

Talking shit: getting the message across

Abstract

The United Nations (UN) recently affirmed that access to sanitation is a distinct human right and a legally binding element of the right to life in existing human rights treaties. Sanitation is widely regarded as a neglected issue, yet illnesses directly linked to poor sanitation are the biggest cause of preventable child deaths worldwide. In combined water and sanitation campaigns, sanitation suffers as the poor relation, lacking attention and funding. Sanitation is clearly an issue that needs a greater profile. This study consists of textual analysis and interviews with professionals working on issues around access to sanitation. This study will discuss various theories of human rights research that relate to campaign design and advocacy strategies, plus some sociological research on how social trends can be perceived and spread. This research first considers how the new human right to sanitation might be enacted by rights-holders and what impact it might have on the campaigns and advocacy work of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Links between sanitation and other human rights will then be explored through the key issue frames around sanitation. This study will then, examine the hypothesis; if sanitation were to be campaigned for as a separate entity to water, then can the distinct human right to sanitation offer new reframing opportunities? This study is ultimately looking for new ways to present the global sanitation crisis.

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The work I have submitted is my own effort. I certify that all the material in the Dissertation which is not my own work, has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

Introduction and background

“What is to be done? It is the oldest question around. Sometimes it’s posed in a way calculated to discourage discussion, the subtext being that only hopeless romantics would discuss opportunities for effective intervention”¹

There can be few practices as universal as going to the toilet, yet we shy away from speaking about it. Be it touch, taste, smell, sight or sound - shit offends every one of our senses. In practical terms, sanitation concerns the “collection, transport, treatment and disposal of human excreta, domestic wastewater and solid waste and associated hygiene promotion”² Unsafe disposal of human excreta brings illnesses caused by the faecal-oral transmission of dangerous pathogens. The most devastating impact of inadequate sanitation is on child mortality, with poor sanitation responsible for the deaths of around 2.4 million children every year³. Lack of sanitation impacts our environment, it affects our ability to attend work and school and it consigns people to the undignified and unsafe practice of Open Defecation (OD). Where we identify a lack of sanitation, we often find discrimination. The toilet habits of the marginalised offer us a microcosm of global poverty and exclusion. But the process of improving sanitation can be a very positive and empowering experience for a community. It can be a route in to improving health, restoring dignity and better economic prospects. Sanitation has been described as the “orphan sector – abandoned by health, disdained by financiers and ignored by planners”⁴. At international, national and grassroots level, sanitation is poorly reported, under-funded and low on the political agenda. Though there is no ‘silver bullet’ solution to tackling the global sanitation crisis, sanitation is arguably one of the few health or social crises to which both the causes and the solutions are understood. One major factor hampering progress on sanitation is a distinct lack of dialogue regarding toilets and toilet habits.

Academic research on the right to sanitation would not fill a large bookshelf. The relevant literature which has informed this study falls broadly into six categories: (i) *research on water and sanitation*, (ii) *research on health and development*, (iii) *NGO campaign material*, (iv) *NGO reports and policy documents*, (v) *academic literature on campaigns and advocacy* and (vi) *sociological research on social movements*. Existing literature that engages with sanitation appears to support an assumed knowledge that: (a) *sanitation is a taboo subject* and (b) *it not openly discussed in a pragmatic and constructive manner*. However, there seems to be little research on just why this issue is not discussed more. If we accept that sanitation is widely regarded as a taboo subject that no-one seems to want to talk about, should we also accept that the subject of shitting is therefore categorically unapproachable? Or could it be that this issue needs to be addressed in a different way? The newly established human right to sanitation offers a rare opportunity to rethink how we engage with and present this issue.

Perhaps the most dynamic material in relation to the focus of this study contains a central concept of human dignity and sanitation. Fawcett and Black’s (2008) *‘The Last Taboo: Opening the Door on the Global Sanitation Crisis’* discusses sanitation, health and human dignity from a ‘soft engineering’ perspective. Also, Rose George’s (2008) *‘The Big Necessity’* approaches the global sanitation crisis in an innovative way, taking a deliberate

¹ Farmer, 2005: p.230

² COHRE et al, 2008: p.17

³ WaterAid (Cumming), 2008: p.2

⁴ Bartram, J, cited in WaterAid, 2010: p:11

‘myth busting’ stance in both acknowledging the lack of open discussion on human sanitation needs and identifying different ways to engage with the issue. In *‘Pathologies of Power’*, Paul Farmer (2005) discusses links between health and human rights and the wider implications of State obligations to health care. WaterAid’s (2008) report *‘Tackling the Silent Killer: the case for sanitation’* and (2010) *‘Ignored: biggest child killer’*, plus the combined agencies report (2008) *‘Sanitation: a human rights imperative’* all link health, dignity, human rights and sanitation. There are a wide number of reports that discuss the sanitation target of the MDGs⁵ and touch on links between sanitation and other human rights. In addition, Conway and Waage’s (2010) *‘Science and Innovation for Development’* discusses poor sanitation as a key obstacle to development. The reports of the Special Rapporteur⁶ shine light on some of the current debates and the *‘Compendium of Good Practices’* (2011) highlights positive developments around the right to sanitation. Below are a collection of quotes which best summarise the gaps in research that this study aims to address:

“Existing failures to address the fundamental human need for decent sanitation reflect the unwillingness in societies everywhere to talk about excreta disposal and behave as if it was a matter of public importance instead of private embarrassment and shame”⁷.

“The taboo surrounding sanitation is one of the biggest obstacles it faces. For most people, sanitation is a highly private matter and an uncomfortable topic for public discussion”⁸

“That sanitation continues to be overlooked by national governments and donor agencies alike, suggests that policies are defined by attitudes rather than evidence-based analysis”⁹.

This study seeks to apply various theoretical models to the analysis of advocacy strategies and campaign frames relating to sanitation. This research includes, but is not restricted to, discussion of Malcolm Gladwell’s (2001) “tipping point” of social epidemics and how George Lakoff’s (2004) “cognitive frames” and “values” can apply to campaigns. With regard to NGO campaign and advocacy strategies, this study will discuss Della Porta & Tarrow’s (2005) work on “TANS”, Chapman’s (2001) “helpful” campaign criteria, Tarrow and McAdam’s (2005) “scale shift” and Nelson and Dobsons (2008) “new rights advocacy” of economic, social and cultural rights. Also, this study will refer to Keck and Sikkink’s (1998) “boomerang model” and “adjacency claims”, plus Risse, Ropp and Sikkink’s (1999) “norms socialisation” and “spiral model”. Furthermore, Moeller’s (1999) “compassion fatigue” and Darnton and Kirk’s (2011) discussion of frames and the “Live Aid legacy” will also be explored.

This study has favoured a flexible¹⁰, qualitative methodological framework that can be seen as primarily deductive. The research comprises textual analysis, analysis of campaign material and synthesises the results of a number of interviews. This study features an

⁵ For example, see UNDP (2006), UN MDG Report (2010), UN-Water & WHO (2010)

⁶ See Albuquerque (2009, 2010, 2011)

⁷ Fawcett and Black, 2008: p. 220

⁸ Albuquerque, 2009: p.3

⁹ UN Water, 2008: p.6

¹⁰ as “presented in a general and non-specific manner, allowing interpretations, leaving further space for further decisions to be considered” . Sarantakos, 2005: p.113

interpretivist epistemology¹¹, which contains an element of grounded theory. In this sense, a grounded theory “aims to develop theory through research, not subject the research to theory”¹². Current sanitation campaigns are often overshadowed by a focus on access to clean water frame and are perhaps not linked successfully enough to other issue frames. The recent affirmation of sanitation therefore presents opportunities to (a) study how this right may be practically applied and (b) rethink how sanitation campaigns are currently framed. This study explores campaigning for the human right sanitation. However, each of the frames identified in *Chapter Two* could be a legitimate study in its own right. Although there are no obvious ethical considerations with this study, it is important to note that trying to judge NGO advocacy strategy or campaign design detracts from the purpose of this study. The purpose is to examine whether the human right to sanitation could be communicated as an effective campaign message. Ultimately this study is not seeking to criticise the existing work of NGOs, but rather, is looking for gaps and fresh opportunities.

Lead research question:

Can the new human right to sanitation offer an opportunity to reframe and reinvigorate sanitation campaigns?

Sub-questions:

- *What are the normative foundations for the human right to sanitation?*
- *How can the right to sanitation be claimed or enacted?*
- *What influence can the recent ‘right to sanitation’ resolution have on advocacy strategies?*
- *Should human right to sanitation campaigns attempt the ‘name and shame’ formula of rights campaigning?*
- *What sanitation campaigns currently exist and how are these framed?*
- *Can new frames and campaign opportunities be identified?*

The following persons were interviewed for this study. Dependant on availability and location, interviews were conducted in person (p), via skype (s), or by email (e).

Catarina de Albuquerque: *Special Rapporteur on the human right to water and sanitation* (s)

Fleur Anderson: *International Campaigns Coordinator, End Water Poverty* (p)

Ben Fawcett: *author of ‘The Last Taboo’, environmental health engineer and educator (formerly with UNICEF, Save the Children, WaterAid and others)* (e)

Rose George: *author of ‘The Big Necessity’* (e)

Remi Kaupp: *International Officer, Homeless International* (e)

Thiago Luchesi: *Advisor for Child Health Policy and Rights, World Vision* (e)

Amanda Marlin: *Programme Manager for Advocacy and Communications, WSSCC* (s)

Kate Norgrove: *Head of Campaigns, WaterAid UK* (p)

Henry Northover: *Head of Policy, WaterAid UK* (p)

Jennifer Philpot-Nissen: *Senior Human Rights Advisor, World Vision* (e)

Pilar Romero-Ardoy: *Wash Manager, Goal International – Haiti* (e)

Daniel Yeo: *Senior Policy Analyst, Water Security and Climate Change, WaterAid UK* (p)

¹¹ Sarantakos, 2005: p. 118

¹² Pfeifer, 2000, cited in Sarantakos, 2005: p. 118

Chapter One: The Resolution will not be televised

1.1 What is the right to sanitation?

The human right to sanitation entails “access to, and use of, excreta and wastewater facilities that ensure privacy and dignity, ensuring a clean and healthy living environment for all”¹³. The right to sanitation starts with not having to defecate in the open. The Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) model relies on a “sanitary ladder”¹⁴ which depicts different levels of sanitary provision that individuals and households can ‘climb’, thus improving their sanitation facilities. The CLTS Handbook¹⁵ often refers to “moving up the ladder” as a measure of progress from OD, through instillation of basic hardware such as a pit latrine, to full implementation of a toilet and hand washing facilities. One interesting distinction is the difference between the rights to “basic”¹⁶ or “improved”¹⁷ sanitation. Whereas ‘improved’ sanitation sets no benchmark on quality or sustainability, ‘basic’ can be understood to omit “the treatment and disposal of excreta and wastewater”¹⁸. Without the disposal and treatment of excreta it has been argued that basic sanitation alone “would not meet the minimum human rights standards”¹⁹. Other definitions of sanitation take a wider view. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) advocate for “sustainable sanitation”²⁰, whereas End Water Poverty (EWP) campaign simply for “sanitation for all”. In theory, the binding human right to sanitation can provide a legal framework which supports the notion that “each person has not only a right to sanitation facilities for their own use, but also a right to be protected from wastewater and excreta produced by others”²¹.

The emergence of the right to sanitation in international law asks us to seriously consider exactly what is a human rights violation in denial of this right, how should responsibility be attributed and how might this right be enacted. In 2005 the UN Sub-Commission on the Protection and Protection of Human Rights stated: “people who are denied their right to sanitation, should have access to effective judicial or other appropriate remedies”²². Jim Ife (2010) suggests that “the role of the State is not only to legislate, but to provide in the form of public services”²³ and cites the Thomas Hobbes’ statement “rights without responsibilities make no sense, and so the two must be understood together”²⁴. There are a number of organisations involved in advocacy, lobbying, activism and campaigning that focus on access to sanitation. Though their methods and messages vary and target a broad range of actors, it is possible to recognise one overarching goal - sanitation for all.

¹³ COHRE et al, 2008: p.17

¹⁴ Chambers & Kar, 2006: p.7

¹⁵ Chambers & Kar (2006)

¹⁶ The term “basic sanitation” appears in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7, Target c

¹⁷ The term “improved sanitation” is used by the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) as an indicator to measure progress towards MDG 7c.

¹⁸ COHRE et al, 2008: p.18

¹⁹ COHRE et al, 2008: p.18

²⁰ WSSCC (2011)

²¹ COHRE et al, 2008: p.18

²² UN Sub-Commission, 2006 cited in COHRE et al, 2008: p.22

²³ Ife, 2010: p75

²⁴ Hobbes, cited in Ife, 2010: p.90

1.2 *The UN ‘right to sanitation’ Resolutions*

In July 2010, the UN General Assembly (GA) passed Resolution 64/292 which affirmed that sanitation was a human right “inextricably linked to the highest standard of physical and mental health, as well as the right to life and human dignity”²⁵. In September 2010, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) passed Resolution 15/L.14, which confirmed that sanitation was “essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”²⁶ and also clarified that the “legally binding treaty obligations of the UDHR, the ICCPR, ICESCR, CRC and CEDAW also applied to water and sanitation”²⁷. A combined NGO & UN Agency report from 2008 commented that sanitation, seen as a human right, was a “valuable tool that can be used by government officials, judges, civil societies and individuals”²⁸ yet notes that recognition of this right “is only the first step”²⁹. A statement from Amnesty International recognises the added relevance of the HRC Resolution:

*“Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/15/L.14 not only provides the legal basis for the rights to water and sanitation but also recognises that it is inextricably related to the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as well as the right to life and human dignity”*³⁰

Though the adoption of GA Resolution 64/292 and HRC Resolution 15/L.14 have been welcomed by many, others express scepticism about the practical application of the right to sanitation. Danielle Morley of the Freshwater Action Network (FAN) describes the Resolutions as “a fantastic development” that “will have a huge impact on the water and sanitation sector”³¹. Thiago Luchesi of World Vision sees the resolutions as “very important for the interpretation of treaties such as the CRC”³². Fleur Anderson of End Water Poverty (EWP) also suggests the Resolutions represent a “huge shift for civil society in different countries.” from “begging for a service to be provided to you, to claiming your right”³³. Ben Fawcett adds that:

*While I acknowledge and welcome the UN recognition of the human right to water and sanitation I think it will be difficult for states to operationalise this right and for civil society to claim this right in a practical way*³⁴

WaterAid’s Kate Norgrove (2010) acknowledges the “good news that the resolution, recognising water and sanitation as a basic human right, has been passed by a majority vote”³⁵ but highlights that it is “regretful that the vote wasn’t passed by consensus, which exposes a distinct lack of political will on this issue”³⁶. Kate Norgrove also underlines the point that governments agreeing to a right “doesn’t make any difference really, it’s just about

²⁵ UN GA Res. 64/292, 2010

²⁶ UN HRC Res. 16/2, 2010

²⁷ UN, GA Res. 64/292, 2010

²⁸ COHRE et al, 2008: p. 5

²⁹ COHRE et al, 2008: p. 5

³⁰ Amnesty International, 2010

³¹ Morley, 2010

³² Luchesi, Interview, July 2011

³³ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

³⁴ Fawcett, Interview June 2011

³⁵ Norgrove, 2010

³⁶ Norgrove, 2010

the implementation of that right in practice”³⁷. Further reactions to and discussion of the potential impact of the new human right to sanitation will be explored throughout this chapter.

1.3 *The role of the Special Rapporteur*

In 2008, during the UN’s ‘International Year of Sanitation’, Catarina de Albuquerque was appointed as the first thematic Independent Expert on human rights obligations to water and sanitation³⁸. Albuquerque explains that her original mandate was primarily a “research mandate” to look into “legal aspects of human rights obligations”³⁹ to water and sanitation provision for States. The Independent Experts’ first report to the GA focussed on the normative content of sanitation and State obligations. Albuquerque explains “my first report was on sanitation. Precisely because sanitation is the poor parent - let me put sanitation on the agenda”⁴⁰ Albuquerque suggests that her original mandate was “not a big commitment to sanitation” and inclusion of the term sanitation “was rather used as a means to limit the scope of water”, i.e. to define water for “personal and domestic use”⁴¹. In June 2011, HRC Resolution 16/2 extended the mandate of the Independent Expert, changing the role to that of a Special Rapporteur. Whereas the previous title of the Independent Expert referred only to ‘human rights obligations’ to water and sanitation, the new thematic focus of the Special Rapporteur explicitly defines water and sanitation as human rights. Albuquerque explains:

“Because you have to consistent with what the GA says. If my “human right” is like any other human rights, then I should not have a research mandate, I should rather be a Special Rapporteur, like torture, education or freedom of expression.”⁴²

Albuquerque acknowledges “the adoption of the GA of last year’s resolution, recognising water and sanitation as a human right had a very important impact in the change of the mandate.”⁴³ This shift in role can be seen to reinforce the UN’s position that sanitation should be seen internationally as a human right.

The Special Rapporteur’s current mandate includes a focus on “good practices and enabling factors”⁴⁴ pursuant to the implementation of the human right to water and sanitation. To this end, a ‘Compendium of Good Practices’ will be presented to the GA in September 2011, giving examples of positive “legislation, planning, service delivery, advocacy and capacity building, monitoring and litigation”⁴⁵. In compiling these good practices, Albuquerque (2011) applied five normative criteria; “availability, accessibility, quality/safety, affordability, acceptability” and five cross-cutting criteria; “non-discrimination, participation, accountability, impact and sustainability”⁴⁶. Albuquerque (2011) discusses applicability of the right to sanitation and State accountability and the need

³⁷ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

³⁸ See UN HRC Res. 7/22

³⁹ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁴⁰ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁴¹ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁴² Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁴³ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁴⁴ UN HRC Res. 16/2

⁴⁵ Albuquerque, 2011: p.3

⁴⁶ Albuquerque, 2011: p.3

to create “reliable and effective judicial and administrative complaints mechanisms that allow individuals to air and satisfactorily redress their governments”⁴⁷ The Special Rapporteur highlights the significance of the legally binding right to sanitation to the “formation of international customary law”⁴⁸ and notes that “while there is less jurisprudence in support of the right to sanitation, the body of case law is slowly growing.”⁴⁹ . The right to sanitation can be understood as “*lex ferenda*, part of the body of law being developed”⁵⁰.

Crucially, the Special Rapporteur focuses on sanitation a distinct human right, separate from water. Regarding a recent country visit to the United States, Albuquerque reflects: “one of the things that shocked me most in all my country visits was a discussion with a homeless man in Sacramento, California.”⁵¹ The US country report brings attention to fact that “access to water and sanitation must be ensured for homeless people”⁵². Without access to public toilets, the flipside is that national laws “prohibiting public urination and defecation can be discriminatory”⁵³ Interestingly, the Special Rapporteur has since received a correspondence from Sacramento which she intends to raise with the US government. Charting the progress of this new rights claim from Sacramento could be very significant. This may be one of the first right to sanitation individual petitions raised at the UN and, in theory, the US response could help set a new legal precedent. The human right to sanitation for homeless people would negate the argument that a State is unable to recognise ‘illegal’ or ‘unofficial’ slum dwellers. The right to sanitation would apply regardless of the domestic situation of the individual raising the claim.

1.4 International campaigns and advocacy

This section will explore how the human right to sanitation may impact international advocacy work and discuss what a distinct human right to sanitation might offer a safe-shit advocate’s toolkit. Specifically, this section will consider the work of End Water Poverty (EWP), the Water Security and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC), the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) global initiative, World Vision, WaterAid and UNICEF. Clifford Bob (2009) argues that “for international audiences, invoking a right can suggest a cause’s worthiness – even if the underlying grievance is complicated, ambiguous or contested”⁵⁴ Thiago Luchesi of World Vision suggests that “resolutions such as the one on the right to sanitation help us in structuring our advocacy strategies”⁵⁵ The role of TANs in furthering a cause can be understood through Della Porta and Tarrow’s (2005) discussion of “insider-outsider coalitions” in that “transnational actors must gain access to the political systems of their target State and contribute to the winning coalitions in order to change decisions”⁵⁶. Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999) suggest that the successful socialisation of new norms involves “moral discourse” which “emphasises processes of communication, argumentation

⁴⁷ Albuquerque, 2011: p.27

⁴⁸ Albuquerque, 2011: p.5

⁴⁹ De Albuquerque, 2011: p.29

⁵⁰ Nowak, 2008: p.5

⁵¹ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁵² Albuquerque, USA Report, March 2011

⁵³ Albuquerque, USA Report, March 2011

⁵⁴ Bob, 2009: p.9

⁵⁵ Luchesi, Interview, July 2011

⁵⁶ Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: p.153

and persuasion”⁵⁷ Advocacy networks can contribute to the acceptance of new international norms and often correspond to the over-arching goals of specific campaigns.

EWP represent a global network of some 180 organisations which works to harmonise water and sanitation campaign messages. EWP aims to act as “*the* targeted campaign for people campaigning on water and sanitation.”⁵⁸ Andersen explains that EWP primarily “looks at other International NGOs and asks - how can we increase their influence?”⁵⁹ In this sense, EWP can be seen to have a focal role in coordinating a TAN on water and sanitation. EWP’s campaign strategy for 2011-2013 seeks to focus on three underlying aims. Firstly, to raise “water and sanitation higher on the agenda”⁶⁰ Secondly, to see that “WASH funding is allocated to the most marginalised countries”⁶¹ And lastly, to “become an effective mechanism for better access to safe and sustainable sanitation and water services for a larger number of poor and marginalised people”⁶². Jennifer Chapman (2001) offers five core criteria that are “helpful” to campaigning at the international level. These are *international legislation, conventions, an active international campaign, consumer activism and independent monitoring*⁶³. Taking the first of EWP’s three campaign aims, the human right to sanitation has helped raise sanitation higher on the global agenda. As it is now a legally binding treaty commitment, States will need to address sanitation in Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs). The remaining two core campaign aims of EWP contain reference to marginalised people and countries. In discussion of her country visit to Namibia, the Special Rapporteur emphasises the significance human rights can bring to understanding the links between sanitation access and discrimination: “I do think that human rights asks this important question – who?”⁶⁴ Albuquerque adds:

*“Who does not have access? This simple question makes governments nervous and makes them realise that it’s always the same people and that it’s not a coincidence that it is always the same that are deprived from sanitation”*⁶⁵.

Beginning in their 2008 ‘The Stink Goes On’ campaign, EWP had identified links between sanitation and other human rights, such as “health, education, economic and gender equality”⁶⁶. Though their three core campaign aims and the new human right to sanitation do correspond, EWP do not overtly apply human rights language. Fleur Anderson of EWP suggests:

*“Rights are very good for motivating people to see things differently, to see that they can be speaking out, that they can have a voice, it is something that they can be claiming. But I think it doesn’t work so well with governments.”*⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Riise, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999: p.13

⁵⁸ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

⁵⁹ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

⁶⁰ EWP, 2011

⁶¹ EWP, 2011

⁶² EWP, 2011

⁶³ Summarised from Chapman, 2001, in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.263 (fig. 19.1)

⁶⁴ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁶⁵ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

⁶⁶ EWP, 2008

⁶⁷ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

The SWA initiative is designed to work as “a global partnership which aims to address critical barriers to achieving long term sanitation and drinking water for everyone” by linking “national, regional and international processes”⁶⁸ The SWA guidelines do not mention human rights, and instead assert that the SWA partnership “should build on and support existing country and regional institutions, processes and sector networks”⁶⁹. The important caveat in the SWA guiding principles is the absence of any reference to international treaty commitments. The SWA guidelines therefore seem to highlight State sovereignty. This suggests that there is a “two level game”⁷⁰ developing with regard to the international advocacy work of TANs involved in sanitation. Putnam’s (1998) model of the “two level game” is explained by Della Porta and Tarrow (2005): “social movements interacting in the domestic and international realm often bypass heads of governments and engage directly with cross-table lobbying”⁷¹. The SWA guidelines frame their advocacy work in the language of the MDGs. Therefore the SWA global partnership presents a lighter commitment for States, where the legal ramifications of the new human right to sanitation are yet to be digested. To illustrate, the UK abstained from GA Resolution 64/292 in July 2010 and fails to recognise the human right sanitation. But as late as April 2010, the UK were making strong rhetorical and financial commitments to water and sanitation, still keen to acknowledge their role as a co-founder of the SWA initiative.⁷²

The WSSCC are a membership based TAN hosted by the UN in Geneva. Between 2000 and 2002 the WSSCC ran a high profile campaign which sought to address the lack of a sanitation goal in the MDGs⁷³. Amanda Marlin explains that “the WSSCC developed their Wash campaign, with a very clear objective of wanting to introduce a sanitation target”⁷⁴ Rose George (2008) describes this WSSCC Wash campaign as “perhaps the best media campaign for sanitation and hand washing”⁷⁵. George (2008) praises the innovative use of “posters and postcards with smart slogans”⁷⁶ which featured a picture of a W.C. stick figure above the phrase “hurry up! 1.2 billion people want to use the toilet”⁷⁷. As Marling explains the “nature of advocacy” requires fluidity and adaptability, in that “different things work in different geographical regions and different things work with different target audiences”⁷⁸. The WSSCC’s advocacy work may vary its rights focus “depending on who you are talking to”⁷⁹ and this in turn would perhaps adapt depending on the target State. Marlin suggests that “the human rights argument might be very important in some countries where there is a vibrant debate about human rights”⁸⁰. Therefore, for States with a poor track record on human rights, another line of advocacy may be favoured. However, as Gready (2004) suggests

⁶⁸ SWA definition from EWP, 2010

⁶⁹ SWA guiding principles, 2010 (9)

⁷⁰ Putnam (1998) cited in Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: p.154

⁷¹ Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: p.154

⁷² See written statement by the UK for the SWA High Level Meeting, April 23 2010

⁷³ Sanitation was not mentioned in the Millennium Declaration⁷³ of 2000 and was only negotiated into the MDG target 7 at the Johannesburg World Summit in 2002.

⁷⁴ Marlin, Interview, August 2011

⁷⁵ George, 2008: p.88

⁷⁶ George, 2008: p.88

⁷⁷ WSSCC, 2000 cited in George, 2008

⁷⁸ Marlin, Interview, August 2011

⁷⁹ Marlin, Interview, August 2011

⁸⁰ Marlin, Interview, August 2011

“campaigns and norms can play a role in redefining State self-interest”⁸¹. If sanitation is truly considered a fundamental human right, should that universality not be tempered? Or does pragmatism lend us to read that, though the human right to sanitation can help contribute to an advocacy toolkit, it cannot provide an all-encompassing approach?

Edwards (1993) proposes two modes of advocacy. The first “attempts to influence global level processes, structures and ideologies”⁸² and is perhaps more attuned to the philosophical foundations of human rights. Edward’s (1993) second type of advocacy “attempts to influence specific policies, programmes or projects”⁸³ and seems to relate to the current approaches of the SWA, EWP and WaterAid. The WSSCC seem more fluid in the interpretation of the new human rights legislation. Where the UN ‘Five Year Drive’ would fall into Edward’s (1993) first advocacy category, the WSSCC’s own Wash campaign would perhaps better align with the second category. Kenneth Roth (2004) writes; “where the violator and remedy can be clearly identified...the traditional methodology of naming and shaming can be effective”⁸⁴. In the case of sanitation, certainly the ‘violator’ is not often easy to identify. Nelson and Dobson (2008) argue that successful ESC rights advocacy involves working with States to develop policy and capacity, in a way which “reinforces their sovereignty rather than challenging it”⁸⁵. If enacting the right to sanitation does not contain a clearer “repression/denial” stage of State interaction, then the “spiral”⁸⁶ and “boomerang”⁸⁷ models of norms socialisation can perhaps be seen to relate more to Civil and Political (CP) rights. Tarrow and McAdam (2005) use the term “brokerage” to describe information transfer from local to international that “depends on the linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites”⁸⁸. Tarrow and McAdam (2005) argue that successful brokerage “promotes attribution of similarity”⁸⁹ as opposed to the name and shame strategy of civil and political rights campaigns which broker “the recognition of difference”.

Daniel Yeo underlines that WaterAid’s advocacy relies on understanding “the power relationships, the politics of the situation and what governments are focussing on”⁹⁰. Yeo states that “if the political focus is on economic growth, then it’s translating it into that language”⁹¹. An example of this approach can also be seen in the WSSCC’s current Wash campaign, which features the tag line “GDP for GDP: Good Dignity Practices for Gross Domestic Product”⁹². Marlin explains the core economic argument: “by adequately addressing sanitation you reduce healthcare costs, you increase productivity; you stand to gain”⁹³. The WSSCC boil this argument down to the simple campaign line “Turning Shit into Gold”⁹⁴. Keck and Sikkink’s (1998) “opportunity structure” also identifies the understanding of political context as “key to a movement’s emergence and to gauging its

⁸¹ Gready, 2004: p.17

⁸² Edwards (1993), cited by Chapman (2001) in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.249

⁸³ Edwards (1993), cited by Chapman (2001) in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.249

⁸⁴ Roth, (2004) in Nelson & Dobson, 2005: p.78

⁸⁵ Nelson & Dobson, 2008: p.174

⁸⁶ Keck, Sikkink & Risse (1999)

⁸⁷ Keck & Sikkink (1998)

⁸⁸ Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: p.130

⁸⁹ Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: p.130

⁹⁰ Yeo, Interview, July 2011

⁹¹ Yeo, Interview, July 2011

⁹² WSSCC, 2011

⁹³ Marlin. 2011

⁹⁴ WSSCC, 2011

success.”⁹⁵ Advocacy that seems to centre on political will as the key to change surely raises the question; but where does political will come from? The theoretical frameworks of Keck and Sikkink’s “boomerang model” (1998) and Keck, Sikkink and Risse’s (1999) “Spiral Model” suggest that political will is produced as a reaction to pressure. And that pressure is brought about by campaigning, by advocacy and by activism from both above - in the international arena, and from below - through domestic movements. WaterAid’s Henry Northover believes “if the rights language helps generate the necessary political will then I think it certainly has some traction and some value”⁹⁶. Without context, political will can be accused of being as ethereal an entity as human rights without international law.

Perhaps one way of better understanding sanitation as an ESC right is through Jim Ife’s (2010) discussion of different categories of ESC rights. Ife (2010) argues that there is potential for the “disaggregation of the ‘grab-bag’ category of economic, social and cultural rights”⁹⁷ As well as concentrating on ‘economic’, ‘social’ and ‘cultural’ rights as separate factions, Ife (2010) also suggests a fourth category; “survival rights”. Ife (2010) describes survival rights as the “basic things needed for simple human survival: food, water, shelter, clothing and health services”⁹⁸. Nelson and Dobson (2008) suggest that the successful ESC rights advocacy relies on both “the development of new movements and organisations that explicitly link critical human needs to social and economic rights standards”⁹⁹ and “the expansion of mandates by traditional civil and political rights groups to cover economic and social rights”¹⁰⁰ On developing their ‘Demand Dignity’ ESC rights campaign, Amnesty International (AI) stated: “the campaign would focus on human dignity, demonstrating how ESC rights violations lead to poverty”¹⁰¹. International human rights law has an essential role to play in enshrining the right to sanitation in legal protection, forging links between poverty, economic deprivation and human rights violations, offering potential routes of recompense for violations of ESC rights.

1.5 Enacting the right to sanitation

This section will explore how the right to sanitation has been received in the United Kingdom, and how the right to sanitation might be enacted in Namibia. It is important to note that State reactions to the recent UN ‘right to sanitation’ Resolutions must be understood alongside existing treaty obligations and domestic laws. States who are party to the ICCPR, the ICESCR, CEDAW and/or the CRC may also show a greater receptiveness to campaigns and advocacy that focuses on sanitation as a human right. Morley (2010) notes the legally binding status of HRC Resolution 15/L.14:

“In 160¹⁰² countries in all regions of the world, governments can no longer deny their legal responsibility to ensure that water and sanitation services are provided to the billions of poor people lacking access”¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Keck & Sikkink, 2008: p.7

⁹⁶ Northover, Interview, August 2011

⁹⁷ Ife, 2010: p.117

⁹⁸ Ife, 2010: p.116

⁹⁹ Nelson & Dobson, 2008: p.46

¹⁰⁰ Nelson & Dobson, 2008: p.46

¹⁰¹ AI’s 2005 Annual report, cited in Nelson & Dobson, 2008: p. 68

¹⁰² The figure of 160 refers to those States who have ratified the 1966 UN ICESCR

The UK has ratified the ICESCR, but refuses to acknowledge the human right to sanitation. Outwardly, the UK justifies their decision on the lack of an agreed definition of sanitation. However, the UK government seemed confident enough of the definition of sanitation in 2006 when their Department of International Development (DfID) produced a booklet entitled ‘*Why we need a global action plan on water and sanitation*’¹⁰⁴. The position of the UK in abstaining from GA Resolution 64/292 highlights a wider unwillingness among the international community to recognise sanitation as a human right. World Vision’s Jennifer Philpot-Nissen comments: “sanitation is still struggling to be accepted as a right, despite the GA and HRC resolutions - look at the UK government’s position for a start”¹⁰⁵. It is worth noting that at both signature and ratification of the ICESCR, the UK made no reservations relating to the right to life aspects of Article 11. Their position therefore certainly seems to contradict their binding treaty commitments as it can argued to go against the restrictions placed on derogations under Article 5 of the ICESCR. This would put the UK in breach of its treaty obligations. AI (2011) note:

“The UK justified its position on the grounds that there is no international agreement on what the right comprises and that there is no clear internationally agreed definition of sanitation. Amnesty International deplors the UK’s position on the right to sanitation”¹⁰⁶.

Henry Northover indicates that behind the scenes, the UK’s position may reflect views that applying sanitation as a human right “is hindered from a complexity in indentifying who are the duty holders and duty bearers involved”¹⁰⁷. Northover also suggests that accepting the binding status of this new human right may have “adverse implications for the home office and home office budgets”, for example “prisoners slopping out would be declared illegal or could be challenged”¹⁰⁸. This would certainly appear to be a controversial issue worthy of further research.

The overriding impression from WaterAid UK is that the human right to sanitation can help gain public support for campaigns, but the language of human rights is not a major part of their advocacy strategy. As Henry Northover explains:

“I think there are two perspectives in WaterAid. Some are very keen on it as being a sort of vehicle for which to deliver on water and sanitation. Others, such as myself are sceptical about just how far the rights agenda can deliver outcomes”¹⁰⁹

Rose George suggests that the new human right to sanitation may give “more voice” to the arguments made by sanitation campaigners, so “more politicians are willing to listen to their arguments”¹¹⁰. According to Chapman (2001), national campaigns are aided progressive rights legislation, an effective higher court, a history of social activism and NGO activity, strong public awareness as well as independent monitoring¹¹¹. It is important to note that

¹⁰³ Morley, 2010

¹⁰⁴ DfID, 2006

¹⁰⁵ Philpot-Nissen, Interview, July 2011

¹⁰⁶ AI, 2011

¹⁰⁷ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹⁰⁸ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹⁰⁹ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹¹⁰ George, Interview, August 2011

¹¹¹ Summary of Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.263 (fig. 19.1)

WaterAid are not a human rights or social justice organisation and do not employ a ‘name and shame’ strategy in their campaigns or advocacy.

One State where the human right to sanitation might be enacted is Namibia. The Special Rapporteur notes following a country visit to Namibia in July 2011: “the constitution of Namibia makes international human rights treaties directly applicable, which mean that these rights can be claimed in court”¹¹² Though there is no specific mention of water and sanitation in the Constitution of the State of Namibia, Article 144 does indeed state that “the general rules of public international law and international agreements binding upon Namibia under this constitution shall form part of the law of Namibia”¹¹³. Though the report on Namibia is quite positive, Albuquerque recognises “a lack of knowledge about the rights to water and sanitation, as well as economic and social rights more broadly” has “an impact on people’s ability to claim them”.¹¹⁴ Henry Northover (2008) writes of WaterAid’s experiences in Mozambique and Ethiopia: “the best way NGOs can influence the official policy-making processes is to work with government or State, and not to exercise claims against it through legal redress”¹¹⁵. Northover notes that a legal framework “could help bring greater traction in delivering services” but adds that “in India it would take an estimated 500 years to clear the backlog of court cases”¹¹⁶ Though a successful legal case in India¹¹⁷ would help set a new nominative standard, it is unlikely that any pre-existing case would ever gain legitimacy due to the legal rule of non-retroactivity. However, in Namibia is a State with the appropriate constitution, and a population that lacks awareness on the right to sanitation. The right to sanitation needs a test case that will challenge the boundaries of this emerging legal norm.

1.6 Summary

Sanitation for all requires access to affordable sanitation facilities. The UN resolutions make sanitation provision a legally binding commitment for States. States are therefore obliged to remove barriers to access. Though the new human right to sanitation has generally been welcomed, there is scepticism about whether this new right will make any difference. The general view seems to be that the human rights to sanitation can be a useful tool for campaigning, but is not as serious avenue for advocacy. Sanitation is an ESC right, and though can be seen as essential to the right to life, ‘naming and shaming’ does not seem to be the correct campaign strategy on this issue. However, there are new normative foundations to a new right under international law. The work of Special Rapporteur emphasises links between the human right to sanitation, exclusion and wider poverty. The UK is in breach of its international treaty obligations. In Namibia, the legal right to sanitation could be claimed at a national court.

¹¹² Albuquerque, Namibia Country Report, 2011

¹¹³ Republic of Namibia, 1990

¹¹⁴ Albuquerque, Namibia Report, 2011

¹¹⁵ Northover, 2008: p.4

¹¹⁶ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹¹⁷ *Ratlam Municipal Council v. Shri Vardhichand & Others*, Supreme Court of India, 29 July 1980 is perhaps the strongest piece of jurisprudence on the legal right to sanitation. The court’s decision ruled against the “municipality’s failure to provide basic public conveniences” and asserted that the human need that leads to OD makes “bashfulness becomes a luxury and dignity a difficult art.” Cited in COHRE et al, 2008: p.15

Chapter Two: Harnessing Disgust and Accessing Dignity

This chapter focuses on the cognitive frames that surround sanitation. This chapter will begin with an initial discussion of the nature of campaigns and the impact of framing. Challenges with engaging the UK public on issues of global poverty will also be discussed. This study will establish six dominant frames around campaigns which focus on access to sanitation. These cognitive frames are: *the development frame, the water frame, health frame, education frame, housing frame and the dignity frame*. Frames were identified through intrinsic links between sanitation and other human rights. This study will then examine how a distinct human right to sanitation campaign message might impact these dominant frames.

2.1 Framing and Campaigning

Effective campaign messaging relies on the “making and telling of stories and the extent to which different parties accept their validity”¹¹⁸. Framing a campaign correctly is essential in conveying the heart of an issue. Paul Gready (2005) defines frames as “an interpretation or explanation, an attempt to create shared understandings as the basis of a campaign”¹¹⁹. A successful campaign frame can encapsulate an issue “in a way that engages the general public and sets the terms of the debate.”¹²⁰. Framing can also be understood as “the simplification of complex problems into an easily communicable form”¹²¹. Keck and Sikkink (1998) speak of the importance of “frame resonance”¹²² and of understanding the “political context or opportunity structure”¹²³ of a campaign’s emergence. Gready (2004) also notes that “frames forge shared identities, expectations and action from often diverse constituencies”¹²⁴. Importantly, the correct framing of an issue can transform the direction of a campaign¹²⁵.

George Lakoff (2004) explains that the way we interpret frames involves “not just the dictionary definition” of a subject, but also a “whole chunk of related knowledge”¹²⁶. Darnton and Kirk’s (2011) ‘Finding Frames’ report proposes that successful campaigns use cognitive frames that tap into your individual values. The report takes George Lakoff’s (2004) theoretical model of cognitive “surface frames” and “deep frames” and applies them to UK campaigns, with a particular focus on Make Poverty History (MPH). Whereas deep frames “essentially represent worldviews”, surface frames are “closer to the simple meanings or words”¹²⁷. Darnton and Kirk (2011) suggest that “values are seen to be at the root of our motivational system: they are the guiding principles by which we act”¹²⁸. Lakoff (2004) argues that an individual will interpret information according to a pre-existing structure of

¹¹⁸ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.260

¹¹⁹ Gready, 2004: p.24

¹²⁰ Gready, 2004: p.24

¹²¹ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.260

¹²² See Keck & Sikkink for a discussion of David Snow’s work on “frame alignment”, 1998: p.17

¹²³ Keck & Sikkink, 1998: p.17

¹²⁴ Gready, 2004: p.24

¹²⁵ For example, see discussion of the successful reframing from female circumcision to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) in Keck & Sikkink (1998: 66-72)

¹²⁶ Lakoff (2004), cited in Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.8

¹²⁷ Lakoff, cited in Darnton and Kirk (exec. 2011: p.1)

¹²⁸ Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.40

beliefs, associations and preconceived connections. Therefore campaign frames that hit the right note both appeal to our values and evoke our personal belief systems. As Chapman (2001) proposes; “campaigns are both fluid and difficult to access. They cannot be understood as a linear or logical sequence of separate events”¹²⁹. There is no ‘holy grail’ that will apply to all sanitation campaigning, and defining purported success in the project cycle of a campaign is problematic. This study will focus on the framing of campaign messages.

Malcolm Gladwell (2001) uses the term “tipping point”¹³⁰ to discuss the phase at which a “social epidemic”¹³¹ reaches a critical mass, which moves it from the periphery of society to the forefront of public consciousness. Darnton & Kirk (2011) apply Gladwell’s (2001) tipping point to a study of UK campaigns. The tipping point can also refer to that stage of a norms socialisation process when new norms gain acceptance and trigger a “norms cascade”¹³² of behavioural change to filter through a community. When Gladwell (2001) speaks of successful social epidemics, he identifies three common factors. These are, “the law of the few”, “the stickiness factor” and “the power of context”¹³³. Essentially, the “stickiness factor” in a campaigns context requires powerful, contagious and attractive messages which stick in the public consciousness. A “tipping point” also requires the correct set of circumstances to generate momentum and change – the “power of context”. As Tarrow and McAdam’s (2005) suggest: “information alone will not lead someone to adopt a new idea, cultural object or practice”¹³⁴. The “law of the few” refers to the role of high impact individuals and this theme will be discussed further in *Chapter Three*.

As Albuquerque (2011) notes, beyond the courtroom, the impact of a legally binding human right also has the potential to impact campaigns:

*“Even when litigation is not ultimately successful, it can have a positive impact when combined with civil society campaigns exerting pressure on policy makers and can lead to policy change”*¹³⁵

Chapman (2001) proposes that “campaigns may focus at the international level, the national level – or the grassroots level – or in a combination of all three, with different actors as targets in each.”¹³⁶ In addition, Tarrow and McAdam (2005) describe “scale shift” as the “transposition of frames, networks and forms of collective action to the international level.”¹³⁷ When combining the two theories of “tipping point” and “scale shift”, it is possible to see how local level campaigning can feed an international movement. Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) identify “diffusion, domestication and externalisation”¹³⁸ as key to a social movement’s transfer from the local to the global. One aspect of a successful campaign message is the ability to convey change from local to international and vice versa. This can be understood as positive framing and works from “a bedrock belief that change is possible, the fact that people can radically change their behaviour or beliefs in the face of the right kind

¹²⁹ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.260

¹³⁰ Gladwell, 2001: p.7

¹³¹ Gladwell, 2001: p.7

¹³² Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998, p.895

¹³³ Gladwell, 2004: p.12

¹³⁴ Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: p.129

¹³⁵ De Albuquerque, 2011: p.29

¹³⁶ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.259

¹³⁷ Tarrow & McAdam, 2005: p.123

¹³⁸ Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: p.2

of impetus”¹³⁹ Darnton and Kirk (2011) believe a common problem in the framing of campaigns is that they are often “framed not in the language of emancipation or justice, but with the vocabulary of charity, technical expertise, neutrality and a deep paternalism”¹⁴⁰. This can be understood as negative framing. Through discussion of the six dominant cognitive frames around sanitation, this study will seek to draw out examples of positive framing opportunities.

2.1 *Water and sanitation*

Though it tends to be the ‘first home’ of sanitation campaigns, when framed with water, sanitation often gets overlooked. As Fawcett and Black (2008) suggest “the problem is that whenever sanitation is bracketed with water, it becomes the quintessentially poor relation”¹⁴¹. Fleur Anderson states that water provides “an easier message, it’s a clearly understood message - people don’t have drinking water, anyone can understand that”¹⁴². In contrast, “the message about sanitation is more difficult and the answers are more difficult as well”¹⁴³. Anderson underlines the difference in water and sanitation campaign messages. With water “you want to provide a pump, people get water – it seems such an easy thing”, whereas “sanitation has a few more steps to it and is not so generally understood.”¹⁴⁴ These views reflect both the tougher challenges of campaigning on sanitation and the difficulties in finding simple messages about sanitation solutions. Though solutions exist, they are often more complex than those relating to clean water access and rely more on behavioural change, as do the outcomes. UN-Water highlights this disparity:

*A focus on drinking water alone does not necessarily result in improved access to sanitation. Indeed, given the social taboos around the subject of bodily wastes, sanitation has been sidelined, both as a topic of conversation and an investment priority*¹⁴⁵.

The use of positive frames is of most obvious use in water campaigns. With the use of positive imagery around water campaigns, Amanda Marlin notes: “you can get fabulous photos...very appealing and attractive photos of water projects and children drinking water...it’s much harder to visually depict sanitation”¹⁴⁶. WaterAid’s Kate Norgrove admits “it’s much harder to campaign on sanitation as an issue as opposed to water”¹⁴⁷. Many NGOs promote a sanitation message that favours a combined water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) approach¹⁴⁸. Of these, the natural choice of positive frame would be clean, fresh water. And the most likely choice of image might be of smiling child by a shiny new water pump. But as an over-emphasis on waterborne illnesses can serve to overshadow the health rationale of

¹³⁹ Gladwell, 2001: p.258

¹⁴⁰ Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.91

¹⁴¹ Fawcett and Black, 2008: p.95

¹⁴² Anderson, Interview, July 2011

¹⁴³ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

¹⁴⁴ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

¹⁴⁵ UN-INWEH, 2010: p.1

¹⁴⁶ Marlin, Interview, August 2011

¹⁴⁷ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

¹⁴⁸ For example, UNICEF’s 2009 report ‘Soap, Toilets and Taps’ promotes a holistic ‘Building for Life’¹⁴⁸ WASH programme in schools. UNICEF also introduced a well-publicised ‘Global Hand-washing Day’.

sanitation improvement, as “a much higher proportion of this disease burden is to do with poor excreta control and lack of hygiene”¹⁴⁹. To illustrate, WaterAid UK’s homepage currently carries the picture of a child drinking water from a bowl. The image carries the phrase “today 4,000 children will die from drinking dirty water”¹⁵⁰. So again, defecation is not mentioned. And as Fawcett states “the majority of 'water and sanitation related' diseases, and resulting mortality and morbidity are actually shit-related”¹⁵¹ The subtext being that dirty water is the problem, so clean water is the solution. However, WaterAid’s ‘Dig Toilet’s Not Graves’ campaign does have a strong sanitation focus, which will be discussed further in the ‘health frame’ section of this chapter .

There is also a negative frame evident in water campaigns. EWP’s Fleur Anderson defines this as the “pity agenda”:

*“Water is always seen as sad situation. People don’t have a pump; you see dry ground and people stood around fishing out water from a dirty river. You are encouraged to pity people in the public representation of water. So it’s not very empowering and therefore a difficult angle to campaign on ”*¹⁵²

If campaigns around water are successfully engaging people more than those surrounding sanitation, this suggests that the cognitive framing around water campaigns is more effective. Water and sanitation are clearly heavily interlinked, but are not always interdependent. The “frame bridging”¹⁵³ between water and sanitation is perhaps too strong. The result being that water has “hijacked the centre ground”¹⁵⁴ and is distorting understandings of waterborne illness and disproportionately balancing funding in favour of water. Research undertaken by Perlman and Sheehan (2007) suggests that improved toilets have been shown to reduce diarrhoeal disease “by an average of 32%, whereas an improved water supply does so only by 6%”¹⁵⁵. The water frame brings attention to sanitation, but as a Lancet article from 2008 highlights:

*“Sanitation is often in the shadow of water, a situation which is reflected in the amount of funding, priority, and attention given to each entity. However, although these differences must be acknowledged, they must not be used to further widen the sectoral approach. The water and sanitation sectors must find ways of working together ”*¹⁵⁶.

Rose George believes that the renewed focus on sanitation offered by this new human right “may also address the vast disparity in attention and funding given to clean water advocates”¹⁵⁷. Ben Fawcett believes that sanitation should be campaigned on as a separate issue as water and speaks of the “nature of the topic, needing a different campaigning approach in order to reach our audiences - the influential, the public etc”¹⁵⁸. If water does

¹⁴⁹ Fawcett & Black, 2008: p.72

¹⁵⁰ WaterAid, 2011

¹⁵¹ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

¹⁵² Anderson, Interview, July 2011

¹⁵³ Snow & Bernard, cited in Della Porta & Tarrow, 2005: p.129

¹⁵⁴ Fawcett & Black, 2008: pp.71-72

¹⁵⁵ Perlman & Sheehan, cited in Fawcett & Black, 2007: p.74

¹⁵⁶ Lancet, 2008

¹⁵⁷ George, Interview, August 2011

¹⁵⁸ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

overshadow sanitation in combined campaigns, to the detriment of the sanitation side, then perhaps other cognitive frames can be identified that can help reframe sanitation as a separate campaign issue.

2.3 *Health and human rights*

The human right to health and health care strongly links to the right to sanitation. In terms of “adjacency claims”, sanitation campaigns are predominantly framed around health issues. The global sanitation crisis is essentially a health crisis. Prof. Vivienne Nathanson of the British Medical Association notes that “these are avoidable deaths; we have known their cause and the means to reduce them for generations.”¹⁵⁹ WaterAid declare that poor sanitation kills an estimated 4,000 children each day and diarrheal diseases are responsible for an estimated 88% of all under-five deaths worldwide¹⁶⁰. Kate Norgrove explains how child health is central to WaterAid UK’s campaigning:

“Our messaging isn’t around water and sanitation as a sector, but around child health, in which case you bring in sanitation, health care, water into one campaigning lump which is easier to rally around”¹⁶¹

WaterAid’s ‘Dig Toilets, Not Graves’ campaign contains strong right to health messaging and the phrase “hope mired in excrement”¹⁶² also plays upon our innate disgust at human faeces. This campaign was launched on the back of a report entitled ‘Ignored: biggest child killer – the world is neglecting sanitation’ which states that “millions of lives are being lost because of governments and the aid community’s blind spot when it comes to sanitation.”¹⁶³ WaterAid’s key campaign messages on sanitation focus on health and the preventable loss of life.

Paul Farmer (2005) argues that “human rights can and should be declared universal, but the risk of having ones risks violated is not universal”¹⁶⁴ This comment emphasises the fact the some of the health risks posed by poor sanitation are not the same in all parts of the world. As Kate Norgrove suggests, because “you don’t die of diarrhoea here (in the UK), it’s harder to understand why people would die of diarrhoea anywhere else”¹⁶⁵ An innovative approach to addressing this disconnection can be found on the homepage for WaterAid’s ‘Dig Toilets Not Graves’ campaign. A short film features British school children singing the infamous ‘*diarrhoea, diarrhoea*’ rhyme. The film then cuts to an African child who adds the line “when it’s just killed your sister and you’re really going to miss her”¹⁶⁶ followed by the statistic that “every minute, diarrhoea kills three more children.”¹⁶⁷ Diarrhoea is clearly to important an issue to misrepresent, and crucial to understanding the interconnections of sanitation and child mortality.

¹⁵⁹ Nathanson, V, 2010, cited in WaterAid (2010: p.7)

¹⁶⁰ WaterAid (Cumming), 2008, p.2

¹⁶¹ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

¹⁶² WaterAid (2010)

¹⁶³ WaterAid, 2010

¹⁶⁴ Farmer, 2005: p.231

¹⁶⁵ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

¹⁶⁶ WaterAid (2011)

¹⁶⁷ WaterAid (2011)

One major problem with the overreliance of health frames for sanitation campaigns is the priorities of the medical community¹⁶⁸. Ben Fawcett suggests that the priority of the health sector is “treating disease rather than preventing it” and as a result “funds go into hospitals rather than public health campaigns”¹⁶⁹. WaterAid’s Henry Northover explains that the health sector is “dominated by health systems approaches that are looking at the delivery of pharmaceutical curative treatments rather than preventative care”¹⁷⁰. As Northover notes, a Health Ministry would normally “measure their budgets and performance on the delivery of outputs rather than outcomes”¹⁷¹. In terms of transparency, accountability and justifying expenditure, Northover notes “you can count vaccines as fairly clear on being delivered, much less clear how you can deliver success to sanitation.” World Vision’s Thiago Luchesi recognises how a focus on vaccine delivery feeds into National policy-making “it is much easier to create a success story out of the delivery of vaccines (which are indeed very important) than building sanitation facilities”. If you are a health ministry with a limited budget and there are numerous competing human rights issues that are linked to health, a focus on outputs rather than outcomes will provide more measurable figures and deliverable results in the short term.

In his discussion of health and human rights, Paul Farmer (2005) suggests that “a health angle can promote a broader human rights agenda in unique ways”¹⁷². Farmer (2005) believes that “medicine and public health form an extraordinary symbolic capital that is, so far, underutilised in human rights work.”¹⁷³ However, as altering toilet habits requires behavioural change, there are limitations to the health frame for sanitation campaigns. On one hand, Farmer (2005) speaks of how “the esteem in which public medicine and health are held” can potentially offer a “new agenda of health and human rights”¹⁷⁴. But on the other hand, George (2008) suggests that when it comes to people actually changing their behaviour “health messages rarely have an impact”¹⁷⁵ Val Curtis (2008) also criticises the “doctors, disease and diarrhoea” approach suggesting that “it never works and is not culturally relative”¹⁷⁶ George argues that “habit, even a habit that people know to be bad for their health, is difficult to break”¹⁷⁷, which suggests that a single focus on health messages is not enough to trigger behavioural change. In addition, WaterAid state that “the drivers of investment and behaviour change are more likely to be security, privacy, dignity and convenience”¹⁷⁸. This statement supports the view that health messages alone are also not enough to influence the priorities of donors. Therefore, a single focus on health framing may also not fully engage the targets of a sanitation campaign.

¹⁶⁸ For a full discussion of this issue, please see WaterAid’s 2011 report ‘The Sanitation Problem: what could and should the health sector do?’

¹⁶⁹ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

¹⁷⁰ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹⁷¹ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹⁷² Farmer, 2005: p.234

¹⁷³ Farmer, 2005: p.234

¹⁷⁴ Farmer, 2005: p.234

¹⁷⁵ George, 2008: p.204

¹⁷⁶ Curtis, 2008, cited in George, 2008: p.204

¹⁷⁷ George, Interview, August 2011

¹⁷⁸ WaterAid, 2008: p:8

2.3 Sanitation, dignity and discrimination

The human right to sanitation can be seen as central to the “dignity and worth of the human person”¹⁷⁹. The UN has described the global sanitation crisis as an “affront to human dignity on a massive scale”¹⁸⁰. Access to sanitation can be as an issue of discrimination due to the lack of equality to access. As Catarina de Albuquerque notes, a distinct human right to sanitation:

*“Has the potential to make sure that people look at sanitation differently. Not merely as a box that we have to tick, but rather as a human rights issue that has much profounder implications in peoples lives, including in their dignity.”*¹⁸¹

As the Special Rapporteur argues; “there is always a coincidence, an overlap between race, economic status and lack of access to sanitation”¹⁸². WaterAid’s Henry Northover suggests that “there is one area where rights language does have some comparative advantage, and that’s at the national level in terms of non-discrimination.”¹⁸³ The Special Rapporteur states that “one central aspect of realising the rights to realising water and sanitation is addressing discrimination”¹⁸⁴ Albuquerque’s country report from Namibia emphasises this connection: “inequitable access to water and sanitation reflects wider inequality in Namibia”¹⁸⁵. In turn, this supports a statement in Albuquerque’s first report to the HRC, in which she notices a “strong correlation between lack of access to sanitation and a low rating on the human development index”¹⁸⁶. Campaigning on sanitation through a human dignity frame can help us identify areas of discrimination, marginalisation and social exclusion.

Human dignity is often a contextual campaign theme, often used in case studies to illustrate individual stories, with the primary campaign frames being health and water. However, it is also through denial of basic human dignity that human rights claims for sanitation can be best understood. AI’s ‘Demand Dignity’ campaign seeks to raise awareness of ESC rights violations as the root causes of extreme poverty. In this campaign the dignity frame is prevalent, with a focus on “combined abuse of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights that drives and deepens poverty”¹⁸⁷. One innovative approach to try and find new ways to reframe campaigns around sanitation can be found on the ‘Search for the Obvious’ website. In 2010 the Acumen Fund sponsored an open multi-media “Make Sanitation Sexy” competition. Entrants were invited to “show the world that the lack of basic sanitation is one of the most critical issues facing the developing world today”¹⁸⁸. Entrants were then judged in categories which included best tweet, essay, video, poster design and campaign. This simple competition revealed some illuminating ways of reframing campaign messages about sanitation. The most prominent messages focus on aspects of human dignity and seek to make everyday human connections. The health frame is always present, but the dominant messages seem to put the individual dignity at the forefront.

¹⁷⁹ UN UDHR, 1948 (preamble)

¹⁸⁰ UN Water, 2008: p.6

¹⁸¹ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

¹⁸² Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

¹⁸³ Northover, Interview, July 2011

¹⁸⁴ De Albuquerque, 2011: p.22

¹⁸⁵ Albuquerque, Namibia report (2011)

¹⁸⁶ Albuquerque, 2009

¹⁸⁷ AI (2011)

¹⁸⁸ Search for the Obvious, 2010

Sebastian Fernandez, Michael Malz, and Pablo Vizcaino's won 'best campaign' in the "Make Sanitation Sexy" competition. Their short film "image no toilets"¹⁸⁹ features a man desperate for the toilet. Every time he opens a WC door, the toilet is missing. Eventually, the man gives up, drops his trousers and squats by a tree. The audience are asked "at what point do you give up your dignity?"¹⁹⁰ Kate Norgrove suggests that:

*"Whereas people can understand what it would be like not to have a hospital or a school nearby, they can't image what it would be like not to have a toilet."*¹⁹¹

A similar dignity theme can be seen in Claire Seringhaus' runners-up entry "Sanitation is Swell". Through a series of Dylan-esque flashcards, this film asks you to imagine yourself in the situation where "you are getting ready for a hot date, but you cannot take a shower, or brush your teeth and you have dysentery"¹⁹². Fawcett states that "we don't talk about our own sanitary needs because we can easily 'flush and forget' our waste and we wish that others would do the same"¹⁹³. The "Make Sanitation Sexy" entries both reframe the issue in terms of human dignity and challenge us to question and perhaps reflect on our own sanitation practices in direct and humorous ways. Human rights law has the potential to enshrine dignity in legal protection and offer routes of recompense. And furthermore, a distinct human right to sanitation can add clarity and applicability to notions of dignity in a focused and individualistic way. But it is also these everyday connections to our individual sense of dignity that can help bring an issue to life.

2.5 *Development, sanitation and the MDGs*

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target 7c, which seeks to "to halve by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation"¹⁹⁴. The MDG sanitation target has been criticised for having "failed to mobilise the requisite political will among international or national level actors"¹⁹⁵ and UN Water state that "without sanitation, disease control and poverty eradication are impossible"¹⁹⁶. EWP's Fleur Anderson admits to being "a bit sceptical on campaigning on rights" and proposes that "the MDGs have been a much better platform for campaigning, in the way governments can actually respond to"¹⁹⁷. However, Nelson and Dobson (2008) argue that though they offer "attainable levels of progress" the MDGs "can be accomplished without even attempting to address the thorny social and political causes of inequality and deprivation"¹⁹⁸. From this perspective, it is easy to understand a States preference for MDG targets over treaty obligations. Essentially, the MDGs permit States to "frame objectives in terms of non-binding, essentially voluntary goals"¹⁹⁹. Though from a human rights perspective, the MDGs

¹⁸⁹ Fernandez, Malz & Vizcaino (2011)

¹⁹⁰ Fernandez, Malz & Vizcaino (2011)

¹⁹¹ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

¹⁹² Seringhaus (2011)

¹⁹³ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

¹⁹⁴ UN MDGS, 2002

¹⁹⁵ WaterAid, 'Sanitation – a human rights imperative' (2008: p1)

¹⁹⁶ UN Water, 2008: p.14

¹⁹⁷ Anderson, Interview, July 2011

¹⁹⁸ Nelson and Dobson, 2008: p.117

¹⁹⁹ Nelson and Dobson, 2008: p.118

have also helped highlight cross-cutting themes that link sanitation with other human rights²⁰⁰. These links help strengthen “adjacency claims” that cement “the relationship of new normative claims to existing norms”²⁰¹. Human rights law, over the non-binding commitment of the MDGs, can help set the parameters of the debate and clarify State obligations.

The MDGs have proved a particularly useful campaign tool when linking sanitation to economic development. WaterAid suggest that international neglect of the sanitation sector is “acting as a brake on development efforts and constraining progress across all the MDGs”²⁰². Though it is recognised that “the world is on track to meet the drinking water target”²⁰³, UNICEF estimate that “the target on sanitation will be missed by over 700 million people”²⁰⁴. EWP state that “in Africa, an estimated 5% of GDP is lost to illnesses and deaths caused by dirty drinking water and the absence of sanitation”²⁰⁵. In addition, the UNDP estimate that “at any one time, half the hospital beds in developing countries are filled with people suffering from diarrhoea”²⁰⁶. In June 2011, Ban-Ki Moon launched the UN’s ‘Sustainable Sanitation: five year drive to 2015’. This new campaign called upon UN member States to “redouble efforts to close the sanitation gap”²⁰⁷. The WSSCC have helped develop campaign messages for the UN Five Year Drive. Marlin notes “we’ve picked up the human rights language in our messaging for the drive to 2015” which runs with the central human right to sanitation message “Making the Right a Reality”²⁰⁸.

The Gate’s Foundation recently launched their ‘Reinventing the Toilet’ campaign, which displays some interesting innovations in the way the sanitation crisis is presented in the development frame. The goal is to “encourage new ideas and new approaches to accelerate safe and affordable access to sanitation for everyone”²⁰⁹. A research fund attached to this campaign has been awarded to eight universities who successfully submitted proposals for a “waterless, hygienic toilet that is safe and affordable for people in the developing world”²¹⁰. The Gates Foundation’s call to action presents development in terms of creative innovation. However, it can be argued that enough low-cost toilets already exist without the need for further technologies solutions. For example, Ben Fawcett has written on the huge range of low-cost of sanitary solutions available, ‘The Expanding Technological Menu’²¹¹, and believes that technical reinvention is “not the solution”²¹². However, this well-funded international campaign also encourages “creative new approaches to policy and advocacy that take an unapologetically direct approach to poop and the huge pile of problems that it creates”²¹³. Importantly, ‘Reinventing the Toilet’ asks us to reassess how we think about

²⁰⁰ UN-INWEH report from 2010 intrinsically links sanitation, through human rights, to every one of the eight MDGs (UNU-INWEH, 2010, p.11)

²⁰¹ Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, p.908

²⁰² WaterAid, ‘Sanitation – a human rights imperative’ (2008: p3)

²⁰³ UN MDG Report, 2010: p. 58.

²⁰⁴ UN MDG Report, 2010: p. 60.

²⁰⁵ EWP, 2008

²⁰⁶ Cited in WaterAid, (2010: p.7)

²⁰⁷ UN HRC Res. 65/153

²⁰⁸ Marlin, 2011

²⁰⁹ Gates Foundation, 2011

²¹⁰ Gates Foundation, 2011

²¹¹ Fawcett & Black, 2008, Chapter 3

²¹² Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

²¹³ Gates Foundation, 2011

toilets. Another interesting development is the WSSCC's and WHO's joint Global Sanitation Fund. The fund attempts to fill a gap in traditional donor funding mechanisms and "boost expenditure on sanitation and hygiene in accordance with national sanitation and hygiene policies"²¹⁴. The Special Rapporteur notes the role of the fund as having "been instrumental in Madagascar, Senegal and Nepal in developing good collaborative practice between government and civil society"²¹⁵. Both of these initiatives can be seen to present development and sanitation in a positive frame.

Henry Northover argues that linking too many rights together can lead to "diluted imperative around progressive realisation"²¹⁶. Northover warns that "once you make rights inseparable, and you can't deliver on some of them because of inadequate resources, then you potentially jeopardise other rights."²¹⁷ However, the diluted imperative criticism can also be levied at development as a controversial and contested norm. A comment by Jim Ife (2010) captures both the positive and negative frames surrounding development: "the word development has positive connotations, though these are often counter-balanced by the poor reputation of many development projects"²¹⁸. Darton and Kirk (2011) argue that "it is striking that some of the words that should be avoided are right at the heart of how the development sector describes itself"²¹⁹. Darton and Kirk (2011) suggest that "practitioners should avoid using negative frames, rather than challenging or repeating them"²²⁰ and propose linguistic changes that better evoke positive frames. For example, 'aid' could become "mutual support or partnership", 'development' could be reframed as "well-being, freedom and responsibility" and 'campaigns' could be called "engagements or dialogues"²²¹. The development frame has proved effective in tying sanitation into wider issues of global poverty and benefits from having an MDG target to tie its arguments around. The development cognitive frame can also bring to sanitation campaigns a conceptual grounding that "sanitation must be safe, physically accessible, affordable and culturally acceptable"²²². However, development as a concept attracts criticism, and can be seen as "an enterprise without a legal or moral anchor"²²³.

2.6 *What you don't know will hurt you – sanitation and the right to education*

Sanitation as a distinct human right can help with the delivery of sanitation campaign and WASH messages through educational channels. So much of improving sanitation relies on behavioural change, which is reliant on education. The right to education suggests that children have the right to attend school, to learn and to develop. Understanding the right to health education in sanitation terms brings attention to obstacles, usually health related, that can inhibit, disrupt or damage altogether a child's ability to attend school. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimate that meeting the MDG sanitation target would result in a gain of 272 million school days in the developing world"²²⁴. Similar messages are

²¹⁴ UN-INWEH, 2010: p.34

²¹⁵ Albuquerque, 2011: p.11

²¹⁶ Northover, Interview, July 2011

²¹⁷ Northover, Interview, 2011

²¹⁸ Ife, 2010: p.17

²¹⁹ Darton & Kirk (exec. 2011)

²²⁰ Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.89

²²¹ Terms suggested as "range finders", Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.93

²²² OHCHR et al, 2008: p.18

²²³ Nelson & Dobson, 2008: p.103

²²⁴ OHCHR et al, 2008: p.18

prominent in UNICEF's 'WASH in Schools' campaign²²⁵ and the work of UN-Water, who employ a "Five 'F's" strategy to sanitation education: "faeces, fingers, flies, fluids and fields"²²⁶. Loss of schooling due to illness, the need for sex-segregated toilets in schools and hand-washing for children are also prominent messages in the work World Vision. Thiago Luchesi explains "the right to sanitation also has links with the right to education (because of the importance of school sanitation) and children's right to survival and development (article 6 of the CRC)"²²⁷. In addition, the CRC gives states obligations to:

*"To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents"*²²⁸

There is another aspect of the right to education that is under-discussed. This is right for all to be taught basic, life saving educational messages about health and hygiene. As Fawcett and Black (2008) argue, prevention is the key to "reduce definitively the toll of childhood diarrhoeal disease and death"²²⁹ Fundamental to prevention is education. A parent has a right to know, to be able to pass on health messages to their children. And the State has a responsibility to educate their citizens on public health issues. Pilar Romero-Ardoy works as WASH manager for Goal in Haiti and notes the importance of education in combating a recent cholera epidemic: "health prevention messages do save lives if only because people are very conscious of not bringing their hands to the mouth if they are dirty or have them washed them"²³⁰ In Chapman's (2001) study of campaign structures, she identifies "active civil society organisations, high levels of public awareness and active individuals"²³¹ as elements that improve the success rate of campaigns at grassroots level. Education is intrinsic to the spread of information and also leads to better community engagement in grassroots campaigning around the right to sanitation.

2.7 Slums, sanitation and the right to adequate housing

*"Sanitation is part of housing (housing is not just houses, it's your whole habitat), and they're all part of the right to property, the right to dignity, the right to a standard of living"*²³²

By 2030, the proportion of the world's population living in cities is expected to rise by 60%. Around 6 million people move to cities every year, with 40% of that urban expansion in slums²³³. Around a quarter of all city dwellers currently do not have a decent place to go to the toilet²³⁴. About 1.2 billion people still practice OD²³⁵ and 90% of human

²²⁵ UNICEF, 2009

²²⁶ UN-INWEH, 2008: p.13

²²⁷ Luchesi, Interview, July 2011

²²⁸ UN CRC, 1989, Article 24(e)

²²⁹ Fawcett and Black, 2008: p.79

²³⁰ Romero-Ardoy, Interview, August 2011

²³¹ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.263 (fig. 19.1)

²³² Kaupp, Interview, August 2011

²³³ World Water Day press release, 2011

²³⁴ World Water Day press release, 2011

²³⁵ WaterAid, 2008

waste in the developing world is discharged untreated²³⁶ The fact that many governments still fail to recognise “the unofficial, or even illegal status of many living in slums is a serious impediment to improvement of infrastructure, including water supplies and sanitation”²³⁷. Catarina de Albuquerque explains the unwillingness to recognise ‘unofficial’ slum dwellers: “the fear of governments is that by recognising people’s rights that you will be attracting more slum dwellers. The same with homeless”²³⁸ Fawcett warns that “it might, perversely, mean that states are even less likely to give formal recognition to slum-dwellers, as it will increase their (governmental) responsibilities”²³⁹. Campaign messages about the right to sanitation therefore face a struggle in communicating the complex issues of housing, tenure and slums and the scale of a problem which encompasses such a range of other human rights concerns. As Remi Kaupp suggests “if you start talking human rights with communities, they’ll make a list of other rights which often have much higher priority”²⁴⁰

Albuquerque (2010) recognises; “the lack of security of tenure, in particular in informal settlements is one of the critical underlying issues in this context”²⁴¹. Remi Kaupp notes that “the first and most important point is the shift towards recognition of these “squatters”, which leads to the logical and painful next step: tenure”²⁴². Ben Fawcett explains that lack of tenure can lead to a vicious cycle for tenants:

*“Landlords don't want to spend their capital on toilets, or, if they do, they then put the rent up and poorer tenants then have to move to cheaper, un-toileted accommodation.”*²⁴³

Though it is tempting to present a toilet as the solution to poor sanitation, like a water pump is the solution to dirty water, campaign messages must reflect that ‘unofficial’ slum dwellers often have little incentive in improving the toilet facilities in their homes “when they face the constant threat of forced eviction”²⁴⁴. Another problem with a house-to-house approach to toilet instillation is that “in densely populated urban areas, on-site latrines are seldom practical due to lack of space”²⁴⁵. Among the good practices highlighted by the Special Rapporteur is the work of The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres (SPARC) in India, who concentrate on “the construction of community toilets within slums”²⁴⁶. Homeless International partners with SPARC in India and Remi Kaupp underlines their role “SPARC builds capacity of community groups so that they can bid for contracts, and get public subsidies to build and manage toilet blocks”. Organisations such as SPARC highlight how innovative business can encourage behavioural change and inject new economic growth. Which in turn provide case studies that bring positive frames to sanitation campaigning.

²³⁶ World Water Day 2011 press pack

²³⁷ Fawcett and Black, 2008: p.37

²³⁸ Albuquerque, Interview, July 2011

²³⁹ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

²⁴⁰ Kaupp, Interview, August 2011

²⁴¹ Albuquerque, 2010

²⁴² Kaupp, Interview, August 2011

²⁴³ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

²⁴⁴ De Albuquerque, 2010

²⁴⁵ De Albuquerque, 2011: p.19

²⁴⁶ De Albuquerque, 2011: p.20

2.8 *Summary*

The human right to sanitation brings out a new perspective which is, as yet, underutilised in existing campaigns. In this chapter, some of the issues surrounding sanitation were explored. The work of NGOs and related campaigns that focus on improving sanitation reveal issues that can be framed in terms of water, housing, health, dignity, development and education. In some cases the new human right to sanitation can be seen to offer an opportunity to better reframe and reinvigorate sanitation campaigns. In other cases, a rights-focus can possibly weaken arguments for improving sanitation. Overall, sanitation is a neglected issue partly because it is always presented alongside water. The development frame is currently dominated by the language of MDGs, but positive messages of investing in sanitation are emerging as the strongest advocacy tool. The housing frame raises other competing human rights claims and is complicated by issues of tenure and States inability to tackle slums. The health frame is essential, but also requires a strong education frame to convey behavioural change and preventative remedies over curative treatment. The central cognitive frame to present sanitation in rights terms is the dignity frame. Dignity goes to the heart of sanitation as a right and also helps us focus message on issues of equity and inclusion, which perhaps also offer the strongest avenues of legal redress.

Chapter 3: Reframing and Any Other business

3.1 Same shit, different day

Another factor facing any campaign that seeks to raise awareness about sanitation is the threat of Moeller's (1999) "compassion fatigue". This term relates to the desensitising of the public and donors to global crises: "if the public doesn't know, or knowing cannot relate in some explicit way to an event or issue, then it's off the radar"²⁴⁷. As Moeller notes "the most devastating effect of compassion fatigue: no attention, no interest, no story"²⁴⁸. Moeller speaks of a "reciprocal circularity" in press reporting of such "low-intensity crises" and suggest that the "droning 'same-as-it-ever-was' coverage"²⁴⁹ creates a cycle of apathy and reinforces a sense of underlying hopelessness – i.e. the problem is natural and unfixable. Keck and Sikkink (1998) suggest that a successful cognitive frame "must show that a given state of affairs is neither natural nor accidental, identify the responsible party or parties and propose credible solutions."²⁵⁰

Darnton and Kirk (2011) suggest that the "Live Aid legacy" continues to cast "the UK public in the role of powerful giver and the African public as grateful receiver"²⁵¹. Despite the awareness-raising and funds gained from Live Aid in 1985, Darnton and Kirk (2011) argue that a "charity-based development model" developed which still "entrenches uneven power structures and results in aid dependency."²⁵² Darnton and Kirk (2011) suggest that the UK public is currently "stuck in terms of how it engages with global poverty"²⁵³ and point to a worrying trend which is seeing both a drop-off in public support for development spending²⁵⁴ and a growing despondency with international aid. The global sanitation crisis is a slow burning disaster. It is an ongoing, yet unspectacular crisis of massive consequences to human life. There are no flash floods or explosions to focus press attention and shit is certainly no headline-grabber.

3.2 So what do we call it?

*"Even the word 'sanitation' is sanitised, perpetuating ancient taboos about discussing human waste, obscuring and institutionalising the simple reality than evacuating waste is a natural human function that must be treated with dignity and respect"*²⁵⁵

One challenge with sanitation campaigns is finding the correct wording. Keck and Sikkink assert that successful framing requires "clear, powerful messages that appeal to

²⁴⁷ Moeller, 1999: p.12

²⁴⁸ Moeller, 1999: p.12

²⁴⁹ Moeller, 1999: p.12

²⁵⁰ Keck & Sikkink, 1998: p.19

²⁵¹ Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.23

²⁵² Darnton & Kirk, 2011: p.61

²⁵³ Darnton and Kirk, 2011: p.13)

²⁵⁴ A recent DfID reports shows the proportion of the UK public reported to be "very concerned" about levels of poverty in "poor counties" dropped from 32% in June 2005 to 24% in February 2011²⁵⁴.

²⁵⁵ UN-INWEH, 2008: p.6

shared principles”²⁵⁶. Ben Fawcett points to a need for “hard-hitting but 'attractive' messages” that are “presented in ways that can't be avoided”. Fleur Anderson of EWP suggests that part of the problem is that “the word sanitation, it's not a word we use”. A view shared by Kate Norgrove, Head of Campaigns for WaterAid UK who notes that “It's difficult to talk about sanitation; the word itself is quite obscure”. Rose George (2008) also acknowledges that “there is no neutral word for what humans produce at least once a day”²⁵⁷. Lakoff (2004) emphasises the importance of the correct wording when framing an issue “because language activates frames, new language is required for new frames”²⁵⁸

Ashleigh Graber and Kenan Reel took the best video award from ‘Make Sanitation Sexy’ competition with their film “Shit Talks. Talk Back”, which opens on the line “we all talk it, we just don't talk about it”²⁵⁹. The film runs through a list of alternate names for faeces and concludes by suggesting that the word shit has the most impact, ending on the line “shit happens but we have to be able to talk about it if we want to do something about it”²⁶⁰. George (2008) describes the “brilliant core” of CLTS as “disgust”²⁶¹. Kamal Kar (2008) speaks of the need for the CLTS approach to “use crude language” and “awaken disgust”²⁶². For reasons of practicality, would an NGO seriously run an advert with the word ‘shit’ in it? It's doubtful, and would probably contravene advertising standards in most English-speaking countries. In which case SH*T should be used.

3.3 *An empty spotlight*

*“We need a champion. A Bono or a Geldof. A Nelson Mandela or an Angelina Jolie. A film star or a politician who has the courage to talk about toilets, when people only want to talk about taps”*²⁶³

Sanitation is a cause without a recognisable figurehead. There are no “charismatic, internationally-known champions for toilets”²⁶⁴. Gladwell's (2001) “law of the few” refers to the little understood phenomenon of high-activity individuals, whose activity spreads a message far and wide. Exactly what makes for a good, high-profile advocate in any field is difficult to call. Gladwell (2001) suggests that “one critical factor in epidemics is the nature of the messenger”²⁶⁵. Gladwell (2001) speaks of “connectors” as the “kinds of people who know everyone”²⁶⁶. Gladwell (2001) describes how “by having a foot in so many different worlds, they have the effect of bring them all together”²⁶⁷. It is also possible to interpret “connectors” in a similar vein to Clifford Bob's (2009) definition of “gatekeepers” as “entities at the core of the human rights movement, whose support for a claim can boost it

²⁵⁶ Keck and Sikkink, 1998: p.23

²⁵⁷ George, 2008: p.12

²⁵⁸ Lakoff, 2004: p. xv

²⁵⁹ Grabel & Reel, 2011,

²⁶⁰ Grabel & Reel, 2011

²⁶¹ George, 2008: p.213

²⁶² Kar, cited in George, 2008: p.215

²⁶³ George, 2008: p.12

²⁶⁴ Fawcett, Interview, July 2011

²⁶⁵ Gladwell, 2001: p.91

²⁶⁶ Gladwell, 2001: p.38

²⁶⁷ Gladwell, 2001: p.51

substantially”²⁶⁸ Chapman (2001) also notes the need for “social entrepreneurs with strategic vision”²⁶⁹ Rose George (2008) uses the term “searchers” to describe innovative sanitation advocates and identifies the following common characteristics “persistence, obviously, but also flexibility” and a willingness “to consider more than conventional wisdom”²⁷⁰.

Jack Sim, founder of the World Toilet Organisation (WTO) believes that “to get the world talking properly – or at all – about sanitation, any weapon will do”²⁷¹. Rose George suggests that successful propagators of sanitation advocacy also display “an awareness that providing sanitation is also about human psychology and behaviour”²⁷². In Risse, Ropp and Sikkink’s (1999) discussion of norms socialisation they note that “both emotion and cognition operate synergistically to produce change and attitudes”²⁷³. In 2010, Kate Norgrove was evicted from an anti-poverty conference in New York for dressing in a ‘giant poo costume’. Norgrove recognises that where sanitation is concerned “you can use toilet humour, which makes it easier to campaign on.”²⁷⁴ Humour is also evident in a short film for WaterAid’s ‘Dig Toilets Not Graves’ campaign, which features members of the public being chased by a remote controlled ‘poo on wheels’. The accompanying tag-line exclaims: “imagine if you could never escape from poo”²⁷⁵. This approach supports the view taken by Jack Sim, founder of the World Toilet Organisation: “people joke about it, but when the jokes stop, they listen. When they’ve stopped listening, they take action”²⁷⁶.

3.4 *Enemies and binaries*

A clear problem in the world of sanitation is that there is often no “clear, identifiable violator, violation and remedy”²⁷⁷. Where responsibility for sanitation provision is concerned, governmental departments are often so disparate that there is usually no clear target to focus campaigns on. As Fawcett puts it; “there are few countries where the responsibility for sanitation is clear - there are no ministers of shit!”²⁷⁸ The view among sanitation advocates seems to be that naming and shaming in the world of sanitation may be counter-productive. Kate Norgrove suggests that “the most successful campaigns use enemies and things that are going wrong as a way of generating discussion”²⁷⁹. Chapman (2001) also suggests that attracting attention to campaigns benefits from having “obvious villains”²⁸⁰ Norgrove explains “it’s much easier to campaign against stopping people from doing something that getting people to do something”²⁸¹. Improving sanitation requires positive rights obligations from States, rather than just the negative obligations of stopping a certain practice.

²⁶⁸ Bob, 2009: p.3

²⁶⁹ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.267 (fig. 19.4)

²⁷⁰ George, Interview, August 2011

²⁷¹ Jack Sim cited in George, 2008: p.74

²⁷² George, Interview, August 2011

²⁷³ Eagly & Chaiken (1993) cited in Risse, Ropp & Sikkink, 1999: p.14

²⁷⁴ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

²⁷⁵ WaterAid (2011)

²⁷⁶ George, 2008: p.74

²⁷⁷ Nelson & Dobson, 2008: p.78

²⁷⁸ Fawcett, Interview, March 2011

²⁷⁹ Norgrove, Interview, July 2011

²⁸⁰ Chapman in Edwards & Gaventa, 2001: p.267 (fig. 19.4)

²⁸¹ Norgrove, Interview 2011

It is often said that there is no ‘silver bullet solution’ to the global sanitation crisis. Even this phrase implies that there is an ‘enemy’ to be ‘defeated’. Where improving sanitation requires positive obligations, and often behavioural change, the enemy or binary dynamic is perhaps at odds with enacting that right. However, campaigns do benefit from having an enemy to point at. For sanitation, the enemy is shit, or more precisely, it is Open Defecation. The focus on ‘total sanitation’ highlights both the need for behavioural change - the entire community need to safely dispose of their excreta. As George (2008) notes: “it only takes one family without a latrine to pollute all common areas and drinking water”. George (2008) also notes the “irony of defecation” in that it “is a solitary business yet its repercussions are plural and public.”²⁸² Luckily, we are hard-wired by “natural design – look and smell”²⁸³ to be repelled by, and to avoid the enemy – ours and other peoples faeces. But likewise, it is also important to acknowledge that “disgust coupled with taboo is not an adequate disease avoidance strategy”²⁸⁴

3.5 *Conclusions and Recommendations*

International human rights law is primed for a test case that can exert pressure on the theoretical boundaries of this new human right to sanitation. State discrimination relating to access can lead to a rights-claim, whether enacted through the positive obligations of State-specific constitutions or through the Special Procedures of the UN. Without legal application, this right will flounder. States may not wish to engage in the language of rights violations with regard to sanitation access, but this is no reason for the legal application of this new right to be abandoned with shrug.

In discussing the normative content of frames around sanitation, this study explored the pros and cons of applying human rights language to sanitation campaigns. Below is a brief summary of each of the cognitive frames discussed.

- The water frame

A combined WASH message in campaigns requires water. However, human rights does not often fit the language of development NGOs and water tends to get the majority of focus and funding, subjugating sanitation to a subsidiary role. This is reflected in WATSAN campaigns. Water can also distort public perceptions of shit-related illness and can favour a pity agenda.

- The health frame

The keys effects of poor sanitation are health-related, particularly child mortality. That is the tragic truth. Health messages can bring greater legitimacy to sanitation claims. However, the health sector favours curative treatment over preventative intervention. Health messages alone do not always resonate with the public or effect behavioural change on the ground, but some innovative approaches show that health messages can be presented in new and engaging ways.

²⁸² George, 2008: p.203

²⁸³ Fawcett and Black, 2008: p.78

²⁸⁴ Fawcett and Black, 2008: p.78

- The dignity frame

The dignity frame is perhaps closest to the essence of sanitation as a distinct human right. Dignity helps identify exclusion and discrimination, through which the human right to sanitation can offer new avenues of legal redress. Dignity offers new ways to frame campaigns, to link shared understandings and communicate the personal and private aspects of toilets and toilet habits.

- The development frame

The MDGs have galvanised support for improving sanitation and have helped form clearer links between sanitation and other human rights. However, MDG targets offer a softer option for States than treaty obligations and only last to 2015. The development frame helps emphasise the economic benefits of investment in sanitation. But development as a concept brings its own baggage as a contested norm with questionable outcomes.

- The education frame

The health effects of poor sanitation affect a child's ability to attend school. Child health WASH campaigns can also emphasise the positive frames of sanitation access. The right to education emphasises behavioural change and centres on the duty of States to share information and raise awareness.

- The housing frame

Perhaps the most problematic area of sanitation to convey in a campaign. Though the right to sanitation is intrinsically linked to housing, competing rights-claims in slums and lack of tenure pose further challenges. However, the right to sanitation for homeless people highlights the role rights claims can play.

In contrast to the view that sanitation is a taboo subject that no-one wants to talk about, I believe that people do in fact want to talk shit. The problem seems to lie more in broaching the subject. Humour and shock value can help break the ice. The global sanitation crisis needs influential figures to shout shit from the rooftops. The new human right to sanitation can reframe and reinvigorate sanitation campaigns. Sanitation needs to be campaigned for as a separate entity. Sanitation as a human right gives that entity grounding. Positive cognitive frames of human dignity, improved health, empowering education and fiscal sense can perhaps wrestle campaigns for improving sanitation away from the stifling water frame. After the MDG target date of 2015, perhaps the framework of human rights can provide a new home for the orphan sanitation.