserta en los debates internacionales del "social learning" e incorpora elementos clave de la planificación como aprendizaje social, de la participación colaborativa y de los modelos de dirección de proyectos. WWP es fruto de 25 años de experiencia desde el grupo GESPLAN en diferentes contextos europeos y en países emergentes. La implementación ha dado lugar a diferentes metodologías e investigaciones aplicadas. Esta nueva forma de pensar abre nuevos campos de investigación en el ámbito de la planificación, evaluación y dirección de los proyectos de desarrollo rural.

Palabras clave autor:

Trabajando con la gente, desarrollo rural, planificación, dirección de proyectos, aprendizaje social.

Palabras clave descriptores:

Desarrollo rural, planificación rural, proyectos de desarrollo rural, desarrollo sostenible, metodología en desarrollo rural, trabajadores sociales

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En travaillant avec les gens (WorkingWithPeople, WWP) dans des projets de développement rural: une proposition d'apprentissage social

Résumé

Dans cet article on montre un cadre conceptuel qui synthétise l'évolution du «projet moderne» et ses valeurs dominantes, jusqu'à arriver à une nouvelle analyse pour la planification des projets de développement rural dans la postmodernité: «En travaillant avec les gens» (Working With People, WWP). Le modèle WWP qui est proposé s'insère dans les débats internationaux du "social learning" et incorpore des éléments clef dans les modèles de planification comme l'apprentissage social, la participation en collaboration, et les modèles internationaux de direction de projets. Le modèle WWP est le fruit de 25 années d'expérience dans le cadre de la planification des projets de développement rural réalisé pour le groupe de recherche GESPLAN dans différents contextes européens et dans pays émergents. Cette nouvelle façon de penser ouvre nouveaux domaines de recherche dans le cadre de la planification, l'évaluation et la direction des projets de développement rural.

Mots-clés de auteur:

En travaillant avec les gens, le développement rural, planification, direction des projets, apprentissage social.

Mots-clés descripteur:

Développement rural, planification rurale, projets de développement rural, développement durable, méthodologie de développement rural, travailleurs sociaux.

Introduction

Participation not only means to consult the population, it is much more than this. The logic of participation is, in fact, "*the logic of collective action*" (Cernea, 1991). The planning of interventions for rural development must be built on self-organizing tendencies, aimed for encouraging people to act collaboratively. Planning, understood as social learning (Friedmann, 1993), fits this approach and works as a process whose main point is that all the effective learning comes from the change of real experience: the affected population is participating actively and provides mutual learning between the planner's expert knowledge and the experienced knowledge of the affected population. Rural development projects are very valuable tools to change reality, but unlike in engineering projects, means and ends do not always keep a constant, clear and direct relationship during its implementation. These projects require a continuous mutual learning since its inception. New values are emerging since the 90s and new ways of planning appeared in contrast with the rigid traditional approaches of planning rural development projects. International literature emphasized the need for experimentation, learning, and adaptation to local contexts, participation, flexibility and the local capacity building proceses.

This paper shows a conceptual framework which synthesizes the evolution of the "modern project" and its dominant values, reaching a new approach for the planning of rural development projects in the post-modernity: Working With People (WWP). For the authors, WWP means a conceptual proposal: development projects, both in emerging countries and in the European Union (EU), have to be developed BY the people and not FOR the people. WWP model is the result of 25 years of experience in rural development project planning from GESPLAN-UPM in several European contexts and emerging countries. WWP's proposal is synthesized into three components –ethical social, Technical-entrepreneurial and political contextual- including the various fields of social relation system to interact by means of learning processes. The implementation of the model –as a guideline in the field of rural development project planning— has lead to different methodologies and applied research.

1. Modern project and its dominant values

The idea that scientific knowledge of society could be applied to its practical improvement first appeared in the eighteenth century. During this period the

main thinking was that any valuable idea had to be practical, measuring its consequences with mathematical precision (Friedmann, 1987). Modern utopian ideologies presented science, technology and planning as infallible tools for rational control of nature and society (Llano, 1988). These ideologies had a parallel with the dominant values of economic development, known during the 50s and 60s: The industrialization in the Third World countries would eradicate poverty forever, through a planning which would lead humankind to happiness. These ideologies, with differences across countries, have a common root of universal and philosophical character that has become the concept of modernity concept (Spaemann, 2004), which most important connotations will be reviewed, as well as the "modern project" concept associated.

1.1. Quantitativism and the impoverishment of man-nature relationships

First, the "dimension of exactness, its claim of certainty and will of domination" (Ballesteros, 1989) characterizes "modernity", culminating in the work of the French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650) - and his "modern project", also known as blueprint project - as an operational tool (Tugwell & Banfield, 1975; Bond & Hulme, 1999). This dimension of exactness, gives rise to a "modern economy" that emphasizes in the economic development and production, leading to an impoverishment of human relationships (Ballesteros, 1989) and introducing radical changes, that some have called *The Great Transformation* (Polanyi, 1944). The market was established as the central institution of society, with ethical and social independence that makes that in "modern science" count only the visual and quantitative features, being the rest discarded. This "quantitativism" —inspired by the engineering sciences and the idealism of the Saint-Simonian engineers— implies important consequences for the understanding of men and its relation to nature, influencing the early development models and in the *classic engineering* projects. At that time the idea of a "planned design" of society rules, emerging in the new field of "social planning" with the concept of "modern project". The worker is often a mere instrument for the production of objects, designed from modern science and manufactured under the guidance of a model.

1.2. Top-down development models approach

At this "modern" time, planning is seen as something that is inseparable from power (Schumacher, 1976). It is the time of futurists, rational planners, forecasters

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and scientific model builders. Modern project —blueprint project— is based on engineering, on scientific rationality, with primarily descendent approaches such as blueprint or top-down development approaches that are based within the concepts of objective rationality and reductionism and has roots in the fields of engineering and construction (Bond & Hulme, 1999). From the blueprint project perspective, the first models of planning development were created (Brinkerhoff & Ingle, 1989) such as: calculation quantitative models and central planning, investment and production analysis, economic policy models, and models of regional and urban analysis. The influence of Saint-Simon (1760-1825) is manifested in the view of this "modern project" providing complementary approaches from scientific planning, sociology, political sciences and public administration. Saint-Simon suggested the consideration of an image of society, where the "scientists and engineers" as experts of society organic laws, would draw the future according to a global plan. He proposed a neutral system without values, based on the scientific conceptualization and empirical research, through which he could predict what kind of institutions and processing would be required by the emerging industrial society.

1.3. "Technical" approach and lack of urban-rural relations

Following the steps of Saint-Simon, the great synthesizers of social knowledge, Weber argued in favor of the "technical reason" as a solution of problems (Weber, 1984). This "technical" approach to the model project causes a clear urban-rural dichotomy, resulting in numerous conflicts with settlements in rural areas, land use planning, and society division (Clark, 1982). The urban-rural division is exacerbated also by the disappearance of the rural industrial small family and the concentration of production within the cities (Marx, 1867). In Europe, this technical approach is reflected in national policies for development planning with a strong orientation towards production. Urban-rural interactions were marked simply by the need to supply the city (Sharp & Smith, 2003). Several authors have linked the absence of urban-rural relations with conflicts and changes in society (Murtagh, 1998). The lack of consideration of ecology in the modern project has been common within modern economists as well as in the Marxist approaches (Ballesteros, 1989). Nature is seen as mere raw material, linked to increases of production, the problems will be solved when society will replace capitalism (Marx, 1867). The "modern world" pressure with its commitment to

individualism and lack of urban-rural relations, it poses a threat to community organizations, more typical in rural society. Numerous studies show differences between organization forms of rural and urban communities, it requires necessarily a different treatment. But urban and rural relations also have multiple supplementary connotations within the territorial consideration (Masuda & Garvin, 2008).

1.4. Indefinite enrichment and excessive consumption

"Modern project" embodies the ideal of *unlimited progress* based on the belief of the unlimited character of natural resources (Friedmann, 1987). The denial of differences and hierarchies between human needs tend to confuse the real needs, promoting excessive consumption in "modern" societies. What counts is the indefinite enrichment of individuals, abstractly considered (Ballesteros, 1989). Following the ideas of the classical economics founders —Adam Smith and his contemporary Sir James Steuart— the modern project seeks a "general welfare" of society valuing only the visible and "*all things become objects of consumption*"(Arendt, 1958). The beliefs in unlimited resources and in unlimited growth, lead modern economists to be unconcerned about the ecology, the damaging relations between man and nature, giving rise to the so-called "homo economicus". The lack of "qualitative" approach in the modern project, prevented to discover the differences among territories and resources (Schumacher, 1976) to examine urban-rural relations. From this simple perspective, the industry is identified with manufacturing, entrepreneurship and capital accumulation, and identifies a dynamic economic activity of agriculture. Although this manufacturing spreads to some rural areas, this view has led to a persistent lack of entrepreneurial dynamism in many rural areas (Masuda & Garvin, 2008). Agriculture and rurality thus, was presented as the antithesis of modernity (Moore, 1984).

2. The modern project crisis: Postmodernism

The main mistake of the modern project - based on indefinite progress and "scientific" planning directed from the central government (Spaemann, 2004), was trying to find a formula that would allow the interpretation of historical events aiming for a "planned design" of society. But life is unpredictable enough

and neither the economist nor the statistician would have the "registered " within the limits of nature physical laws, men are still responsible for our individual and collective destiny, for good or evil (Schumacher, 1976). Another fundamental mistake of modern project is the main orientation towards production, as the prior step to consumption, leading to confusion between means and ends. "*Frequent complaints arise and, in modern times, on the perversion of ends and means, the fact that men become slaves of machines they have invented and they "adapt " themselves to their requirements instead of using them as instruments for human needs and demands*" (Arendt, 1958, p. 165). But despite these mistakes, modern project influences the European tradition, shaping ways of thinking and doing. In terms of human behavior, the frequent loss of the ability to distinguish clearly between means and ends is also "exported". Since the 50s, looking for industrial-urban growth, the blueprint model (Sweet & Weisel, 1979) is exported to developing countries, with the aggravation of taking it out of context. If the model did not work at its own place, it would hardly work elsewhere.

It was not until the World War I (1914-1918) when this "modern project" approach had a clear point of contrast. At a time of great global conflict and in a turbulent context, development planners began a period of deep reflection. New forces and ideas of philosophers such as Bergson and Heidegger began to influence, initiating a historic shift in planners thinking of the time (Friedmann, 1987). The "modern project" and its associated economic development model began to be questioned, with decadence symptoms in the 70s (Schumacher, 1976). The failure of the unlimited progress ideology, as the core of the "technocratic modernization" is the main cause for change.

In Europe in the 70s, the breaking point could be identified with the modern project when the inefficiency of the model was proven, which adopted the market economy as the best instrument to encourage the development since the Treaty of Rome in 1957, to correct the regional imbalances, even to enlarge the differences between the constituent countries. Although it is accepted that the modern project failed as a tool for balance achievement, it took many years until planning measures opened to new horizons.

Thus, over the 80s, development planners incorporated new approaches and values related to development projects (Korten, 1980; Hulme, 1989; Rondinelli, 1993) giving rise to a changeful situation, which reflects the failure of modernism. Planners suggested a new conception of "progress," resulting from the efforts

of human freedom, which starts from the conviction that the great problems of our times are not technical, but ethical (Ballesteros, 1989). Therefore a new phase began, which arises within a multicultural society-after modernism and "before" a new era- that has been summarized in one word: postmodernism.

3. The Postmodern rural development: Emerging values

The term "postmodernism" first appeared in the work of Toynbee, *A Study of History* (Toynbee, 1957), published between 1934 and 1954 referring to a paradigm shift with regard to "modernity. It is a reaction to the failure of technocratic modernity and the idea of indefinite progress, and refers to the preparation of something new, a new era of humanity that demands new ways of acting and thinking. It is a cultural and ideological effect, with new values and trends, which emerge with clarity and contrast with the past (Ballesteros, 1989). Since the early 90s different authors refer to the emergence of postmodernism, especially in relation to cultural and ideological changes within rural areas (Cloke & Little, 1997; Halfacree, 1993; Murdoch & Pratt, 1993; Philo, 1993). In this new phase, which reflects the lack of novelty of the industrial capitalist society, society becomes "old". Some have called this change as "*postmodern sensibility to difference*" (Philo, 1993). Numerous studies analyze this ideological-cultural change in rural communities (Cloke & Little, 1997; Halfacree, 1993). What follows next are some of these connotations of "postmodernism" and its cultural and ideological changes in relation to rural areas.

3.1. Revalorization of "rural" areas

There are new activities and concerns, Hi-tech agriculture is in crisis as a surplus activity, rural areas are no longer seen as a space designated for production enhancing environmental conservation, values that become the subject of political concern. In some regions, the question of how to retain the population within the territory raises, while elsewhere increases its value and attractiveness, making the difference against the city. This reappraisal of the "rural" concepts turns the difference between town and countryside less marked, with a more diverse relationship that includes new activities and changes. The rural environment is configured as poly functional space, not only productive but also recreational,

residential and for conservation or environmental protection. In most developed societies, modernity is not as simply as industrialization. New urban-rural relationships, residential decentralization processes (Clark, 1982), spatial dispersion of the industry and services to the countryside (Murdoch & Pratt, 1993) came from this process of change. But new conflicts and incompatibilities between its uses arose (Murtagh, 1998).

3.2. Origin of spatial tradition and territorial balance

Other of the values that are consolidated in post modernity, and provide a new approach to planning, is the territorial approach to planning. Excepting for a few pioneers planning experiences in the United States, mainly oriented to people in rural areas, that had no continuity, and it was along the 60s when the space dimension was considered. In those years, a research expansion linked to the countryside and the French concept of Land Management was developed in Europe, as an instrument for economic and social development. Planning measures in Europe sought a territorial balance and corrected the rural-urban polarization after the Second World War. However, despite conceptual and political developments not yet in Europe manages to articulate a clear spatial planning doctrine (Robinson, 1969). After the evidence of failure of the model project as a tool balancer for the market dynamics, it took eighteen years, in 1975 when the Common Market Council, made the decision to agree the first regulation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which opened a horizon to change the model. The ERDF was established as an instrument of *territorial character contributing to the correction of imbalances in the Community (*Article 130C Single Act, 1986). After several modifications of this instrument,1985 and 1988 confirms this new territorial orientation of regional development as the main route to social inclusion and to counteract the undesirable effects of previous guidance, based on eminently functional criteria. This orientation shift was greatly influenced by the *European Regional/Spatial Planning Charter* defined in 1983 as the spatial projection of social, environmental and economic policies for a society oriented to achieve a balanced regional development and physical organization of space. Regional/ spatial planning gives geographical expression to the economic, social, cultural and ecological policies of society. It is at the same time a scientific discipline, an administrative technique and a policy developed as an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach directed towards a balanced regional development and the physical organization of space according to an overall strategy.

The United States presented a different approach from Europe, because they were well ahead in the planning practice. Regional planning in the United States adopts a functional approach to provide infrastructure for production processes, questioning the efforts to overcome regional disparities that can slow the global growth. More than a rural area, it gave importance to new technologies (Webber, 1984). This approach to planning has made the difference with Europe in relation to the rural world: social and economic problems of rural people have no special consideration, and agriculture is a sector of the economy like any other. One explanation for this course of action may be found in the following words: in a free society, individuals are free to live wherever they please, and industries to locate where they prefer, subject to certain necessary local controls. Every person and every company are free to pursue their own interests within the rules established by law (Hansen et al., 1990).

3.3. Endogenous development and functional-spatial integration

In the sixties, neither Europe nor the United States contemplated the involvement of rural inhabitant in the planning process. At that time, no Western country thought that development could be promoted from within, with an endogenous approach. Rural areas were defined as underdeveloped, and were considered to be incapable to develop by themselves (Ackoff, 1984). In the United States, as in the EU, it was assumed that rural problems would be solved through programs designed at a national level. Special plans oriented to disadvantaged areas, which were applied during the 50s and early 60s, adopted a functional approach without considering the participatory processes as the modern project. The dean of the American agricultural economists described the poor performance of this approach: none of the political orientation were a solution to the development problems of the rural nonagricultural sector, indeed, these national policy measures accelerated the social and economic decline of the rural communities.

In the mid-seventies, voices of warning arose about the wrong path that was taken, as an important sign of the failure of modernism and postmodernism identity, starting a new process of spatial-functional integration to overcome rural backwardness. This integration process did not become a full reality until, in 1968, there was a social revolutionary movement, with Herbert Marcuse as a precursor, which acquired a global reach (Hansen et al., 1990). This movement, which came to convulse the world, reached the halls of power, breaking the consolidation of the

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modern project and showing a rejection to technical reason. Although at the end the motion was defeated, it did destabilize the social welfare system, but did not offer alternative routes. It was then when thinkers, more positive, saw the solution in a new planning style based on dialogue and participation. Thus, the rational Euclidean planning model, as paradigm of scientific planning that appeared to have triumphed in the early 60s, and dominated for over a century, was in crisis indicating the failure of modernism and the beginning of a new stage of planning in post-modernism.

It would take a decade for these approaches to change the regional policy, in this case accompanied by the European Community. In the absence of effective measures for rural development in the EU, new strategies arose based on the concept of "endogenous development". Numerous debates about the concept have appeared (Garofoli, 1992), with general consensus that recognizes the importance of the local processes and the social participation. People cannot be developed, they can only do so by becoming part of the decision-making process and activities that affect their welfare. But endogenous development is more than just a level change in which decisions are made, it requires the creation of new local organizational structures to achieve local control over the development process. Within this context, in 1990 was created the European Initiative LEADER (EU, 1990) as a new experimental approach to rural development. The specifics of the initiative have been described in numerous investigations (Moseley, 1995; Cazorla et al., 2005), adding some new elements to the development model presented in this work.

4. Towards a new model for postmodern-planning

Facing this crisis of modernity, new forms of planning appeared seeking to connect thought with action. Some authors (Llano, 1988) have argued that within the action concept, the explanation for the failure of modernist model and scientific planning can be found. In the search of a renewed approach, based on the learning that can occur amongst planning, public and collective actors, 'action' is considered as in the sense of detailed by Hannah Arendt (1958) as the exclusive human faculty, as distinct from labor and work, which defines how people relate directly with each other, establishing our identities, innovate and accomplish the unexpected.

4.1. "Knowledge and action" in non-euclidean planning

Criticism of the modern project has been linked to the intrinsic notion of action by the historically and globally perverse effect that it has led. In contrast to the alleged passivity implied by the contemplative attitude of the previous centuries, since the eighteenth century the active role of man is affirmed. This man "action" in modern times focuses on the pursuit of happiness through the application of rigorous rationality –as in rational thought– and the scientific model. The belief in modern times that man can only know what he does, leads to a rise of the concepts of "action" and "productivity" – to be considered as the highest state of man. It is disregarded the "unproductive labor", "housekeeping" and not the durable production of things (Arendt, 1958). This view of human action caused numerous conflicts giving rise, in the late twentieth century, to a deep malaise that responds to the differences between expectations and achievements (Llano, 1988). Since the rediscovery of new forms of action, there is also a rethinking of matters regarding man-nature relationships (Arendt, 1958) and arises a green claim (Ramos, 1993) against the modern project (WCED, 1987).

Exploitation (from human action) is revealed as provocation under the evidence that the natural resources are limited and the destruction of the ecological environment may be irreversible (Spaemann, 2004). The technocratic modernization and ownership claim is that they are not only a threat to nature, but to man as well (Schumacher, 1976): the best technical improvements, which would be absurd to say dismiss, also contain an impressive potential for self-destruction. This rediscovery of the human action effects, raises a concern and controversy for its novelty, gathered in the first report of the Club of Rome titled "Limits to Growth: energy resources and raw materials are finite", and current forms of matter and energy are not transformed without secondary degrading effects to the natural environment (Meadows, 1972). "Action" is the sphere of planning, and also of the human community, that retains the memory and continuity of actions to carry out them through dialogue and other means (Holden, 2008). Therefore, in seeking an understanding of knowledge and action, our focus is on social learning among different actors that can occur within the communities' participation in the action in democratic societies, regardless of the type of work, or people within communities, their position, status or experience.

In this context, we are talking about the need to consider the effects of human action, meaning action, according to Alfred Schutz (1962), as a human behavior planned by the agent in advance, in other words, a conduct based on a project. From this conceptual conception, the project purpose is part of the intrinsic notion of project, understood as a human action that pursues objectives (Trueba et al., 1995). Act means taking an initiative, to start, to place something in motion, and finally govern it. With this approach, the new theory of planning in post modernity is rooted in the same action and practical knowledge: planning is defined as a professional practice that specifically seeks to connect the forms of knowledge with the forms of action in the public domain (Friedmann, 1993). We refer thus to a non-Euclidean model, which involves a reflexive process on the knowledge and action, and where planning is conceived as something other than engineering. The purpose of human action and the planning behind it are more than projective anticipation from the technical reason and outlined according to the modern project. It has sufficiently demonstrated the limitations and problems caused by this type of modern style planning, as a tool for decision-making and in the project management field.

Dominant research in the field of project management have emphasized during modernity, the rational models, the "hard systems" models, focusing on the project technical dimension, especially from planning and control. Considering the limitations of these "hard systems models", there are other jobs within the Social Sciences (Cicmil & Marshall, 2005) that show the need to integrate behavior into the project management (Winch, 2004) and organizational learning (Argyris, 1997). The learning organizations use a team-based structure and work to achieve a shared vision and understanding of the world. The organizational learning approach share characteristics such as openness to questioning, dialogue, risk taking and experimentation based on new information, inclusiveness and empowerment, and flexibility within a sense of community. These models also prioritize team construction, as the most suitable mean for the improvement of individuals and the creation of new knowledge. Other researchers also recognize the importance of understanding the contextual knowledge to integrate exogenous and external factors that influence planning and project management (Morris & Pinto, 2004). The entry of external knowledge, questioning the actions of organizations, is considered a basic benefit for management improvement (Auluck, 2002). This approach enables organizations to benefit from external interpretation of what others think of them and to hear their ideas about how they might improve (Holden, 2008).

4.2. A new postmodern sensibility

But to fully understand the new model proposed, it is necessary to clarify what we mean by the term "postmodern sensibility new", its relationship to human behavior based on a project. The action value from an integrated perspective, and its consideration as good or bad, is not subsequent or resulting from the actions themselves, but constitutive of them. The purpose of "doing" and "act" are of different nature: the first consists of a product, while the end of the "action" matches that of the acting person. From this difference we refer to the need to consider in the model, in addition to the technical assessment of production obtained from the project and its production process, the intimately link to the purpose of the assessment of human action from the people involved, that is engaged and working in the project. It is not only the value of perfection from the performed work, but also the assessment of the perfection achieved by the agent following the work done in the context of the project. This consideration leads us to affirm: "*we must do everything necessary, mind that technically we can do*" (Ramos, 1993).

"New postmodern sensitivity" demands that planners also incorporate the notion of care as one of the keys to guide the actions from an integrated vision of problems and solutions. Contemplation and respect for nature are also human needs, a requirement of our way of being that are presented as values. This vision leads us to argue that only from men purposes can be fully understood the human action. In this way we will not remain only on the purpose of "making" technically good, but in the "act" (doing good) according to our nature (Habermas, 2004). The restoration of these coordinated forms will lead, at the operational level, to an integrated vision, a consequence of doing well, but with an underlying approach of respect, a fruit of knowledge and care intrinsically linked to action. To take into a postmodern planning model this "new postmodern sensibility" demands consistency, realistic responses with respect, restraint and solidarity. These values allow to discover and resize the vital spaces and "lost paths" in planning (Spaemann, 2004), from participation and engagement, understood as the "personal contribution" of each of the agents within or associated with a project (IPMA, 2010). This commitment makes people "believe" in the project and be part of the team. But for the process to be effective, it is necessary to get away the anonymity, seeking to engage responsibility from near and close solutions, that, in planning, is given a priority at the regional and local levels. We are referring to the collaborative approach from the theory of participation planning (Holden, 2008; Habermas,

2004) encouraging the interaction among actors and actions to unite them in a common project. Solidarity is not only understood in the sense of working for others, but "with others". Participation (Chambers, 1997) appears as the more serious demand of solidarity, allowing formal and informal human relations, from which it is necessary to provide a life vision and to motivate people to work together to achieve common objectives (IPMA, 2010). In these framework, and as a result of numerous case studies of applied research in the field of planning development, the next section describe a new approach to rural development projects from social learning and the new postmodern sensibility.

5. WWP: a new approach to rural development project management

The model presented and developed by the authors, coined with the expression "Working With People WWP", is understood as the professional team practice that seeks to connect knowledge and action by a common project, which besides the technical value of production- of goods and services- mainly incorporates the value of people who get involved, that participate in the projects that are developed through actions within the context of the project. With the expression *Working With People*, is intended to show the need to overcome the technical vision of a project, focusing on individuals' behavior and the context in which they work in. It is intended to value, beyond projects' sophistication, the improvement of human behavior achieved by the involved agents. Therefore, WWP project requires that planners, in addition to certain technical and contextual abilities, to have a special social sensitivity (Cazorla & De los Rios, 2001) and solid ethical standards. WWP project, as an alternative to the modern project is the result of the following research areas: (1) *Logic-participatory working models* (Chambers, 1997; Cernea, 1991; 1992; Korten, 1980; Uphoff, 1990); (2) Models of *planning as a social learning* (Friedmann, 1987, 1992, 1993; Cazorla et al., 1995; Holden, 2008) and from the *collaborative participation theory of planning* (Habermas, 2004); (3) *formulation and evaluation methodologies and project plans for Rural Development* (Cazorla et al., 2005; Cazorla et al., 2008; Trueba et al., 1995); (4) *Project management Models*, especially those that integrate behavioral competencies (Winch, 2004; Cicmil & Marshall, 2005) and contextual competencies (Morris & Pinto, 2004) that influence the projects.

5.1. Working With People (WWP) principles and values

WWP project includes the following *principles* and values:

(a) Respect and primacy for the people, which are the main elements to be considered in any development strategy and in the design of any technical innovation. The authorities and professionals, who promote these projects, are committed to respect the fundamental rights of the people, their traditions and cultural identity. Respect and social sensitivity must extend to the people in charge of managing the development projects, which must be defined and negotiated through participative processes of social integration.

(b) To guarantee a social well being and a sustainable development, on the other hand, *WWP projects* require that the technical investment and efforts made must be directed to satisfy the necessities of the rural population, focusing on the social well being and the sustainable development of rural communities. Technology, knowledge and their switch into innovation constitute the determining factors to guarantee social well-being. To advance towards new technologies means a great step towards the solution of social and economical problems, as well as in the increase of the quality of life of all citizens and economic growth, strengthening competitiveness and the encouraging job creation.

(c) Bottom-up and multidisciplinary approach: In each one of the different stages in this WWP projects it is necessary to guarantee a *subsidiary* principle, in which the rural development projects are responsibility of the rural community agents, considering the representative actors from the different activity areas developed among them. WWP approach used by the new professionals must be based on bottom up approach, reinforcing the people's ability, knowledge and practice, to ensure the permanent development of their territory, and allowing a better efficiency in public investments. For this commitment, it is necessary to build a network which facilitates an accurate knowledge of the territory, as well as the action of multidisciplinary teams that offer a positive view of the reality, from different approaches, which allow taking actions with a better perspective of success in terms of the possibility of giving appropriate answers to the population needs.

(d) Endogenous and integrated approach: The WWP project requires a *global approach* which will take into account all the aspects which will allow the creation of new combinations and synergies, generating new projects and new activities, with the intervention of socio-economic agents and managers through multi-sectorial interventions. The engineering projects, a common element to all engineers,

constitute an immobilization of scarce goods and resources (investment) in order to generate a flow of goods and future services, susceptible of being evaluated from the technical, economic, social and environmental point of view. Every project has a series of stages –a project cycle-, a technical articulation, an economic investment, even a necessary evaluation of the environmental impact, that were compulsory not so many years ago.

5.2. Working With People (WWP) components

In addition to the above principles, WWP project may be summarized around three *components* —ethical-social, technical-entrepreneurial and political-contextual—, which interact through social-learning processes. These three components include the four areas of social-relations system — The *Political* field, the *Public* administration field, the *Private* and entrepreneurial fields and the *Civil Society* field— as a synthesis of the society model (Friedmann, 1992). The apparent simplicity of WWP project involves a large complexity given by the richness of relationships and learning that occur between the three types of agents of the proposed model (Figure 1), where the three components must be present in any project designed from the WWP approach, interactions and overlaps between them through social learning processes.
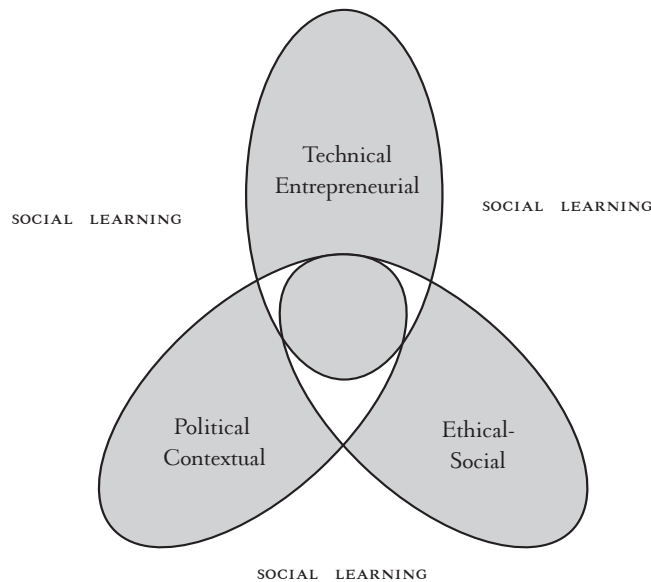

Figure 1. Working With People (WWP) components
Source: the authors.

(A) The Ethical-social component. This component covers the context of behavior, attitudes and values of people who interact in order to promote, manage or direct the WWP project. This component is identified with the social subsystem, consisting of all the interpersonal relationships that are taking place within society. The ground of the social system that surrounds WWP project is to cover the conduct and moral behavior of people and it sets out the "foundations" to make people, both from the private and public fields, to come to work together, with commitment, confidence and personal freedom. The incorporation of ethics, means considering the WWP project as not "neutral", but based on an ideal of service and guided by values. This component integrates behavioral competencies with ethics and values as appropriate elements to overcome potential moral conflicts related to the parties involved in the project (IPMA, 2010). Facing the technocratic view of the modern project, which tended to exclude moral considerations WWP project tries to achieve the best for a greater number of people. This means to ensure that the organizations promoting the WWP project have a culture that incorporates the ethical dimension.

(B) The Technical-entrepreneurial component. This component integrates the key elements that turns to achieve providing the WWP project as an investment unit and a technical tool that is capable of generate a flow of goods and services and to meet some targets, according to the required and quality standards (IPMA, 2010). From the point of view of the social relations, this component corresponds to the private-entrepreneurial field, which comprises all the activities of private initiative. The WWP project adopts a "business function" —as mobilizing human, economical, public, and private resources— leading to the arrangement and negotiation between various actors, and involves a commitment to assume and manage the risk. This movement of resources is translated into a final product —an artwork created from the project— which sometimes means, faced to the market demand, a repetition of a series of activities to guarantee the means of survival of the project beneficiaries. Although the technique is the basis, the product produced from WWP project goes further. We refer to the value of the "artwork" created by the people that work in the project, to its value as a unique product —made with perfection, mastery and harmony— and a result from the integration of technical knowledge and skills. Thus, it confers an aesthetic value to the products of the WWP project, which are the result of a "dialogue" of workers with the work produced, including sensibilities and emotions, and being able to express emotions, cultural values, historical references, etc. The Technical-entrepreneurial component

reaches its maximum development when the people from the WWP project are able include a sense in what they produce and create. The product consumer, if having a special sensitivity, will be able to appreciate the values transmitted by people, so a network of —cultural, historical and aesthetical— evocations will be created around the project products. Given this view, the merely commercial and financial aspects of the WWP project are exceeded, it serves not only to achieve "tangible" benefits —achieved "visible" benefits— but to care about the "intangible" benefits in the form of expansion of knowledge, and social and cultural aspects. Therefore, the success of the WWP project goes beyond the fulfillment of the objectives,

and requires an adequate social integration from the beginning, to "bring closer" the potentially affected people to work with them. The greater the social complexity and the more diverse the expectations of parties involved are, a much more sophisticated integration approach is required to make WWP project behave as an open system, capable of entering into "dialogue" and to work "with" people. This integration process exceeds the simple participation, and requires time. It requires a negotiation to develop the ability of "listening" and to look for shared responsibilities. It supposes to consider participation in all its wealth (Cernea, 1991; Chambers, 1997) to reach a mutual enrichment of people and to develop their creativity, as the ability to think and act in an original and imaginative manner (IPMA, 2010). The relations between the project people are the means to take advantage of the WWP individual and collective creativity within the projects' team, for the benefit of people and for the common good: this is what allows to start up actions, as an emerging movement that comes into people who discover something new. With this approach, each WWP project, as a Technical-entrepreneurial investment unit, becomes an innovation, a unique experiment, and whatever its outcomes are, it will always provide information to society.

   (C) The Political-contextual component. This component provides the WWP project with key elements to meet with the context in which the project is inserted. This area covers the ability of WWP project to make relations with political organizations and with the different public-administrations. This ability to make relations with the context depends on the acquisition of an internal organization for the project, which facilitates the participation and the social dinamics. The configuration of the WWP project must ensure that organizational change processes and structural processes are generated to allow the adaptation to the priorities of the involved people, also working with actors from the political and public administration fields. WWP organization has, therefore, an instrumental

character, to serve the population, and it is flexible and changing according to the learning and the new information generated. It is also necessary to consider that it is not appropriate to make decisions separately in order to encourage development, but it is required to integrate all areas of the social relations system, including the political and administrative systems. Thus, the WWP organization becomes a living entity, which transmit values to society —from its ethical component— and is capable of influencing and changing the political priorities and to work together.

(D) The Social learning component. This social learning component provides the WWP project with an integrating component, in order to ensure space and social learning processes among the different subsystems, which lead to learn from the real agents of change. This means to emphasize not in the production of deliverables and anonymous documents, but in bringing knowledge and planning practice to the action itself (Friedmann, 1993). The planner would stand between the other components, as the professional responsible for mobilizing the resources that seek to arrange the private and public energies in innovative solutions for the challenging problems in the public scope. This responsibility brings a new, and more entrepreneurial, mission to planners, identifying themselves with the *entrepreneurial function* of the technical-entrepreneurial component. The social learning process runs with the main assumption that all the effective learning comes from the experience of reality change. The population affected by the project actively participates in planning, with their own behaviors, attitudes and values —the ethical-social component— to promote, manage and direct the WWP project. Therefore, it is required to generate actions directed to integrate the experienced knowledge (Hulme, 1989) of the affected population, along with the planner's expertise, in order to provide a mutual learning. To do so, it is essential the reliability among the agents of the different social subsystems, generated from the responsibility, a proper behavior, rigor, trustworthiness, and an open and consistent attitude (IPMA, 2010). Similarly, to ensure these social learning areas and processes, it is required to have a proper appreciation of values, defined as the ability to understand the inherent qualities of others and understand their points of view. This leads us again to say that ethics and behavior of people involved are the basis of the WWP project.

Conclusion

This paper has presented a theoretical framework in rural development projects and a proposal —Working With People (WWP)— from planning as social learning

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and from the new postmodern sensibility. This WWP has been applied in several experiences in rural development projects, especially in LEADER areas (Cazorla et al., 2005; Cazorla et al., 2008; Cazorla et al., 2010; Cazorla & De los Ríos, 2012; De los Ríos et al., 2011). This experience provides evidence that the process of social learning into the development project can be effective for different initiatives by the public and the private sectors. Of course this does not mean that the WWP approach is always optimal in every context. Multiple ways and approaches can be sequenced and combined, even with the blueprint approaches. The components of planning as social learning, however, are very seldom mentioned or described as components of a successful new project, plan or policy from the point of view of the Project Management competences. The WWP approach opens up the possibility of new research questions and new postmodern approaches to lighten the existing questions within the rural development projects theory and in planning as a social learning research. At the core of the WWP project the balance between three dimensions of competences —technical, behavioral and contextual competence— is basic. It is also essential that the WWP project enable considerable progress to achieve a balanced role of agents and empowerment of the four areas of social relationships system: political, public, private and social. According to these principles, the questions and new researches can be broadly considered, in three dimensions of the WWP model.

First research questions are connected with the *contextual and political* dimension of the rural development project. At the failure of the modern project, in the post modernity emerges clearly universal values and future trends, this can be extrapolated to all the approaches and all circumstances. These WWP principles and values are the following: respect and primacy for the people, guarantee social well-being and sustainable development, bottom-up and multidisciplinary approach, and endogenous and integrated approaches. However, the best approach for any particular circumstance is dependent on the objectives of the intervention and the specific context. The contextual competence elements are critical in the WWP project, for an appropriate integration of the project team within the context of the project and within the permanent organization. Unfortunately, most national and international development agencies assume that there is one approach (their existing policy) which is the best, and they miss the essential first stage of the project cycle, without asking the question: *what type of intervention approach is best suited to this type of issue in this context?* The conceptual framework outlined in this WWP model provides a means to address the previous question, and contributes to "new ways" and "experience lessons"' from

GESPLAN research group. This WWP approach will contribute to the strengthening of the conceptual framework that underpins the rural development action.

The second type of questions are related to the *technical-entrepreneurial dimension* of the rural development project, as an innovation unit and "technical" tool capable of generating a flow of goods and services and to meet some targets, according to the required and quality standards. The technological innovation —from the fundamentals *technical competence*— has dominated debates concerning the development and project management, and has been traditionally conceived as a simple act of production, design and engineering of product or process, without mentioning the social processes. From the *WWP process approach innovation* is conceived *as a process of social learning* that includes new human relations, new management, administration and negotiation systems, new forms of learning, new ways of structuring and sharing information and knowledge among all the social agents that bring innovation. Innovation as a process of social learning might be therefore understood in WWP project, as a hard, open and interactive process with an important *social dimension*, which means a constant adaptation of the forms of knowledge and learning to the market and technological conditions constantly changing. In the WWP project approach we integrate the *planning as social learning,* we identify new roles for planners and the knowledge of *social planning* (Friedmann, 1987, 1993). The role of the planner in endogenous and the social planning practice is to help people to develop and plan for themselves (Cazorla & Friedmann, 1995).

A third type of research question to WWP planning enables us to consider topics of how the *behavioral competence* is developed from the project works. We refer to the need to assess, as well as the "technical assessment" of production obtained, the assessment of human action of people who get involved, participate and work in the project. In this conceptual framework, the beneficiary participation is essential for effective development interventions, but it is only one element of a systematic approach that builds up an empirical experience. The social learning process requires a collective dimension, it interrelates different knowledge in the decision-making of the actions. The new tendencies point towards acceleration and important changes in the ways of learning, betting for the processes based in the action —*learning by doing*—, as well as *competence-based learning* (De los Ríos et al., 2010) in the training of values and abilities essentially acquired through education. The *behavioral competence* —associated with the personal relationships between the individuals and groups managed in the projects and programs— have particular relevance in WWP. According to Scala, in this WWP approach, *the origin of knowledge is the observation and*

experience (Scala, 1991). This innovation as a learning process is especially important in the *rural development projects*, where it is demanded that the rural population change from being an object to become a subject of the projects (Oakley, 1993) and processes (Bond & Hulme, 1999), it is also needed to «put the first last» (Chambers, 1997).

Finally, and most crucial, the *four research questions* in the WWP approach are related to *knowledge and action*. This approach to rural development planning research enables us to consider questions of how *knowledge* —knowledge of the population experienced with the planner's expertise— is, and can be better connected to *action* (rural development project). In Working With People (WWP) —in the same way that the European rural development LEADER initiative— the innovation is essentially defined *as a process* (Cazorla et al., 2005), and is mainly obtained from the local popular knowledge, which is as appropriate for the action as the knowledge obtained from the professionals and the external input (Uphoff, 1990). In the same way, by accepting and encouraging "intangible" investments, WWP and Leader projects help to reinforce the social, cultural and environmental sectors. WWP as a *learning process* means also the development of the mental activity of *contemplation*. We understand contemplation as *the application of the mind —to a material or spiritual object— with attention and a particular affection*. Its aim is to know in a sensitive and intellectual way the realities, being always respectful with the others (Cazorla et al., 2001) and from the *appreciation of their values*, as the ability to perceive the intrinsic qualities in other people and understand their point of view. This knowledge, seen in a double perspective —sensible and intellectual— starts with a perceptive activity, which is put into practice through the view of things, thinking about them and listening to people. Understanding this Working With People approach requires from the professionals of development to give up their own ideas and to create a new *social sensibility*. WWP also covers the ability to *communicate* with them and to be receptive to their opinions, value judgments, and ethical standards. From the understanding of these questions it will be possible to move forward to an enhancement of rural development projects, making the interventions to be more efficient and human.

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