

February
06
2024

Are you thīrsty?

An Exhibition by
Sophie Gong

Intro

Introduction

Welcome to this deep-dive into Munich and its drinking water supply!

This is a poster exhibition developed as part of my final project for my Environmental Studies Certificate Program at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society.

Picture this: you just woke up and feel thirsty from all the sleep you have been getting. What do you do? If you do drink tap water, you would turn on the tap, fill up a glass or two and have right at it, correct?

But have you ever thought about where the water even came from before it out the tap? Where do all these pipes lead to?

Because German tap water is required by law to always be suitable for drinking (potable), the terms “drinking water” and “tap water” are commonly used interchangeably.



How much do you already know about Munich tap water? Scan the QR Code to test yourself! Don't forget to take a screenshot of your answers to compare them later!

This is what you can expect now: a brief history of Munich drinking water, followed by an explanation of the current infrastructure setup. Based off this, I designed surveys to investigate public opinions on the value of tap water and conducted more in-depth interviews to collect personal views on people's relationship with (drinking) water.

History

Let's take a short detour to Munich 200 years ago:

Munich was growing rapidly during this time, so the water supply would have to grow with the population! This posed a problem since the well water (water from underground) supplying the people before was starting to prove insufficient in volume. This was not a good time to drink water in Munich. Cholera was on the rise, and the well water was also contaminated! A fraud was committed: water shortage led someone to pump river water into the well water systems to shell off as well water. The problem with that was the lack of a proper wastewater system back then.

Intro

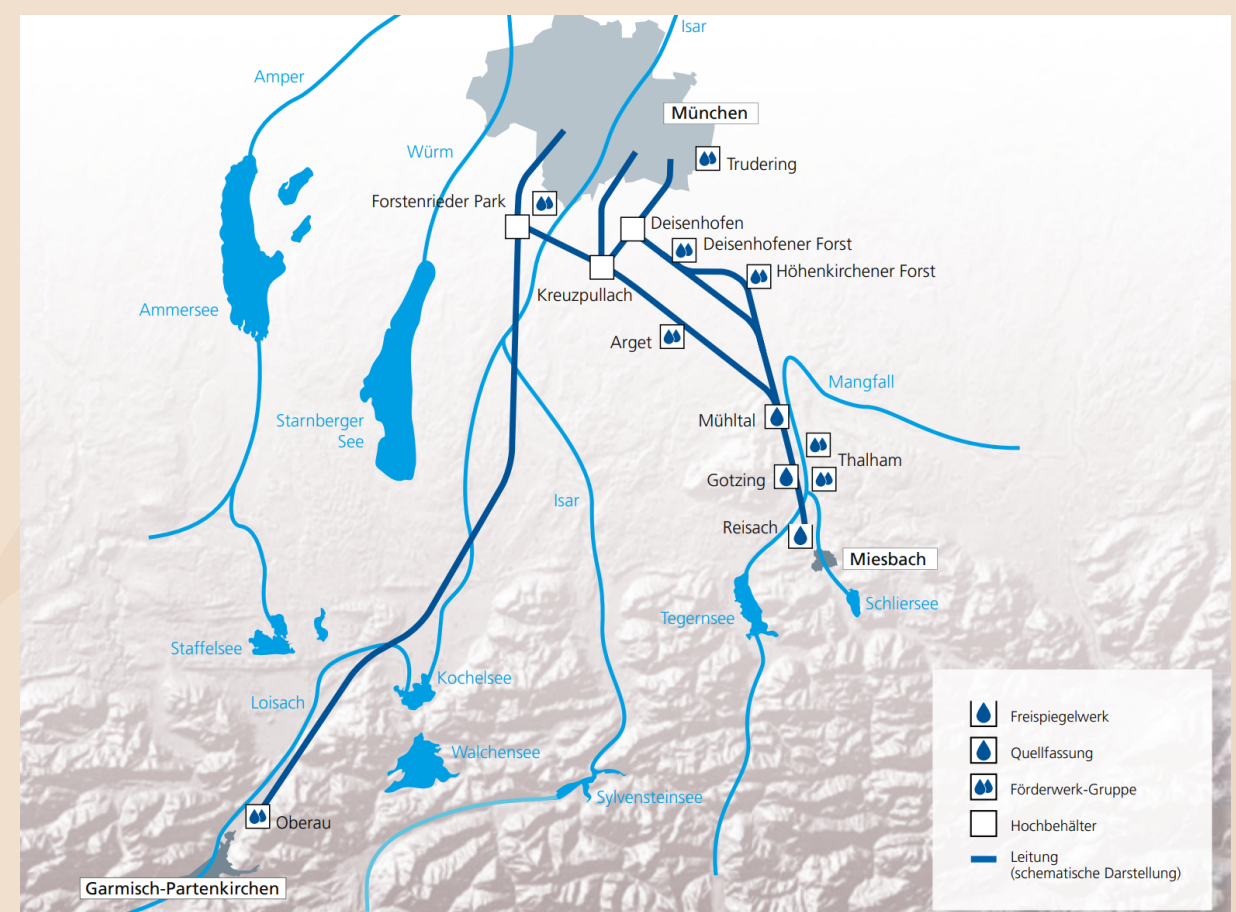
Nowadays, we have a great wastewater system in place (think flushing toilets and a whole pipe system underground!). That was not the case back then: feces would end up draining into the rivers and then pumped back and given to the people as "well water."

Obviously, drinking bottled water like we could now was not an option. The development of an additional water supply source was proposed, and five different plans were put forward. Just in time for the real spike in population, Munich started work on the Mangfalltal plan in the 1880s, which leads us to this day.

Current Setup

Today, the Stadtwerke München GmbH, or SWM, manages Munich's drinking water supply. They are on a mission to supply everyone in the area with clean tap water. Water supply is listed as part of the "Daseinsvorsorge," or public welfare, which is the responsibility of the commune or state we live in (at least that is the case for EU countries).

About 75 % of Munich's drinking water nowadays comes from the Mangfalltal area southeast of Munich; the rest is supplied from the Loisachtal area as well as the Munich gravel plain (Münchner Schotterebene), which can help smooth out some high-demand peaks.



The Mangfalltal water supply location has a big advantage that is always mentioned: the spring lies above Munich altitude, which makes for less dependency on pumps. Water is delivered to three different water storage units that each supply other parts of Munich depending on their altitude.

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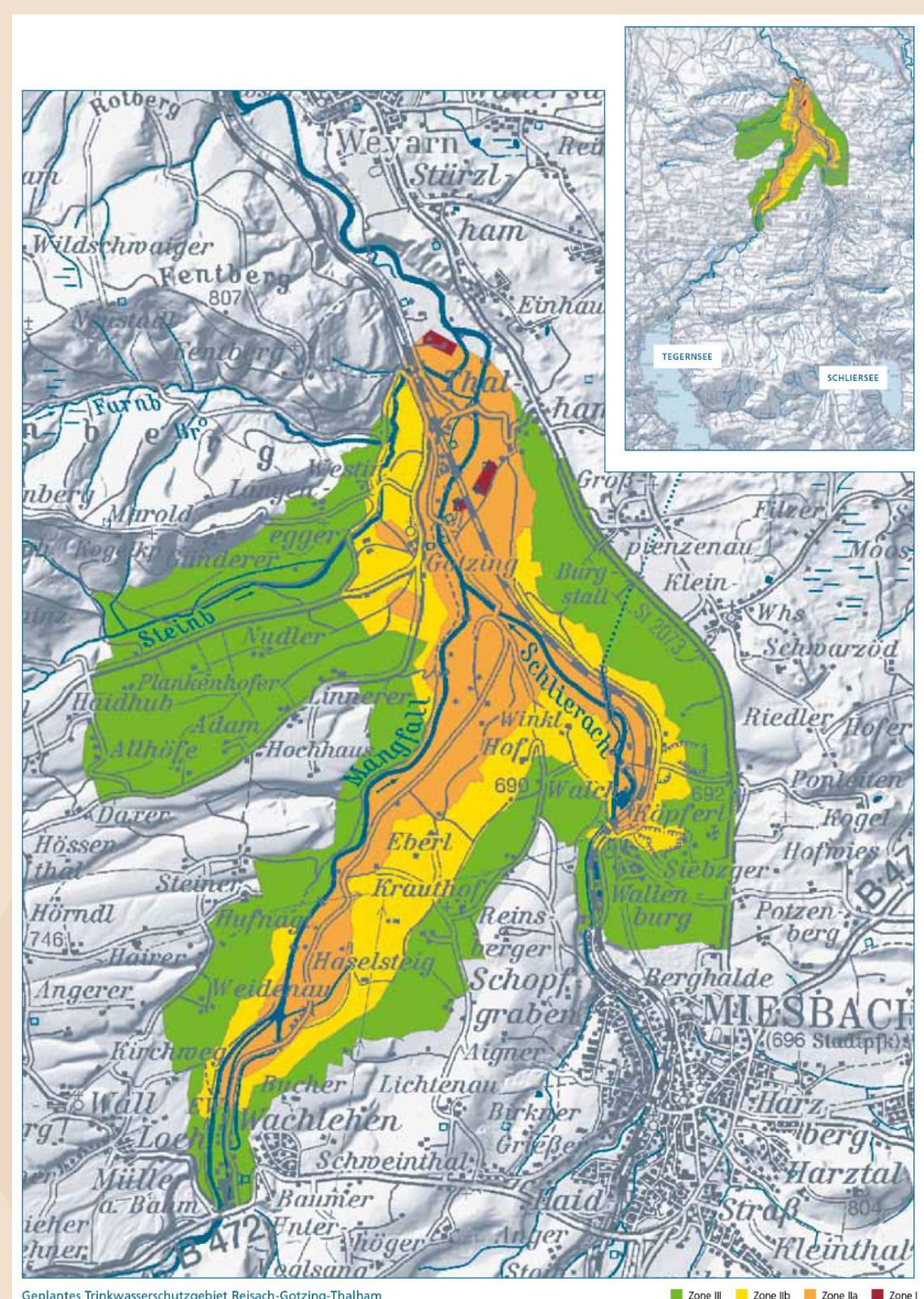
Water Protection Zones

There are three significant areas in a water protection zone:

Zone I: The part right around the water extraction area; it is generally not allowed to enter this part

Zone II: This is the area around Zone I, in which it is not allowed to lay wastewater pipes, do soil interventions or fertilize with liquid manure, slurry, or solid manure.

Zone III: Major soil interventions are forbidden, and handling hazardous substances is restricted to a minimum. High-risk facilities like industrial plants, oil pipelines, or tank farms are forbidden. Right now, there are only two water protection zones in the Mangfalltal area. A water protection Zone III was proposed after an increase in nitrate levels was detected.



Water Protection Zone in the Mangfalltal area:
The proposed Zone 3 is marked in green.

Conflict

Disagreement

Starting in the 1870s, people from Munich acquired big plots of land outside the city borders around the Mangfall River area. During the previous 70 years, many millers had settled around that area to make use of the river's current. These millers were not pleased with the developments and saw their freedom to manage their land restricted in the face of Munich's increased water supply needs. Back then, land ownership meant more power over the groundwater below the land, which the city people understood. In 1880, farmers and sawmill operators took to the streets to display their discontent - to no avail. The very same year, Munich voted for the expansion of its water supply to the Mangfalltal area.

Now, back to today: in recent years, a conflict between residents of the Mangfalltal area and Munich has grabbed political attention from the media. The headlines like "Who does the water belong to?" by Süddeutsche Zeitung or "The eternal dispute over Munich's drinking water" by BR24 made waves. But what exactly is the conflict about? Who does the water belong to, really?

Old Rights

It has been disputed whether the old rights (Altrechte) to water extraction for Munich's drinking water are still authorized. The way they were historically laid down was for an unlimited timespan and also did not include a volume limit. Today, such rights usually have to be renewed regularly.



Munich's mayor receives demand to reevaluation

Some main points of contention seemed to be:

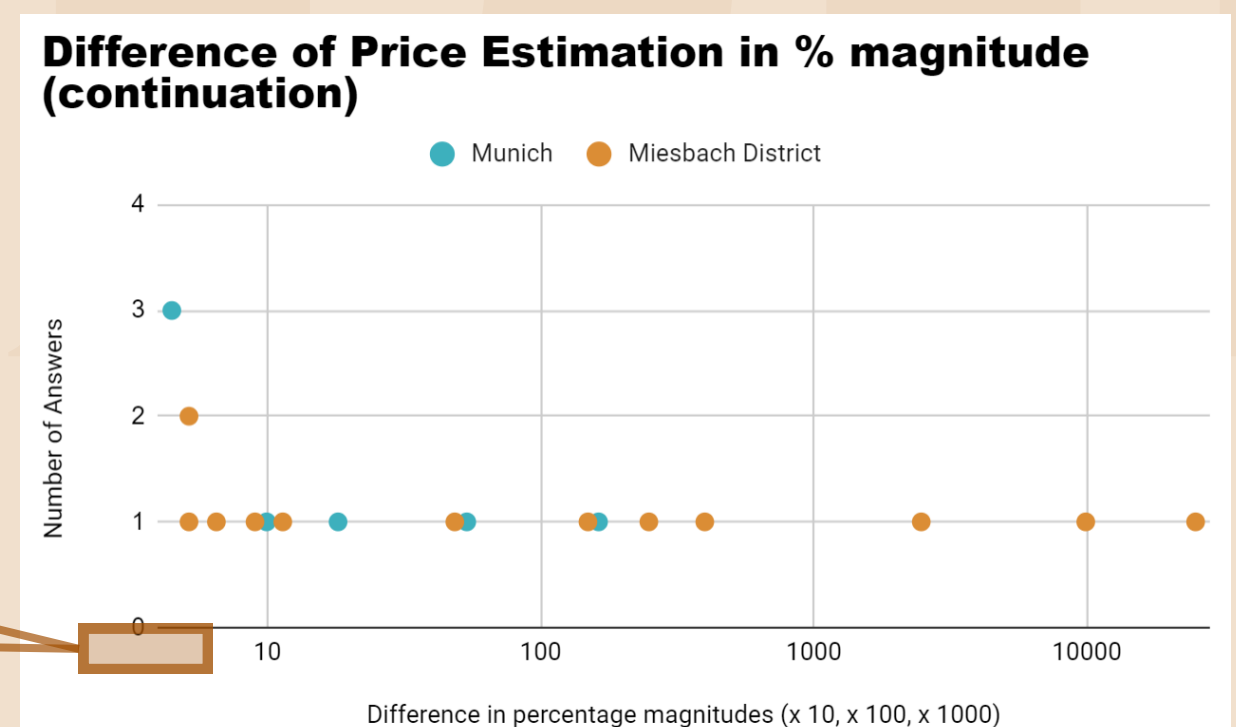
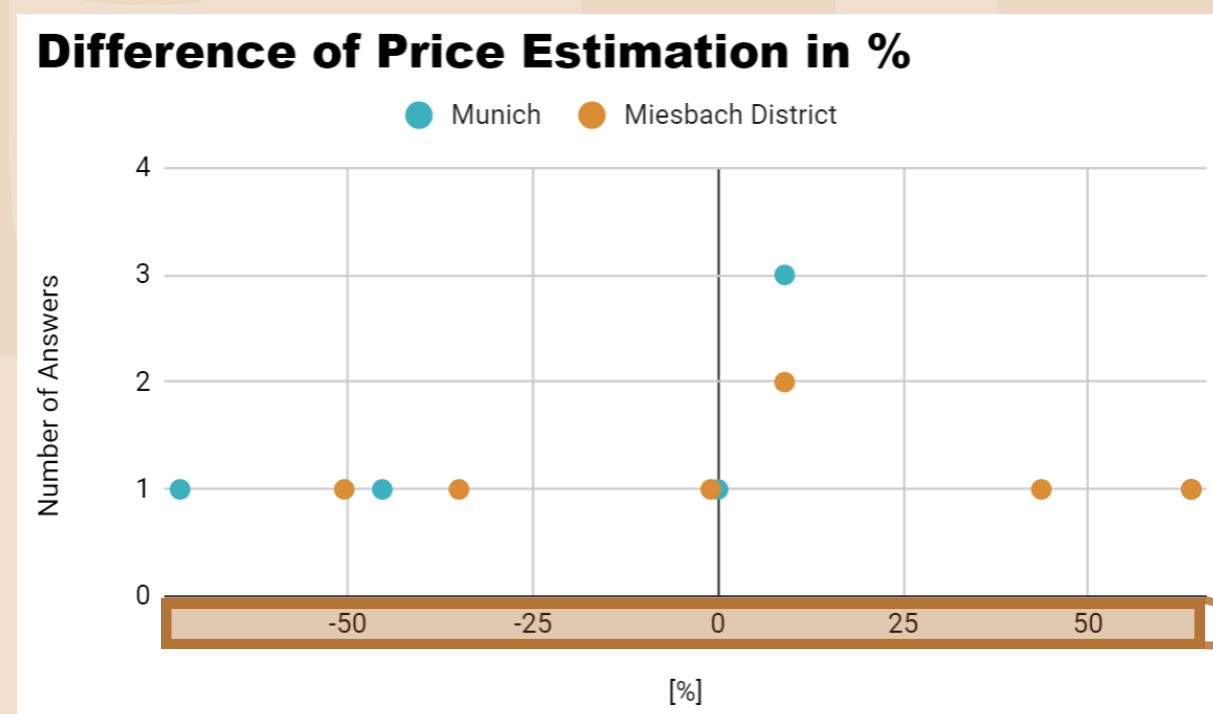
- Munich's right to extract water from the Mangfalltal area at all, revocation of old water rights
- The expansion of the water protection area in the water extraction zone
- Restrictions to locals caused by the expansion.

As many individuals have pointed out during my research progress, this conflict is very complex. It cannot be fully described in a few sentences.

Public

This part is for the numberphiles! To test how differently the Munich public and Miesbach public value water, I went out and asked them (online and in person)!

1. If you had to guess, what would you say is the price of tap water in your area?



This graph shows the difference between the guess and the actual price in percentage relation to the actual price. So, +50 % would mean that someone guessed the price to be 1,5 times the actual price. Orange indicates a guess from the Miesbach district, and blue is a guess from Munich.

Now, this is where it gets interesting. Some people guessed such high numbers that a regular scaling would be extremely long and would not fit onto any poster. That is why I continued the diagram in a logarithmic scaling. This means that we are looking at the magnitude here: a dot at 1.000 means that the difference between guessed and actual price is 1.000 times the actual price!

Sadly, this scale does not work for negative values, so I had to split the diagram into two parts. Overall, people from the Miesbach district gave a higher guess than Munich residents, who generally guessed lower prices.

If we use monetary value to measure how people value water in general, then we could say Miesbach residents think water is more valuable than Munich residents believe.

0,5 € **50.000 €**
Lowest Guess Highest Guess

1,83€
Real Value Munich

2,02€
Real Value Miesbach district

Public

2. What unit of water makes sense to you to guess the price for?

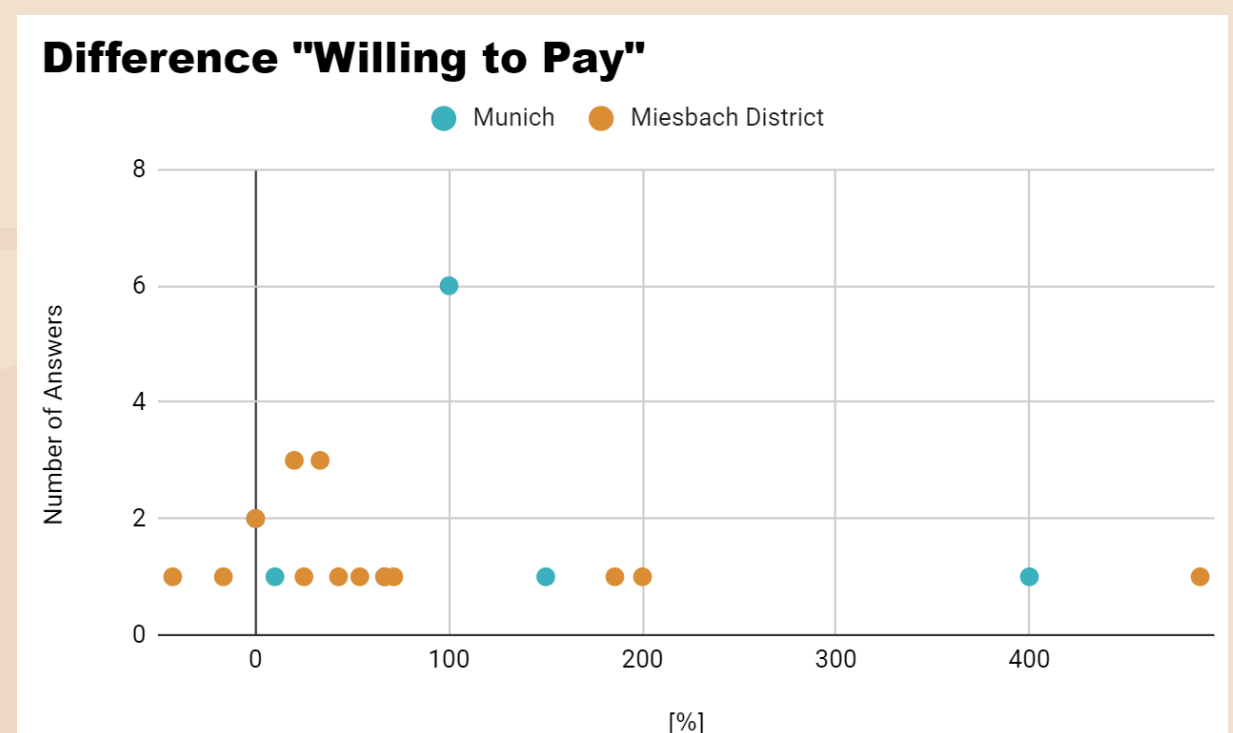
In Munich, half said 1L while the other half said 1.000L. In Miesbach district, about twice as many people suggested 1L as 1.000L.

3. How high do you think your water bill is per month? How sure are you about that?

In Munich, nobody was very sure (9 or 10 on a scale of 1-10) of their water price guess's accuracy. Still, when asked about their estimate of their water bill each month, they were less sure of that than the water price. On the other hand, people from the Miesbach district seemed to be more certain about the accuracy of their water bill than the water price.

4. How much money are you willing to pay for your water per month?

Some members of the public were concerned about the rising water prices in the future. In contrast, most experts and some public opinions said that they would pay as much as is necessary for water without setting any limit. Interestingly, the experts that did state a specific number as their "willing to pay per month" amount ranged between 20 € - 60 €, which is on the lower end of the spectrum compared to the overall answers.



This graph shows the difference between what people think they are paying and what they would be willing to pay in percentage.

Example: I think I pay 10 € a month. I would be willing to pay 50 € a month. My answer is at +400 % in the graph.

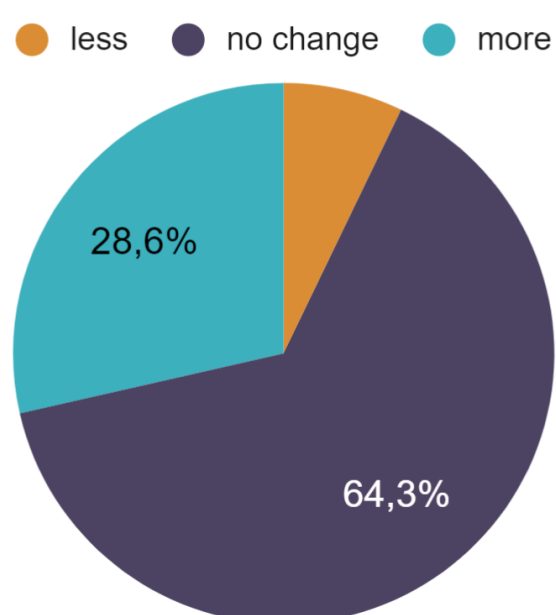
Public

At this point, the following information snippets were given to the respondents:

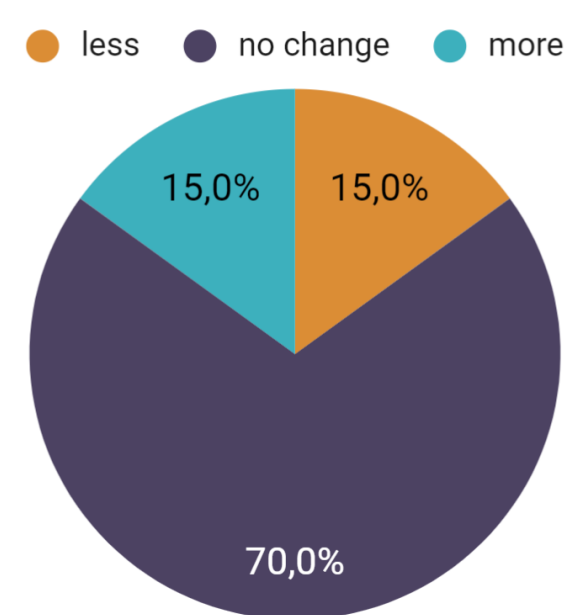
- Munich obtains around 75-80 % of its drinking water from the groundwater of the Mangfalltal area in the district of Miesbach.
- In order to ensure high water quality, there are water protection zones in which, depending on the situation, ground activities such as sewage drainage, agricultural fertilization and industrial plant construction are prohibited/severely restricted.
- Munich has historically used water from the Isar and its side streams as drinking water, but due to population growth, drinking water has been obtained from the Mangfalltal area since 1883.
- A person in Munich consumes an average of approximately 130 liters of water per day.
- Drinking water is used for e.g: Drinking, cooking, showering, flushing the toilet, watering the garden, washing clothes.

5) With this knowledge, did something change about how much you would be willing to pay for your water per month?

After Info: Change in "Money Willing to Pay" Munich

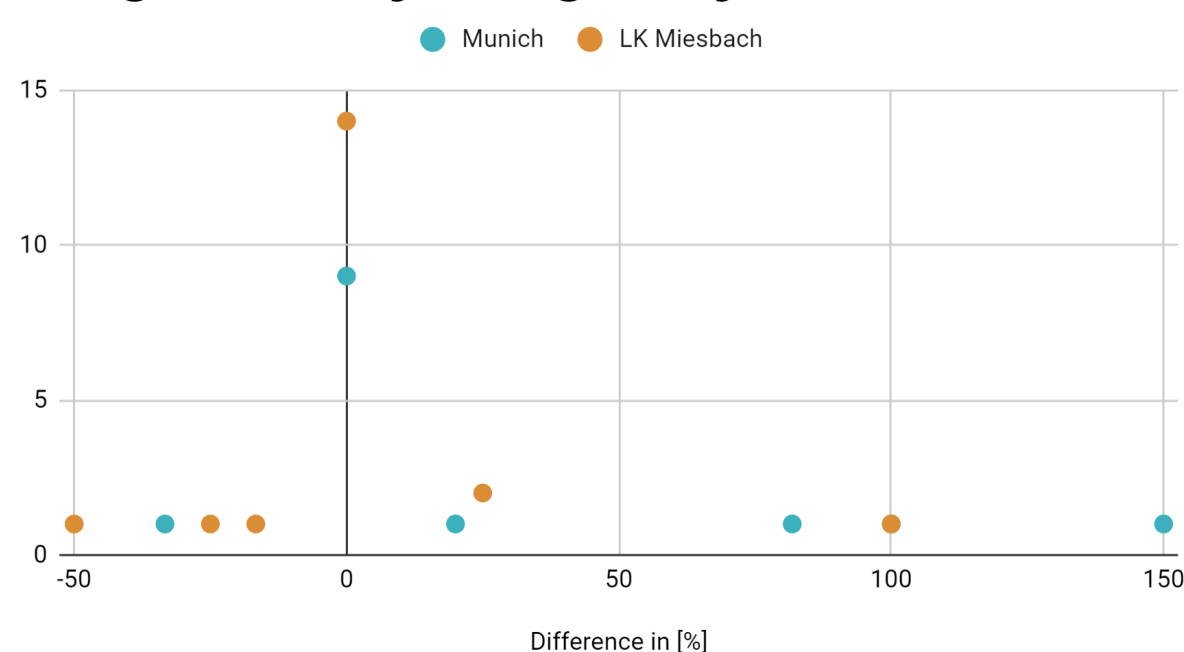


After Info: Change in "Money Willing to Pay" Miesbach district



Most respondents in both areas said the information does not affect how much they would be willing to pay for their monthly water bill. However, the share of Munich respondents who increased their answers was almost double that of those from the Miesbach district.

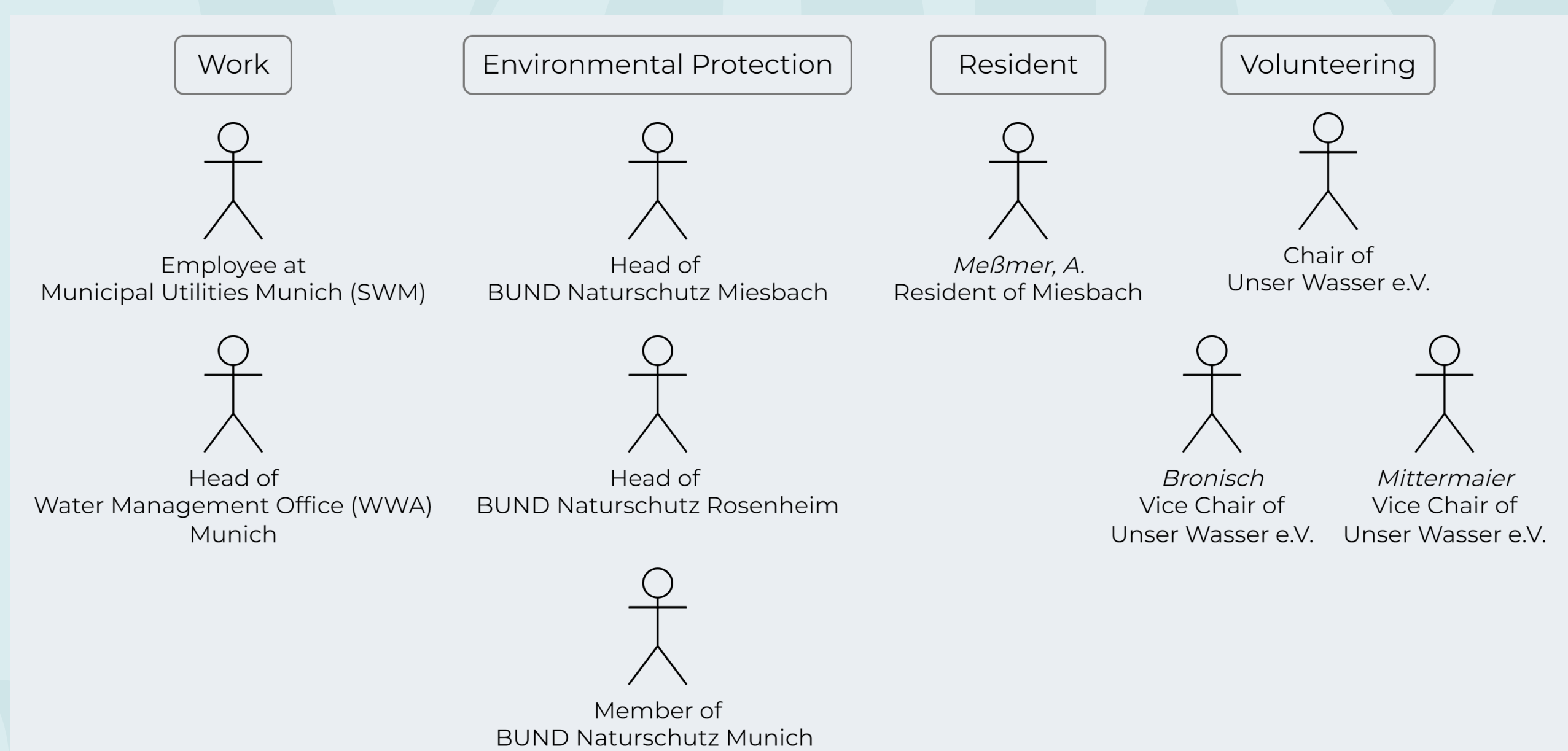
Change in "Money Willing to Pay" after Info



The difference between what they would be willing to pay with information vs. without is measured in the percentage of the original price the respondents were willing to pay. Example: if someone was willing to pay 10 € a month and changed to 15 € now, it would be a +50 % difference.

Voices

I spoke more in-depth with some individuals who have a special relationship with water within or outside the context of this conflict. We'll call them "experts". The main goal was not to find out more about the conflict itself but mostly to understand each interview partner and how water has shaped their life in the past, today, as well as what they think the future of water holds for us. During the surveys, I also spoke to people on the streets, some of whom told me more about their unique relationship with water.



My interview partners and their roles

After my first interview with *Unser Wasser e. V.*, I continued to speak with representatives and members of *BUND Naturschutz*, a resident of Miesbach, and the Head of the Water Management Office (WWA) Munich. My last interview partner, an *SWM* employee, adds to a more diverse perspective.

Many interview partners were eager to talk about technicalities within the dispute, it was even mentioned twice that emotions have no place in this discussion when I asked about feelings towards certain situations.

Voices

Three representatives of Unser Wasser e. V. agreed to speak with me for my first interview. Unser Wasser e. V. is an association for the preservation of property and independence in the district of Miesbach. They started off the conversation by telling me about the history of the Munich water supply before stressing that Unser Wasser e. V. is not against the *SWM* but rather against injustice. Injustice would be mentioned a lot going forth in varying contexts. They advocate for people in the Miesbach district affected by the restrictions that come with a water protection zone expansion and think that the limits are too stringent for the current situation.

They tell a story of injustice that Munich puts onto the people of Miesbach through the lack of accountability for its actions and inadequate compensation. With that comes a perceived power difference between the *SWM* and residents of the Miesbach district. When asked about it, most of my other interview partners said they did not perceive a power difference in the conflict.



Mittermaier
Vice Chair of
Unser Wasser e. V.

I grew up in this area. I still remember a village nearby being resettled due to water protection and extraction. A school friend of mine had to move and change schools.



Bronisch
Vice Chair of
Unser Wasser e. V.

I'm not originally from here. I moved here 25 years ago to be with my wife. Her family has been in possession of a small farm in this area for generations and I could observe the management of neighboring farms. [...] I also got to know many people affected by the groundwater extraction.

Eye to eye

The members of *Unser Wasser e. V.* bring up a feeling of not being heard and not being spoken to on equal footing about communication with the water suppliers. Fair communication between a big GmbH and an individual is hard, especially when a power difference is perceived. The *SWM* employee told me quite the opposite: personable face-to-face conversations with individuals have been quite constructive and on equal footing in his experience, even with *SWM*'s "opponents". He sees a developing group dynamic as more of a barrier to equal communication due to its underlying hostility.

Voices

Respect Nature

The Head of *BUND Naturschutz* Rosenheim uses the terms power difference or injustice differently: she emphasizes that power is held by humans over the environment. Her example is the development of a hydropower plant that uses water from the Mangfall River. The agreed-upon minimal water flow volumes are too low and affect the ecological habitat negatively.

She emphasizes the injustice that stems from a lack of appreciation for the general environment and the prioritization of economic interests over environmental protection. Something that is on her mind a lot when it comes to drinking water, though, is safeguarding its quality. She has heard of cases of drinking water contamination in her vicinity. She would be distraught if she was affected by that.

A member of BUND Naturschutz Munich has a different take on respecting nature:

When I was a student, I had the opportunity to play around with a world population program on one of those old PCs from back in the day.

The software had different parameters that you could adjust to influence global population development, I'm sure there are much more advanced versions out there nowadays. Here's the thing: no matter what combination of parameter adjustments we used, none of them could bring down population development to a steady state.

I was always an exponential curve. That is when I first noticed that this is a problem.

He goes on to say that the need for electricity, going back to the hydropower plant example, and water is so unfulfillable because of overpopulation. There is no way to balance our overpopulated wants and needs with respect for the environment.

Capitalistic Motives?

Ulterior motives behind the SWM's actions are suspected. Why do they advertise their tap water so much? There should be no competition to it. Yet, SWM had to stop promoting their tap water as healthy because that would interfere with the business of bottled water companies. Is there a future plan for SWM to sell bottled water, too? A comparison to Coca-Cola and Nestlé is drawn.

SWM advertises Munich's tap water on their website and even has a document about Munich's drinking water background freely available online.



Ökologischer Landbau im Mangfalltal

Die SWM fördern im Rahmen der Initiative „Ökobauern“ den ökologischen Landbau im Einzugsgebiet der Wassergewinnung Mangfalltal. Mehr als 180 Landwirte haben ihren Betrieb seither umgestellt: Sie bewirtschaften ihre Felder boden- und gewässerschonend und setzen auf artgerechte Tierhaltung.

From the SWM website: Organic Agriculture in the Mangfall Valley



M-Wasser – eines der besten Trinkwasser in Europa

Das Münchner Trinkwasser ist eines der besten Trinkwasser Europas. Rund um die Uhr sorgen wir dafür, dass es bei Ihnen quellfrisch aus der Leitung kommt.

From the SWM website: M-Water - one of the best drinking waters in Europe

Organic farming is the most significant advertisement point for the SWM; they are proud to voluntarily financially support farmers in the water protection zone who want to convert to organic farming. The agglomeration of organic farms in the Mangfalltal area is one of Germany's most extensive continuous organic farming areas. This kind of support is a common practice, and SWM is even known to pay higher sums than other water suppliers in Bavaria. On the other hand, it is said that some farmers develop a dependency on those payments. Since they are not mandatory, they lose a little of their freedom in economic decisions.

It is also mentioned that SWM is a GmbH, so it is a for-profit company. The SWM employee wants to clarify that the water supply sector is an exception and operates in expense coverage to pursue its mission of public welfare provision.

Voices

On the Grounds of...

Individuals have complained of property values decreasing, but some people, the SWM employee included, would say that residential property in a water protection zone even increases in value because an industrial park will not be built in its vicinity.

A survey respondent mentioned his grandparents' leased farm (gepachteter Hof). The area was declared a water protection zone, and his grandparents were forced to move to a small flat instead. A picture on the wall shows their old farm. In flames, from controlled burning. They still don't know who burnt it down.

I had the opportunity to sell a property in a water protection zone once. In my ad, I did not indicate that it was in the protection zone to see how reactions would be. When an interested buyer came over to discuss the transaction, I came clean and told him about the protection zone. He immediately wanted to walk out the door. I tried to talk to him about the pricing but his willingness to pay had gone down dramatically. He did not buy the plot.

Grazing Ban

The Bavarian State Office for Environment (Bayerische Landesamt für Umwelt, short LfU) issued a grazing ban in the water protection zone in recent years, but it was stopped by a petition. Meßmer, a Miesbach resident with a natural sciences degree, saw the grazing ban as necessary. He observed farmers and their farming style and came to the conclusion that their current actions would drain the soil more quickly and increase the risk of contamination. He emphasizes discussion and compromise over forceful bans.

The Head of *BUND Naturschutz* Miesbach was not convinced. Although he is not entirely against the ban, he found the way LfU handled the situation to be bad etiquette. There needs to be a balance between the LfU's academic perspective and the farmers' practical perspective.

What does that mean? Academia bases predictions on figures and statistics to take preventative measures, while practical application initiates change as a response to occurring problems.

Meßmer supports this in a way: "We need to tap into our spiritual understanding of water. Only considering scientific aspects will obstruct our vision." By spiritual, he means to honor water's cleansing and connecting attributes, to see it as a memory storage. It recycles our behavior and mirrors it back to us: on a trip to a Peruvian desert community next to a metal factory, he realized that the metal factory was polluting the groundwater, making the community sick: essentially giving back to humans what humans gave to the water.

Voices

Politics

Academic views by the LfU have not only been in opposition with practical application, but they have also been disputed by political campaigns: this is also where the SWM employee sees an unresolved conflict. He sees a conflict of interest in local district politicians' actions and suggests that the desire to be re-elected biases their actions. The water extraction issue is instrumentalized and used to maximize the possibility of a successful campaign. Meßmer goes one step further and says that politicians do not understand the real issues behind the conflict. He especially sees attempts to regulate or solve problems using monetary means as an arrogant approach to control the public's behavior instead of equipping them with adequate education to make informed decisions independently.



Wasserschloss Reisach

A Landmark in Munich's Water Supply

Wasserschloss Reisach is a groundwater collection infrastructure and has been in operation for about 100 years now, with no renovations needed during that time period. A Miesbach resident and survey respondent told me about her



M-Wasserweg Visitors

elementary school education, which included a bike trip to Wasserschloss Reisach, and how she still likes to go there sometimes to relax. She is very happy to be living near the water protection zone and values the guarantee of clean drinking water a lot. One can book a guided tour that teaches you about Munich's water supply, which includes Wasserschloss Reisach.

The SWM employee took that tour as a university student and was highly impressed by this building. Later on, he applied for a job at SWM because the Wasserschloss had been burnt into his memory and impressed him so much that he could not let this opportunity go. During an open house day, an elderly woman approached him and told him that she and her family had lived in Reisach. Her family's plot of land was bought for a good sum, which enabled them to move somewhere nicer. She saw it as the best thing that could have happened to her family.

Wasserschloss Reisach is also part of the M-Wasserweg, a hiking or biking trail with 20 stops that teaches you about Munich's water supply using graphics and informational signs.

Voices

Daily Paper

The only point of agreement on the conflict topic: a disdain for the media portrayal. One-sided and sensationalizing coverage of issues to find a bad guy and a good guy, almost a David and Goliath-like narrative, do not reflect my interview partners' concerns nor those of others affected. In an article interviewing an affected farmer, the reporters left out that attempts were made to compensate him, and he just did not agree with them. There are very few articles that portray the two sides with equality. The media seems to push the narrative of big city vs. small farmers.

Mangfalltal

Streit ums Münchner Trinkwasser geht in die nächste Runde

23. Juni 2023, 14:48 Uhr | Lesezeit: 2 min

SZ (2023)

Kuh oder Kläranlage? - Streit ums Münchner Trinkwasser

BR 24 (2022)

Bronisch says that portrayal by the media often turns this issue into a by-product of the urban-rural conflict when it really has nothing to do with it in his eyes. "Why should it have anything to do with it?" Conflict is often depicted as farmers against city people, but the three members of Unser Wasser e. V. are here to say: everyone is affected.



Three Members of
Unser Wasser e. V.

Why do we care so much?
Because it affects everyone
in the district!

Streit ums Trinkwasser

Münchner Durst

Deutschlandfunk (2021):

On the other hand, the Head of Water Management Office Munich (WWA) is of the opinion that the urban-rural conflict is precisely the root problem, but someone is blowing it up disproportionately. He disproves this sentiment and describes a symbiosis between urban and rural habitats, wherein both benefit from each other equally.

What is the key issue in this whole conflict?

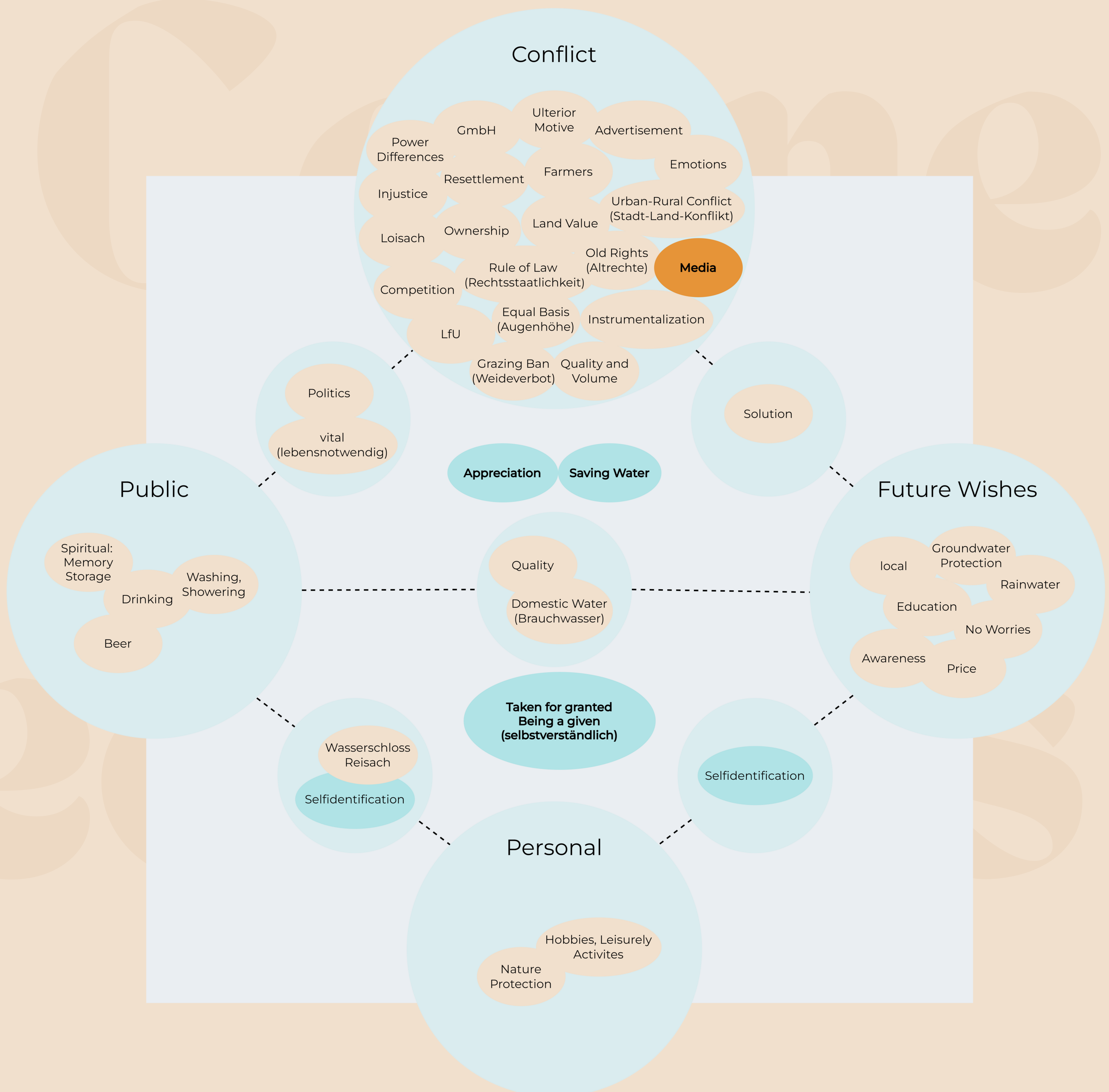
I have heard about political instrumentalization, lack of education, urban-rural conflict, media misrepresentation, power dynamics, injustice, and capitalistic motives, amongst other themes. Everyone has a different opinion on why this is not an easy agreement to come to. All of them are important, but at the same time, there is not one most important issue. It is precisely like every interview partner tried to explain to me: this is complex.

Connections

To take away a little from this complexity, I collected common words repeatedly mentioned throughout the same or different interviews in a graph and categorized them by topic.

- Conflict: What are the main points of contention?
- Public: Comments from the surveys
- Personal: Personal relationships with water, how people found their way to where they are now, personal experiences
- Future wishes: What do you hope for? What should we do?

Connective terms between different topics were found in both areas.



Intro

It might seem like only two sides exist in this story, urban and rural, extracting and being extracted, supporting and opposing. That is not the case at all! Yes, many things are not agreed upon at all. These terms can be found in the area of “Conflict,” with one exception: Media. Still, a lot of connections between the identified topics exist, and many of the same terms were mentioned by parties of “opposing” sides. The three topics “Personal,” “Future Wishes,” and “Personal” can basically be seen as common ground. Almost no contradicting statements could be heard here.

Common Grounds

After hearing so many opinions on this issue, I could determine some recurring aspects that everybody mentioned and would agree on. Common ground, if you will.

Selbstverständlich

Almost every interview partner mentioned the word “selbstverständlich” in relation to water: they either meant that it was “taken for granted” and should be appreciated more, or they wanted to express that it should “be a given,” meaning nobody should have to worry about water supply since access to clean water is a human right.

This word holds a dichotomy of seeing water as undervalued and also, at the same time, thinking that it should be a given and need not be actively appreciated in everyday life.

Quality

What connects everybody is the deep appreciation for drinking water and water in general.

A common opinion was also that there is a lack of appreciation for water in society and the importance of resourceful water usage to save and conserve precious water resources.

Everybody appreciates our drinking water quality.

One survey respondent sees extraordinary value in their drinking water quality and writes:

“It [drinking water] is the most important thing. I filter, steam-distill, and ozonize it if necessary.”

Intro

Elsewhere

An eye-opening experience many respondents have had regarding water quality is a trip to a foreign country. A survey respondent mentioned her trip to Las Vegas and how she felt unsafe drinking tap water there.

The Head of WWA mentions something similar: “I was on vacation with my children, and they would ask me why we can’t drink water from the tap here. This is an important learning moment for them and makes them appreciate water much more”. He tries to instill an awareness of water appreciation in his children by spending lots of time in nature with them, just like he did when he was a child himself.

“Playing in or near natural water bodies, respecting them, and appreciating the fact that they are safe to be around is what I aim for for my children.”

He feels that this is the best way to foster self-identification with bodies of water and nature for anyone, not just children. This would, in turn, encourage everyone to treat nature with more respect.

When speaking of future generations, he mentions that they should be considered when extracting water today. He and two other interview partners stress the need to preserve lower groundwater layers for possible emergencies and as insurance for future generations.

I see a lot of support for the Miesbach district, but there is so little backup from Munich residents to acknowledge that we are doing the right thing for them. I would also appreciate everyone to look at any statements with a critical eye.



Employee at SWM

Future

“What does this conflict do to you, personally?” I ask the *SWM* employee. “Resilience. I need that.” He admits that this whole conflict can wear him down sometimes. For some coworkers living in the Mangfalltal area, the conflict also bleeds into their private lives since it is an often-discussed topic. He is thankful that his place of residence is a little further away. It is not a known issue there, so he does not experience negative comments in his private life. Still, it affects him on a personal level, too. He self-identifies as someone who supplies drinking water to Munich and has always been fond of all things water. Leisure activities like diving in natural freshwater bodies or aquaristics are his way to connect to water in ways other than drinking and showering.

Intro

At the end of his interview, the Head of WWA Munich suddenly remembers something he wants to show me. He rummages around his office desk and finally pulls out a magazine: Tollwood Summer 2023. He seems proud and excited to show me his favorite quotes from the magazine.



A whole festival that is supposed to be about leisure and fun, dedicated to water and its appreciation as a resource! “Did they contact you [the WWA] to collaborate on it?” “No, they did not talk to us at all!”

His way of proving to me: droughts in recent years have reminded people of possible water scarcity, so now this issue is more present in people’s minds again. He is filled with hope for a better future of water.

**„Wenn der Brunnen trocken ist,
schätzt man erst das Wasser.“**

Arabisches Sprichwort

*Only when the well is dry do you appreciate the water.

- Arabic Proverb

“Exactly”

“A member of the Ministry of Environment once told me: We’re on the right track, but everything just takes too long. [...] If you can help in any capacity possible, please do so.”

- Member of BUND Naturschutz Munich

Outline

What should we do?

This could have also been the Common Grounds section because everybody has these wishes for the future:

“I would want to see an increase in public awareness about water supply. People need to know where it comes from and appreciate the drinking water and its quality.

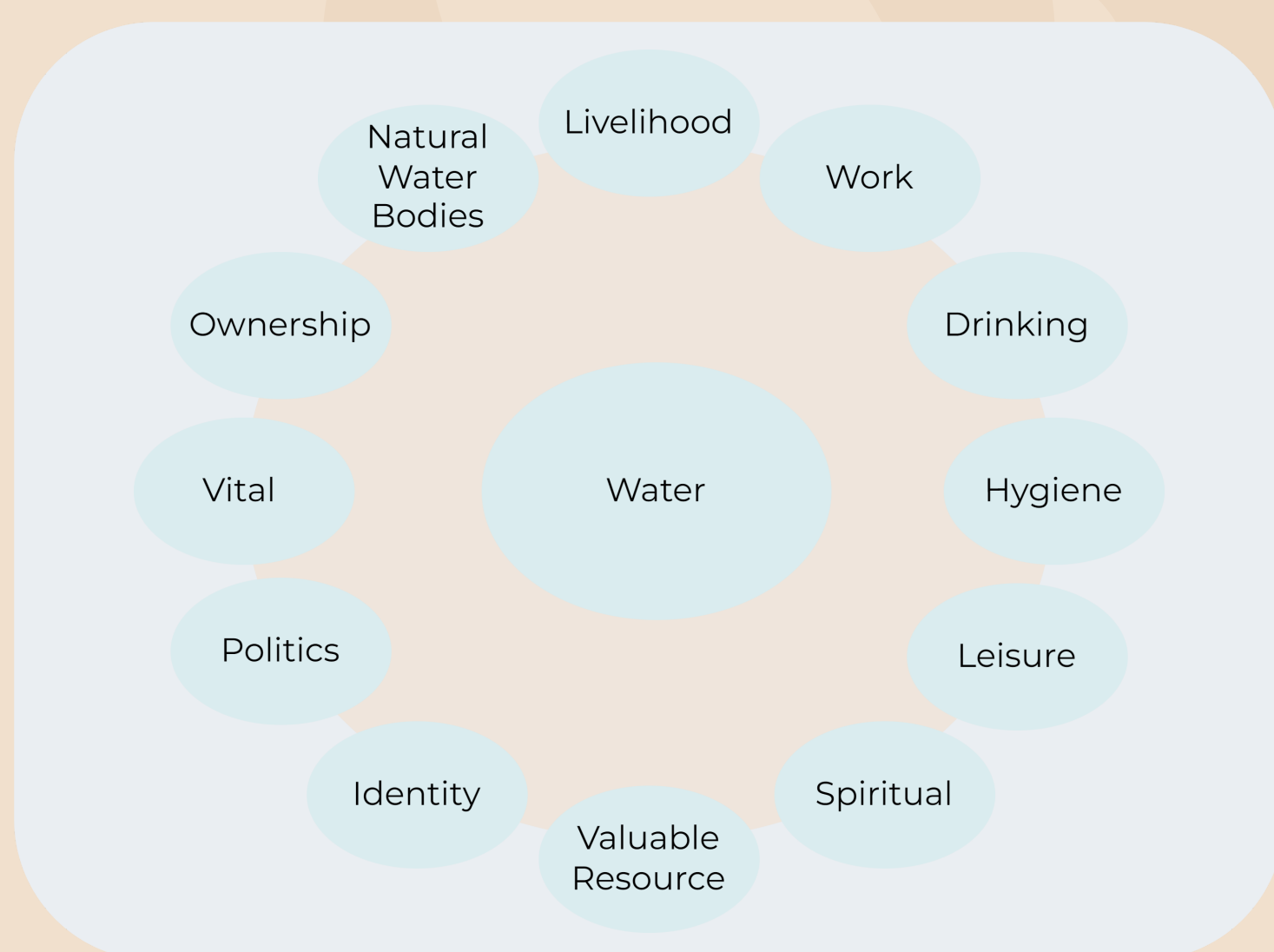
We should save water and use drinking water only when necessary. Ideally, we would separate drinking water from domestic water (Brauchwasser) in different circulation systems so that we can use the water for washing our hands, for example, to flush the toilet.

Ideally, we would not even need water for our toilet system! We should utilize rainwater more in the form of cisterns or big-scale rainwater collection. Let it infiltrate to replenish the groundwater. We need to protect the groundwater!”

This is a central message that everybody would agree on, regardless of their role within the disagreement.

Regarding the conflict, people wishes for finalization of the dispute so that all sides could live with the solution and it could finally be put to rest.

Water connects us all



The survey respondents mainly focused on water in the context of hygiene and drinking, including beverages like beer or coffee. These are everyday touchpoints with water, but certainly not the only ones.

Water connects us all; it is a vital resource that can affect livelihoods. We disagree over its ownership, we make it a political issue. We enjoy natural water bodies, identify with water, work in the water industry, and tie it to spiritual meanings. We put different values on it, measured by our individual experiences.

Outro

In times of conflict, all of these diverse influences play a role in how we see things and what stance we hold. Ultimately, it is up to us to decide whether or not we want to acknowledge the enormous role that water plays in our lives.

My last survey respondent asked me a surprising but obvious question: How do you interact with water after doing so much research on it? I had to pause and think about that for a second because nobody had asked me that before. “I do like to take long showers...” I said guiltily, and we both laughed. At home, I remembered something Meßmer said on the topic of education and taught appreciation:

Engaging in the topic of water and water supply (through our job or volunteer work or in other ways) does not automatically mean that you appreciate water more. Only proper education and deep understanding might change your behavior.

I went into this project looking to find significant differences in personal relations to water between Munich and the Miesbach district. I end this project with a newfound understanding of just how deeply water permeates all of our lives, regardless of where we live.

Takeaways

Thank you for joining me on this journey through our tap water pipes!
Did something change in your perception of drinking water?

Scan the QR Code to reevaluate how much you would be willing to pay for your monthly water bill, and feel free to share any thoughts and feelings you might have with me.

