



Social Aspects in Water Services Management

Mar Webinar 17 Sept, 2025 by Tapio S. Katko, Associate Professor,
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A. Pacey, Sociology:

* Technology alone is not enough (1977)

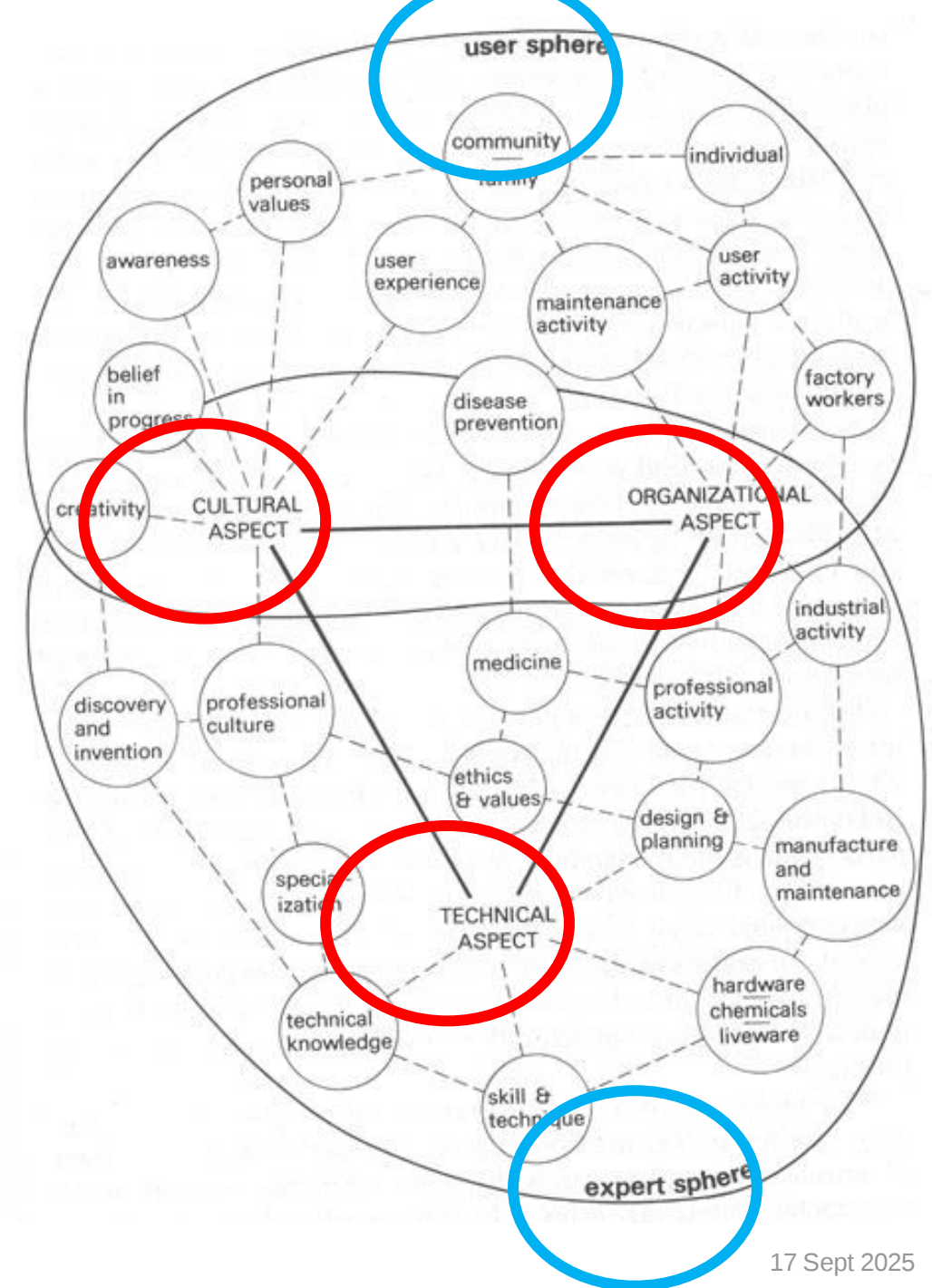
Pacey (1983,49)

* user vs. expert sphere

* Cultural, Organisational and Technical aspects (on the right)

Suominen (2025)

* National culture vs. culture of institutions managing water

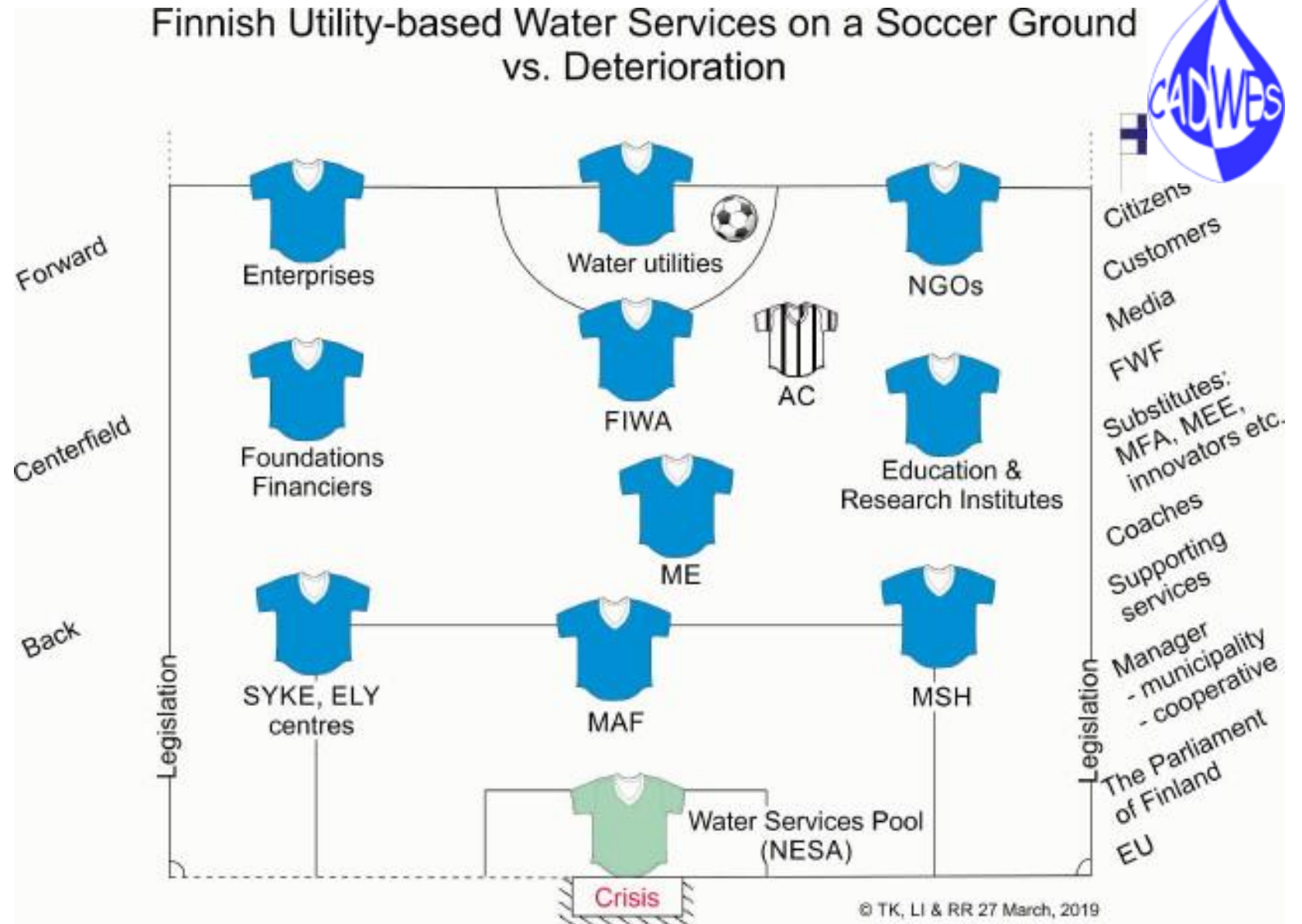


Other examples on wider understanding of technology

- In Tennessee Valley: the success of regionalisation is based on **70% politics, 20% engineering, and 10% on good luck** (Thackston et al., 1983)
- Prof. D. Mara: There are no solutions without **political solutions** (Mara 1976, ix).
- In **economics** with have several schools of thoughts (not exact)
- SWS 2023: innovation is a much **broader concept**: also in **governance, finance, values, and culture**
- **PESTEL**- framework (Political, Economic, Socio-institutional, Technological, Ecological, and Legislative) framework, common in Futures Research and Administrative Studies. (or PESTELE)

Institutions vs. Organisations

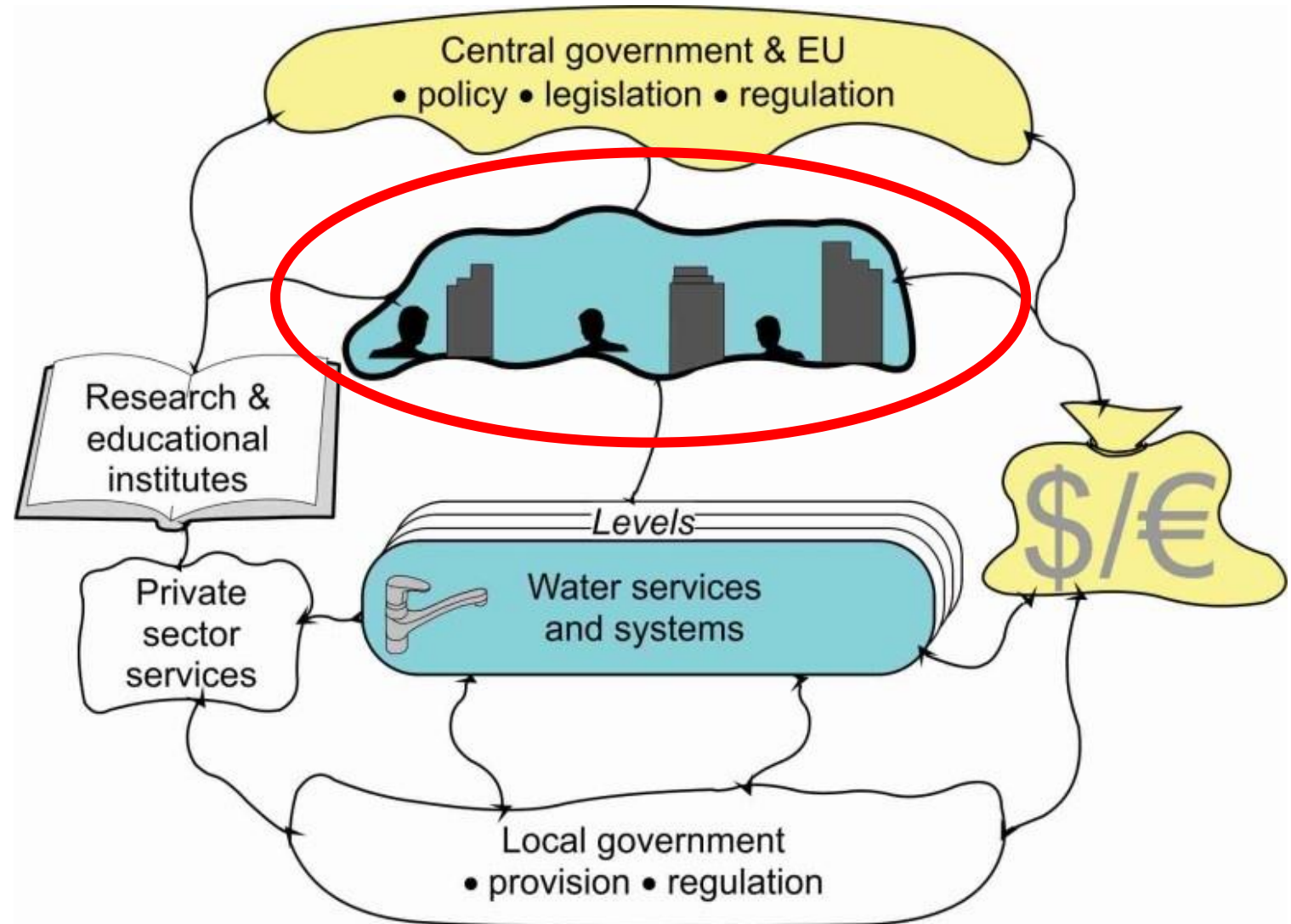
D.C. North: "Soccer analogy": Institutions = formal and informal rules; Organisations = players



Framework of Water Services and Systems

Provision:
municipalities

Production: utilities
or real estates
(Ostrom 1990, 31)



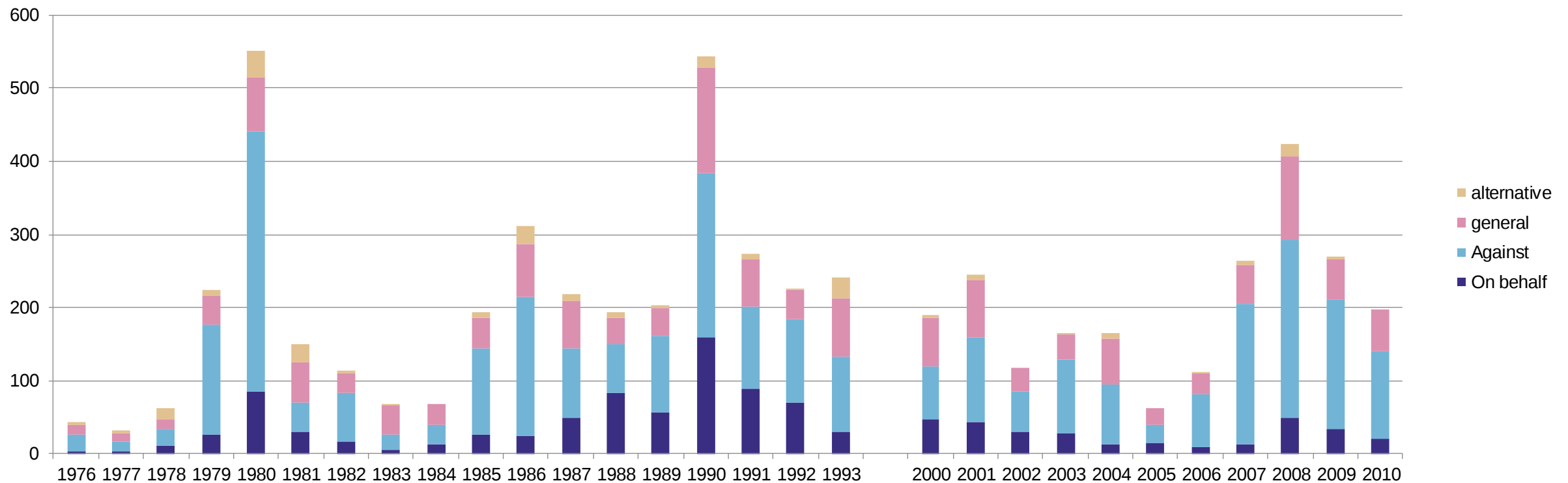
For developing economies in particular (Suominen 2025)

- **Equity and access** (clean and safe water as a basic human right, gender)
- **Community participation** (stakeholder consultations, water use associations, champions)
- **Cultural and social norms** (practices, beliefs, taboos)
- **Public awareness and education** (WASH, responsible water use)
- **Conflict and cooperation** (scarcity, unequal distribution, inclusiveness)
- Affordability and Willingness to **Pay**



The role of media 1976-2010:

MAR case for Turku region (Kurki 2016)





MAR case in Tampere region

Overcritical local
newspaper, passive
role of the water
company

Lack of strategic
thinking by the
company in the start

AR - goodbye !





Findings on Managing MAR projects in Finland

Starting points:

- For community water supply, MAR **offers major advantages:** quality, stable temperature, limited or non-use of chemicals, security of supplies
- **But, influence of publicity and politisation are strong** in environmental conflicts: resistance in esp. large projects

Findings:

good and professional planning

Risks in planning:

- **too large** quantities wanted
- ignoring **proactive media relations**
- inadequate **hydrogeological** studies
- making **neighbours angry** (municipalities, landowners)
- **nature conservation** areas
- **Resistance in large projects**, much less in small ones

Concl. **strategic thinking needed**

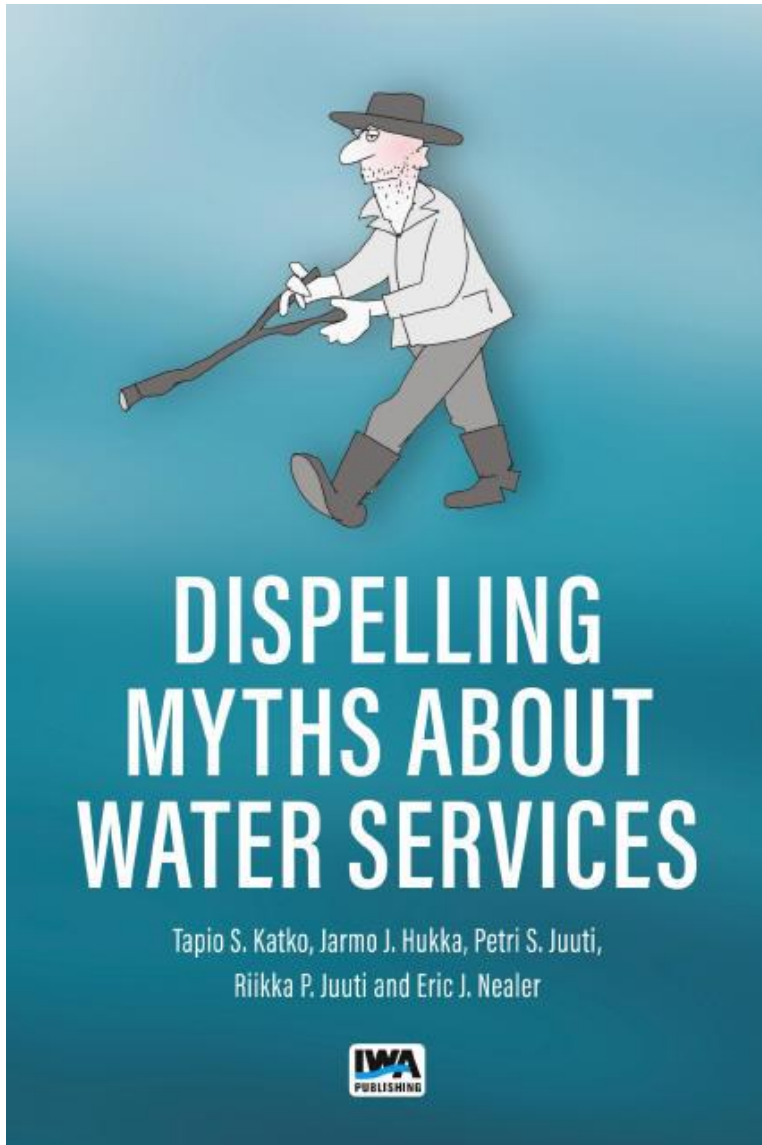
Contents:

- Original book in Finnish with **24 myths** in 2022
- **Rewritten in English** with 21 myths mainly with international sources for international readers + two more authors
- Requested **reflections** from 6 countries

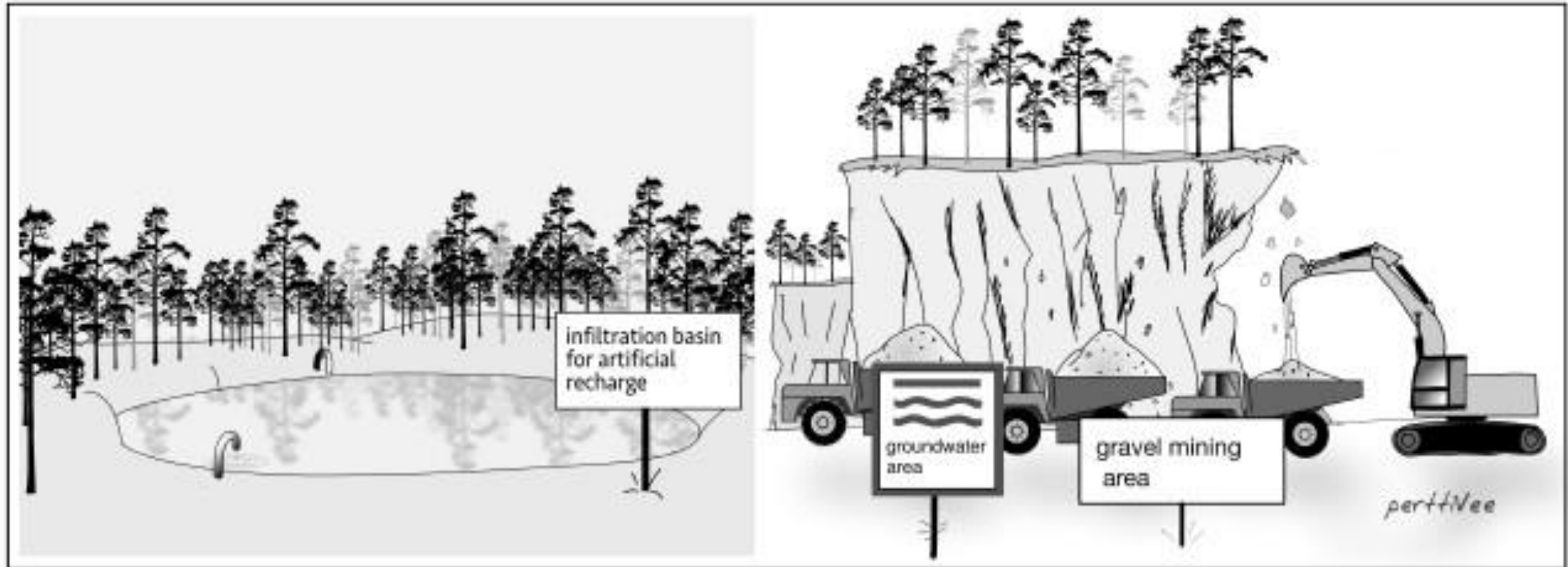
Publication:

eBook available freely, a **printed book** on sale (print on demand)

Reduced price: Email publications@iwap.co.uk and quote the code "DMAWS25"



Myth 3: Managed groundwater aquifer recharge will damage groundwater formations



Myth 13: Water services have far too many stakeholders

fragmented? - legislation





Concluding remarks (MAR and Myths)

1. Adequate and legal resources and control are required

2. Water Services **education and research worldwide needs** to be expanded from water and wastewater treatment also to **policy, institutional and governance issues**

3. **Awareness raising and proactive communications** need to become a **key strategic tool** by water utilities – for creating public trust!

Thank you! Questions, please!

Sources

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