

**Los procesos políticos en torno a la introducción del enfoque
Saneamiento Total Liderado por la Comunidad en la India**
*The policy processes around the introduction of the Community-Led Total
Sanitation approach in India*

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Resumen:

Ante la desastrosa campaña de saneamiento del gobierno indio, agencias internacionales intentaron introducir el Saneamiento Total Liderado por la Comunidad (SanToLiC) un innovador enfoque participativo. Al encontrar oposición a nivel nacional, se centraron en niveles administrativos inferiores, consiguiendo implantar el SanToLiC en algunas regiones y mejorando claramente los resultados obtenidos. La caracterización de los procesos políticos en torno a estas iniciativas ofrece lecciones para la introducción del SanToLiC en otros lugares. Se observó que un líder fuerte y comprometido dentro de la administración era crucial y que, en coalición con la agencia internacional, podían dar peso a la narrativa política que legitima al SanToLiC. Cuando además conseguían controlar intereses en conflicto de otros actores, la adopción del SanToLiC era exitosa.

Palabras clave: saneamiento; India; Saneamiento Total Liderado por la Comunidad; proceso político; economía política

Abstract:

In the face of a disastrous rural sanitation campaign of the Indian government, international agencies tried to introduce in the country the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), an innovative participatory approach. As they found opposition at the national level, focus shifted to lower administrative levels. In the few regions where CLTS was adopted, outcomes improved clearly. The characterisation of the policy processes surrounding these initiatives offers lessons for CLTS' introduction elsewhere. A strong and committed leader inside the administration was crucial. In a coalition with the international agency, they could put forward the policy narrative legitimising CLTS. When they also managed to control competing interests of other actors, the introduction of CLTS was successful.

Key words: sanitation; India; Community-Led Total Sanitation; policy process; political economy

1. Introduction

1.1. Sanitation in India

In 1999, After thirteen 13 years of slow progress in rural sanitation coverage under a supply-led Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP), the Government of India launched the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC). Along with the international trend in the sanitation sector towards demand-led interventions (UNICEF, 1997), it represented a shift “towards a demand driven approach (...) [that] emphasizes more on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities to increase awareness” (Government of India, 2001, p.4). The TSC encouraged the leadership of the communities, for instance involving local leaders and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). Information, Education and Communication (IEC) got approximately 15% of the funds (Government of India, 2007) and included pamphlets, wall writing or folk media carrying messages about the consequences of poor (or safe) sanitation (Kumar & Shukla, 2011). The demand-led character of the campaign was strengthened in 2004, when household latrine subsidies were replaced by an incentive to below-poverty line (BPL) households of Rs.1200 (Government of India, 2004) –later increased to Rs.2200, and to 3500 in 2011– that was to be distributed after self-undertaken construction. Little later, the ‘total’ character or collective focus was reinforced with the introduction of the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP), an award scheme that honoured Gram Panchayats with relevant achievements in cleanliness –including open defecation free (ODF) status– and rewarded them with a cash prize (Government of India, 2011a).

The TSC guideline followed the principles internationally promoted for the sanitation sector (WSSCC, 2010) and seemed to be yielding great results, with the Government reporting rural sanitation coverage at 68% in 2011, a 46 point increase since 2001 (Government of India, 2011b). However, TSC was not being implemented as per its guidelines, but in a construction-focused and subsidy-driven mode, neglecting demand generation (Hueso & Bell, 2013; WaterAid, 2008). Consequently, the real results revealed by the 2011 Census proved to be poor, with a decadal coverage increase of just 8.8 points, less than during the previous CRSP decade (Government of India, 2012b). Four fifths of the toilets reportedly constructed during the TSC were ‘missing’.

1.2. Introduction of Community-Led Total Sanitation in India

Various actors in the rural sanitation sector, aware of the shortcomings of the TSC, tried to introduce different approaches in the country during these years. One of the most relevant

ones –due to its scale and international relevance– was the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach, promoted by the World Bank’s Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) in South Asia since 2002. This approach uses participatory tools to facilitate rural communities analyse their sanitary situation in order to trigger a collective desire to change and take action to create an open-defecation free (ODF) environment. The community should build as per their capacities and knowledge, without financial support or technical prescriptions. (Kar and Chambers, 2008).

The introduction of the CLTS faced several obstacles. Firstly, the TSC widespread use of up-front subsidies for toilet construction in India (WaterAid, 2008) clashed with the zero-subsidy perspective of the CLTS (Sanan, 2011). As a consequence, there was strong opposition at the national level (Kumar & Shukla, 2011) and the CLTS was not accepted as a valid approach in India’s official sanitation policy. However, the decentralised character of the campaign and the interest of the state of Maharashtra allowed the approach to be piloted in two districts (Kumar & Shukla, 2011) and subsequently, through a series of workshops, CLTS started to raise interest throughout the country.

Thus, WSP started in 2005-2006 a structured CLTS scaling up strategy. Based on workshops and extensive trainings of CLTS trainers, the idea was to expose decision makers at multiple levels to CLTS and create a critical mass of trainers and facilitators at the states and districts. Interested administrations were afterwards supported for the strategic planning. Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were first to show interest, but other states followed soon after, including Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka or Orissa (Knowdlege Links, 2011; Kumar & Shukla, 2011).

However, due to the hostile policy environment at the national level, CLTS relied on committed individual champions to take the approach forward. These champions –at the state, district or block level government– had to muddle through, balancing their conviction of CLTS potential and the reality of its non-acceptance at the policy level (Kumar & Shukla, 2011). This generally resulted in mixed approaches, with elements from CLTS and elements related to the TSC widespread practice (Knowdlege Links, 2011). In addition, the need to fulfil the targets set by the administration led to over-reporting, while post transfers –frequent in the Indian administration– quickly undermined many of these efforts (Chambers, 2009; Joshi, 2011). The scaling up strategy of WSP is considered therefore to have yielded average results, with remarkable achievements only in Himachal Pradesh (Sanan, Chauhan, & Rana, 2010).

The start of the 2010s brought new initiatives and the emergence of a new strategy for scaling up CLTS. Instead of extensive promotion at the district or state level, the idea was to focus on a selected block and make it ODF. For this, a more intense accompaniment of the process was envisaged, to make sure CLTS was used in its true spirit and local champions got the support needed. The overall aim was to show results on the ground and attract the attention of the concerned district and state administration, and then scale up the approach (Knowledge Links, 2011). UNICEF Madhya Pradesh started this in Budhni block (2010) in collaboration with the local government and extended it to Guna block in 2011. Similarly, DFID selected specific blocks in Bihar to make them ODF. Initial results of these initiatives are promising, but still diverse and with emergent challenges (Shukla, 2012).

Despite the interest generated, little is known about how these different strategies worked out. Existing studies tend to focus on the challenges faced –as mentioned above– looking at what worked and what didn't, and what elements of the strategy or of the context are more relevant (mixed approach, use of subsidies, lack of skilled facilitation, post transfers...). However, less attention has been paid to the policy process per se, that unfolds along with the efforts to introduce the CLTS approach, despite their key role in shaping the intervention that will take place in the field.

This predominantly technical perspective, neglecting political issues, is not limited to studies about these experiences, but applies also to the TSC –with the partial exception of WSP studies on the enabling environment (Robinson, 2012)– and to the sanitation sector as a whole (WSP Sanitation Global Practice Team, 2011). This is despite the consideration that such analyses risk remaining superficial, as they do not adequately address the root causes of the challenges observed (Wolmer, 2006).

In this paper, we try to contribute to filling this gap and deepening our understanding about the policy processes related to the introduction of CLTS in India. In order to do so, we propose an analytical framework and look at three different experiences, involving both the WSP extensive training strategy and the block focused strategy. We believe that a better understanding of these processes will help devise smarter strategies to influence the Indian sanitation policies, be it through the introduction of CLTS or otherwise. The framework proposed –though it should be considered work in progress– may also be useful for understanding and planning sanitation related policy processes and influence strategies in other settings.

2. The research: analytical framework and methodology

2.1. Aim

In this paper, we try to unpack the policy processes around the introduction of CLTS in different areas of India, and understand how they shape the resulting intervention at the local level and, consequently, their outcomes.

2.2. Analytical framework for understanding sanitation-related policy processes

Historically, development theory and practice have been “strangely ignorant of politics” (Duncan & Williams, 2010, p.4). Policy was viewed from a **conventional perspective**: as a linear, top down process in which rational decisions are taken by those with authority and responsibility for a particular policy area (McGee, 2004; Wolmer, 2006), based on ‘sound’ knowledge provided by experts (McGee, 2004). Responsibility is then handed over to bureaucrats, whose task is to implement the policy (McGee, 2004; Wolmer, 2006). This conventional view has shaped and shapes most of the development policy analyses in the last decades, typically focused on issues such as: Did the experts make some mistake in the policy design? Are there sufficient funds available? Is there enough capacity for implementation?

Since the 2000s, development scholars have questioned this perspective for being “patently far removed from real life” (McGee, 2004, p.7). Its underlying assumptions have been largely criticized, such as the rational and technical behaviour of decision makers (Keeley & Scoones, 2003) or the value-free implementation exercise (Wolmer, 2006). A new **process perspective** has been put forward, aiming to open up the programme black box and examine the policy process more comprehensively (Love, 2004; McGee, 2004). Policies are a broad course of action and interrelated decisions that evolve over time (Keeley & Scoones, 2003) with no single optimal solution. The policy process is iterative and complex, with experts and policymakers co-constructing policies, but where implementation also involves discretion and negotiation (Wolmer, 2006).

Despite these critiques, the conventional view is still prevalent in development and political circles (McGee, 2004). This is particularly true in the water and sanitation sector, whose default mode is considered to be “very technical” (WSP Sanitation Global Practice Team, 2011, p.8) and where policy processes have started gaining investigative attention only in the late 2000s, following the growing interest of the international community in sector governance (Harris, Kooy, & Jones, 2011). Studies focusing on sanitation policy processes are very

scarce (Krause, 2007; WSP Sanitation Global Practice Team, 2011) and predominantly take the form of political economy analysis (Harris et al., 2011), where the focus is on how power and resources are distributed between different groups and on how their underlying interests, incentives and relationships evolve over time and shape policy (DFID, 2009).

While political economy analysis can be very valuable, we argue that it can embody a risk to view actors' interests as the only explanatory factor of their behaviour, overlooking the role of knowledge and discourse in the policy process. Similarly, it might lead to a monolithic single-solution and non normative perspective on the policy, downplaying the relevance of contested perspectives about the problem and the policy. It can also end in a too group-focused analysis that overlooks the role of individuals and their agency within different institutions.

Therefore, we have developed an analytical framework inspired in the approach of Keeley and Scoones (2003) –used for studying different environment related policy process (Wolmer, 2006)–, which we believe overcomes the shortcomings mentioned and has a big analytical power for looking at sanitation policy processes such as the introduction of CLTS in India. The framework has three relevant spheres of analysis: Narratives, Agents and Interests. Narratives are the entry point of the framework, but instead of focusing solely on discourses, attention quickly shifts to the policy Agents and coalitions that coalesce around the narratives and try to influence the process, as well as to the Interests and politics (analogous to political economy) that shape the process. The three spheres are described in detail below.

Policy narratives are linked to knowledge and discourse. Narratives are simple stories about policy change with a beginning, a middle and an end. They describe events or define problems in certain ways, elaborate its consequences and outline solutions. Narratives have strong influence on policy makers' and people's perception about reality and thus on policy decisions. Many times, naïve narratives simplifying complex issues which tend to gain authority and become dominant, shaping the policies and persisting despite the contestation of alternative narratives. However, the latter may eventually overthrow the dominant ones and put forward new ways of framing the problems and solutions.

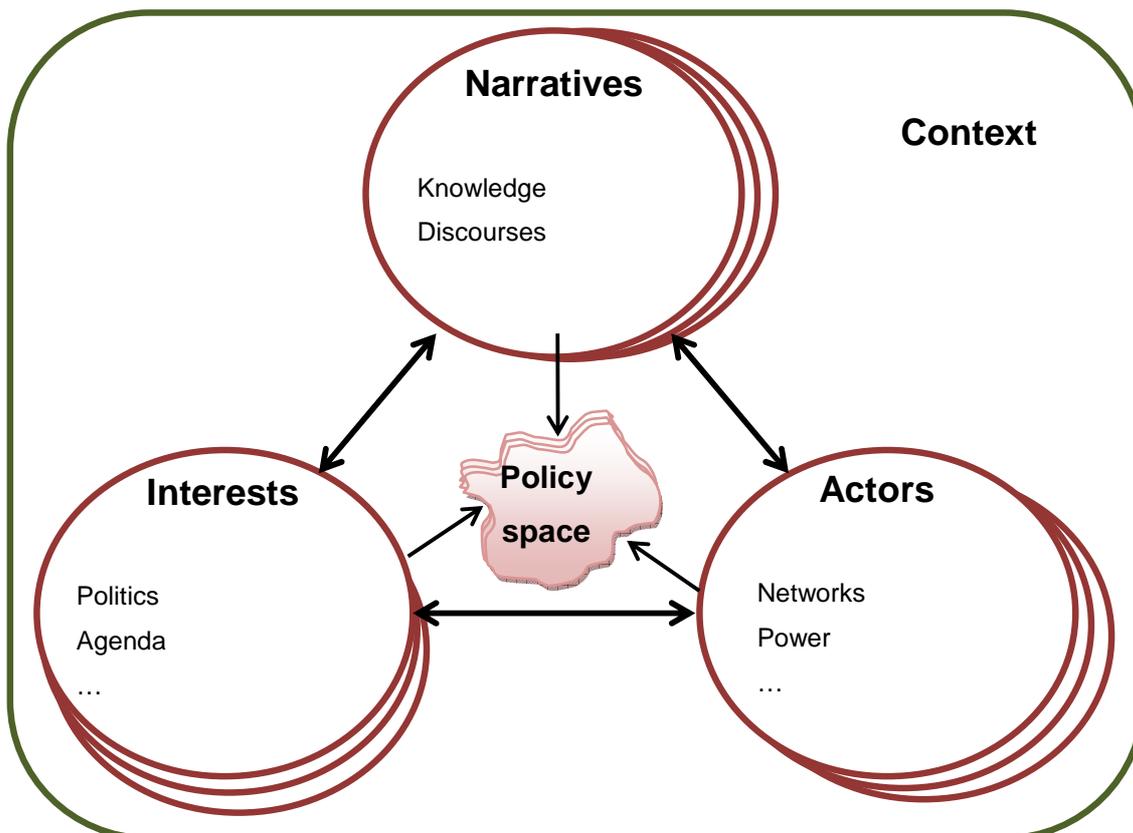
Policy agents involve policy actors that take active roles in shaping the policy process. They might be individuals and institutions from state (bureaucracy and government), private sector, donors and civil society (media, researchers, NGOs, CBOs). They tend to amalgamate around shared identities or perspectives, forming alliances that spread and promote their shared policy narrative, for instance through publications, events, funding... Thus, valid

knowledge is established, orthodox practice is reinforced and priorities are set. This can happen for networks around the dominant narrative, as well as for those trying to increase the profile of marginalized ones.

Policy interests, even if not articulated through networks or explicit narratives, strongly shape policy processes. Actors with power and authority over the process at its different stages tend to favour the narrative that better suits their interests, potentially affecting its intended effects. These interests can be displayed during decision making, or affect more subtly the implementation. When interests of several actors align with the dominant narrative, it can become perpetuated. Policy is then set out as objective and value-free and termed with technical language, hiding its political nature.

The interplay these three overlapping spheres –narratives, actors and interests– constrain the policy spaces of the actors involved in the policy process at the different levels, that is, they limit the actors’ room for effecting policy change.

Figure 2: Representation of the analytical framework



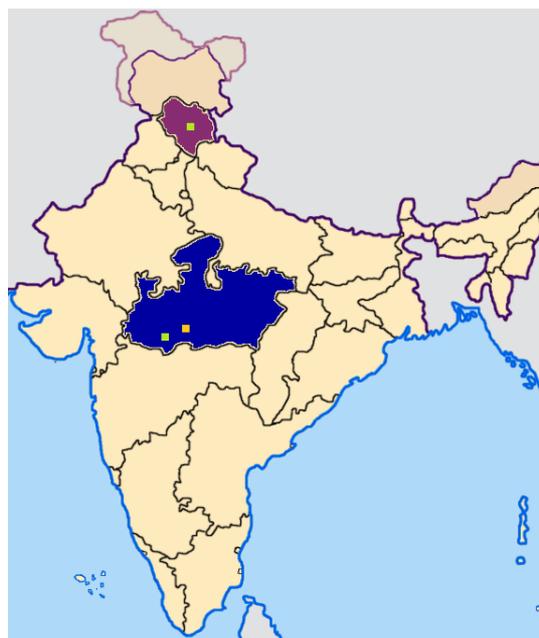
Source: elaboración propia

If networks of actors are tightly formed around the dominant narrative, and this narrative preserves their interests, the policy space will be minimal. High levels of policy inertia are to be expected. However, new actors emerge, others change over the time, contexts and circumstances evolve. So, new arguments can enter the debate, networks can enlarge or reshuffle, enlarging the policy spaces, allowing alternative narratives to be acknowledged and enabling policy change. This happens at different levels (from local to global) and against a background or broad context that will also be determinant.

2.3. Methodology

In order to contribute to the research aim, we analysed three case studies in the Indian context. Two cases belong to the extensive training strategy by WSP: Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh and Mandi district in Himachal Pradesh. These states were selected because they were monitored more closely by WSP and because their context differences could give contrasted perspectives on how the strategy played out. The districts were selected through critical sampling; they were the ones that had performed best in introducing CLTS, according to the available evidences. The third case belongs to the block-focused strategy: Budhni block in Madhya Pradesh, where UNICEF had pioneered the strategy. It was the only running case in the country by the time of the research, so that was the selection criterion.

Figure 1: Map of India with the case studies marked



Source: Adapted from (World Geographics, 2012)

Table 1: Case studies

| State | Case | Strategy | Supporting agency | Initial year |
|------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Madhya Pradesh | Khandwa district | Extensive trainings | WSP | 2006 |
| Himachal Pradesh | Mandi district | Extensive trainings | WSP | 2006 |
| Madhya Pradesh | Budhni block | Block-focused | UNICEF | 2010 |

Source: elaboración propia

To understand the policy processes, policy documents were reviewed and 80 interviews were held with key informants at the national, state and case study administrative level (district or block), including politicians, government officers, supporting agency, NGOs, academics and front-line staff.

To contrast the information with the ground reality and get a general picture of the outcomes, about 16 villages were briefly visited in each case study and the corresponding best performing Gram Panchayats were selected for in-depth studies. In these 3 Gram Panchayats several research tools were used (including random surveys, interviews, observation, transect walks...) in order to get a deep understanding on the intervention happening locally (the materialisation of the policy) and the process of the community towards a better sanitary situation.

The research took place in 2011 and is part of the thesis of one of the authors, so full discussion of the evidences gathered can be found there (Hueso, 2013a). In this paper the evidences about policy process are more widely discussed –to the detriment of those about outcomes– and pre-eminence is given to the case study and higher levels, as compared to the village level.

The main limitations of the research relate to the identity of the field researcher –male and Spanish– which resulted in a triple gap –culture, language and gender– that negatively affected the research process, especially at the local level.

The next section presents the main sanitation narratives in India, and then moves on to present the policy process in the different case studies, both at the state and at the district level.

3. Sanitation narratives in India

Sanitation has traditionally been a neglected sector in the development agenda (Black & Fawcett, 2008) and India is not an exception to the rule. Despite Gandhi's insistence on the issue –he even said that sanitation is more important than independence– it was not until

1986 that there was a relevant sanitation programme in the country. Known as the CRSP, it was a supply-led campaign focused on constructing toilets at the household level. Following the shift towards more demand-led perspective that the international sanitation sector was undergoing during the 1990s, the Indian government –supported by UNICEF (Alok, 2010)– launched the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) in 1999. The TSC represented a radical change from a supply-led to a demand-led perspective, which was nevertheless reflected in practice, as we mentioned earlier. The country –due a certain supply-led inertia and the characteristics of its administration– was apparently not ready for this change and the implementation of the TSC remained construction focused. In the meantime, other actors such as WSP started their efforts to introduce the CLTS approach in the country.

Thus, it can be said there were different perspectives on how to solve the sanitation crisis in India. Or in other words, different policy narratives. It must be noted that narratives are as numerous as actors involved. But despite the many nuances, the sanitation narratives relevant at the national level can be grouped in three cluster narratives. First, the official narrative embodied in the TSC guidelines. Second, a covert narrative heir of the supply-led CRSP and present in the discourses of many of those involved in the TSC implementation. And third, the CLTS narrative, brought forward by actors advocating for CLTS.

All of them had a similar framing of the problem at hand, namely that unhygienic defecation practices in rural areas resulting in a detrimental sanitary situation, as well as of the overarching aim: to improve the sanitary situation by eliminating open defecation.

However, each narrative described the causes of the problem differently, and assigned specific roles and expectations to the different actors involved. As a consequence, the pathway they proposed for solving the problem also varied. Let's look at these differences in detail.

3.1. TSC official narrative

The official narrative portrays the lack of awareness of the benefits of sanitation as the main cause of India's rural sanitary crisis. The lack of resources is a further obstacle to sanitation, especially in poor households.

Therefore, the sanitation campaign should put the “emphasis on creating awareness through intensive IEC [information, education and communication] to bring about attitudinal and behavioural changes for relevant hygiene practices” (Government of India, 2004, p.3). The logic follows that once people have been exposed to the IEC tools, they will understand the

benefits of sanitation and make a decision to change their sanitary behaviour and stop open defecation by building and using a latrine. Those below the poverty line might have financial problems for accessing sanitation, so a cash incentive can be provided to them so that they recover part of the investment made. The administration should start the process through the IEC tools, but then it is the turn of the community to lead the process and of the households to build the latrines: “It is a facilitating process for a community led campaign for demand generation of sanitation facilities” (Government of India, 2004, p.3).

3.2. Covert narrative

The **covert narrative**, generally non-explicit, is the one through which many government officers at different levels articulated their actions. According to this narrative, poverty is the main cause of the sanitary situation, with tradition, ignorance of the benefits of sanitation and low priority of sanitation (among the population) as complementary reasons.

The sanitation campaign has thus to focus on building subsidized toilets in order to overcome the poverty obstacle, with IEC playing a secondary role. The non-stated inherent assumption runs “that availability of sanitary latrine at the household level would entail its usage and the resultant health benefits” (WaterAid, 2008, p.31). Once households realise these benefits, behaviour change will become entrenched. This perspective, which “considers subsidy to be essential for the success of TSC” (WaterAid, 2008, p.33), is seen by many as dominant (WaterAid, 2008), including a WSP member interviewed: “[government officials] did not believe the TSC no-money issue (...) states wanted to stick to the construction mode”. IEC can have a complementary role, but it is difficult to make people understand and change practices, due to their backwardness. Further, a top down implementation led by the government is needed in order to make progress, as lack of interest in sanitation does not allow communities taking an active role.

3.3. CLTS narrative

According to the **CLTS narrative**, most people in the community know about the problems that inadequate sanitation entails and are able to change the situation (Kar & Chambers, 2008). However, due to the taboo surrounding shit and the inertia of social practices, they have not reflected much about it and they are locked into the habit of unsanitary practices.

The sanitation campaign has thus to focus in breaking this taboo. It thus helps “communities to understand and realize the negative effects of poor sanitation and empowers them to collectively find solutions to their sanitation situation” (Water and Sanitation Program, 2007,

p.6). A triggering session is the best way to do that, bringing the issue of shit crudely to the table and into public discussion. When this happens, the seriousness of the problem and its public dimensions are recognized by the community. The triggering also helps sparking powerful emotions, which result in a firm determination to change their sanitary situation. From then on, the community will lead their sanitary transformation, and outsiders should only support when strictly needed. People will build toilets according to their resources; external subsidies, in words of a CLTS consultant interviewed, “can create culture against participatory approach” and should be avoided. The strong determination to change will ensure that sanitation reaches the whole community; those better-off will help those that have problems for building a toilet and any challenge to sustainability will find an adequate response.

4. The policy process in Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh

4.1. Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh (MP) is big state in central India, and its predominantly rural population forms a medley of religions, castes and ethnic groups. MP is one of the least developed states in India, ranking low on almost all human development indicators despite the large number of schemes aimed at the poor population, which fail to reach them partly due to the alarming levels of corruption (Transparency International India, 2008). Rural latrine coverage was 9% in 2001 (Government of India, 2012c).

The sanitation campaign in MP has been described as “overwhelmingly supply-driven” (Robinson & Raman, 2008, p.3) and was consistently construction focused and subsidy-led, with the households having little choice, control or involvement in the process. The TSC official narrative had not managed to make its way through in the state, where the covert narrative was clearly dominant. The campaign being initially under the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), it suffered a strong technocratic inertia; the department does not even have a cadre of extension workers (Khanna & Khanna, 2005; Robinson & Raman, 2008). However, until 2006, more important than the dominant narrative was the lack of political priority, with very little involvement of the government at all levels, underutilised budgets and lack of recruitment of TSC coordinators. The popularisation of the Nirmal Gram Puraskar (NGP), however, raised the political interest in the campaign, resulting in a state sanitation strategy drafted in 2006 (Godfrey, 2008) and clearly inspired in the demand-led TSC official narrative. Nevertheless, the adherence to the ‘new’ narrative was low. Even at

the state government, many officers were not convinced of the need to move away from supply-driven approaches (Robinson & Raman, 2008). But more importantly, the interests of many relevant actors were converging in the covert narrative, favouring the status quo. These include contradictory professional incentives related to misdirected accountability, that resulted in government officers dedicating more efforts to meet formal requirements (disbursing incentives and providing the expected monitoring data and reports) than to actually implementing the campaign (Robinson & Raman, 2008), hence favouring a top-down implementation. Further relevant interests both of government officials and political leaders at lower levels were corruption and political patronage. These are better protected with the money-intense supply-driven and subsidy-centred campaigns. A flawed monitoring system – MP is among the states with most ‘missing latrines’ (Hueso, 2013b)– and lax verification of the NGP candidates completed the loop, as there were no record –and thus little chance of consequences– of under-performance.

As said and as was happening in most of the country (Hueso & Bell, 2013), these interests, coupled with the little enthusiasm that the official narrative aroused, resulted in a constrained state policy space and the sanitation campaign remained dominated by the covert narrative at the state level. As an interviewee pointed out, the state strategy –aligned with the TSC official narrative– seemed to be the result of the advocacy WSP and UNICEF, but had no true commitment from the government.

Similarly, the CLTS alternative narrative promoted by WSP did not get much attention at the state level. However, the lack of relevant actors supporting the official narrative –as compared to the national level– had the consequence of a less hostile stand towards it, and the CLTS was somehow accepted as “a further option of the IEC mix from which the districts could choose”, according to an interviewee at the ministry. It was thus possible for WSP to move forward with their extensive training strategy. Between 2007 and 2009 WSP organised exposure and training workshops CLTS training in 25 districts (out of 48 in MP). Half of these districts showed interest and had further training sessions and assistance from WSP. Change of leadership linked to the frequent post transfers, however, resulted in short lived adoptions of the approach in most districts. One of them, Khandwa district, adopted the CLTS in 2007 and was considered to be among the best performing districts in the state –if not the best.

4.2. Khandwa district

In Khandwa district however, the district commissioner (highest administrative authority) started supporting the CLTS narrative after being exposed to it; he felt there was a need to “involve the community and make the campaign demand-driven” (interview). In a coalition with WSP, they tried to introduce the CLTS approach in some blocks in the district, where the administrative authorities (CEOs) were also supportive. However, in line with what was happening at the state, other relevant actors kept supporting the covert narrative.

For instance, there was resistance from local level bureaucracy due to the perception that the new approach implied more work and that it would be difficult to mobilize communities: “we did not have enough time for so many field visits” (interview). This is related to the technocratic inertia, illustrated by the fact that it was the district sub-engineers the ones in charge of most triggering and follow-up.

At the village level, there was one hand interest of local politicians to manage big and malleable funds, useful for corruption and patronage purposes. On the other hand distrust towards the new self-help policy narrative coming from an administration that had habituated them to top down policy and little concerns about their problems, as showed the poorly compensated evictions after the construction of a reservoir nearby.

Moreover, there were targets and pressure from the state level to show results and win NGPs, favouring rushed top-down implementation and reinforcing misdirected accountability mechanisms and professional incentives linked to the flawed monitoring and verification, they had to “hurry to get the NGP”, in words of a block authority.

As a whole, the network introducing the new narrative was strong, but so were those behind the covert narrative, too. The policy space was not big enough to allow a policy totally coherent with the CLTS narrative; diverging interests had to be accommodated.

The result was a hasty implementation based on a mixed approach with elements of both narratives: CLTS triggering tools were used instrumentally, community mobilization happened along with top-down subsidy -driven toilet construction. In addition, after some time various champions at the district and block level were transferred short after the campaign. The new officers showed less interest in sanitation, so the process decayed even more. Finally, when the NGP verification process concluded, sanitation activities ceased completely.

Results looked promising: in Baledi block, where one of the block level champions was based, 18 out of 22 GPs received the NGP. However, the survey we conducted in 2011 in

one of its best performing GP showed that toilet coverage was just 56% ($\pm 11\%$ confidence interval and 95% confidence level). Only one of its 5 schools had functional toilet facilities. The rest of the awarded GPs in the block and district showed invariably poorer records. Census data later revealed a rural sanitation coverage of 17.4%, as compared to 10.1% in 2001 (Government of India, 2012a). A modest jump of 7.3 percentage points which is however almost twice the average jump in the state.

5. The case of Mandi district, Himachal Pradesh

5.1. Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh is a small mountainous state in northwest India with a rural and relatively homogeneous society. It is one of the most dynamic states in India, with notable economic accomplishments and good levels on all social indicators. The administration of Himachal Pradesh is among the most effective and less corrupt ones (Transparency International India, 2008) Rural latrine coverage was 28% in 2001 (Government of India, 2012c).

Himachal Pradesh, unlike the rest of states in India, had a community-led sanitation campaign and is generally presented as the success story of the CLTS approach. How was it possible to introduce it?

Past failed supply-driven sanitation programmes had left a legacy of disappointment and inaction towards sanitation among the state decision makers (Rosensweig, Perez, & Robinson, 2012), which consequently did not engage with the TSC. The lack of priority was such that until 2005 progress was anecdotal (Government of India, 2012c) and no sanitation policy narrative was dominant; there were no actors interested in supporting neither the TSC official narrative nor the covert narrative (Sanan, 2011). Thus, when efforts were made to introduce the CLTS narrative, it was easy –compared to other states– to open up the policy space and start a coherent campaign. It also helped to have a champion within the government: the Secretary of the Rural Development Department of Himachal Pradesh (the department under which the TSC fell) after having witnessed its potential in a WSP exposure workshop, decided to introduce the approach in his state. With technical support of WSP, he led a long-term effort to set up a new sanitation policy inspired in the CLTS narrative, which was adopted in 2005. It outlined a demand-led approach, based on community involvement and ownership, rejecting subsidisation of latrines and emphasising monitoring and evaluation (Government of Himachal Pradesh, 2005).

The coalition between the Secretary and WSP was a powerful one, they shared the aim and the commitment to make sanitation happen in the state, and had power to interact with officers and politicians at every level and gain more people on board. On the one hand, through successful pilot experiences they convinced the maximum authorities of the state of the potential of CLTS and secured their political buy-in and support. On the other hand, workshops and exposure visits persuaded mid-high level government officers and several champions emerged throughout the state.

Thus, an informal network of actors supporting the CLTS narrative was formed. Gradually they also managed to align the interests of the rest of the actors with the CLTS narrative, by setting up the appropriate institutional arrangements. Massive trainings on sanitation and on CLTS followed and NGOs were hired to support the districts implementation capacity. The District Water and Sanitation Missions met regularly to steer the campaign. These measures offset the misdirected accountability within the administration that were experienced elsewhere in India.

The state also promoted the recognition of local actors for their involvement in sanitation, for instance organising celebrations in ODF villages. A state award scheme was launched in 2007, with various competition levels and rigorous verification by inter-block committees and distributed in public functions with higher level authorities. This raised the priority of sanitation among local authorities and villagers.

5.2. Mandi district

Mandi was the district that pioneered the implementation of the campaign, fuelled by the leadership of the District Deputy Commissioner (highest officer in the district). The political priority he gave to the campaign was reflected in his continuous field visits to see progresses. The importance of the campaign and the need to implement it in a systematic was transmitted “down the line”, in his own words (phone interview). There was also an acknowledgement of the challenge sanitation represented and coherently, monitoring mechanisms were not only accountability-oriented, but also aimed at learning. Similarly, there were monthly meetings of the District Mission to review progress and address the problems found at the implementation. These measures created a learning environment where obstacles were naturalized and addressed jointly, thus doing away with contradictory professional incentives typical of target oriented implementation, and reducing over-reporting. A further factor contributing to this was the absence of cash subsidies for household latrine construction –

though the central government forced the state to disburse it to BPL households years later— which prevented corrupt behaviours.

At the village level, the new narrative generated initially some mistrust, as elected leaders felt that it would be difficult to change sanitation practice without latrine subsidies. Continuous efforts to motivate and involve local leaders and CBOs yielded results in several GPs. When their successes were recognised through public ceremonies with authorities and media coverage, competition between GPs.

The strong institutional structure thus quickly aligned the interests of all relevant actors with the narrative promoted and allowed an effective policy change towards the CLTS narrative.

However, Mandi also illustrates the adoption and adaptation of the CLTS narrative that finally happened throughout the state. The NGO engaged as support organisations for generating demand disliked the crude and explicit CLTS triggering tools and disputed its centrality in the campaign. Instead, they believed that their traditional sensitisation tools were more effective. They were the first to articulate a slightly different narrative, but coherent with the broad CLTS principles: zero-subsidy, bottom up and collective focus. This narrative highlights the high level of education of the local people, which would make the use of the more conventional street theatre and door to door visits by villagers more suitable for motivating the community to change their sanitation behaviour. These tools had been used since 1992 by the NGO in literacy and educational campaigns, through its extensive network of grassroots collaborators. The administration in Mandi was thus sensitive to these arguments and endorsed the slightly modified narrative: “we did a Community Led campaign, focused on behaviour change, but with other methodology” (phone interview with the district deputy commissioner).

As a result, Mandi had a well-planned **intervention** inspired in community-led principles, but using endogenous tools for generating behaviour change. The campaign was very successful with many ODF villages in the best performing blocks. The survey in one of the most awarded GPs showed a jump from 32% to 100% use (survey, $\pm 6\%$ confidence interval and 95% confidence level). Census data recently revealed that Himachal Pradesh is the state with the highest decadal coverage increase in India, and Mandi is the best performing district, reaching 82% in 2011 (Government of India, 2012a) an impressive jump from only 28% in 2005 (Vaidya, 2009).

6. The case of Budhni block

In 2010, back in Madhya Pradesh, a CLTS champion that had been involved in the Khandwa experience was posted as CEO (highest administrative authority) in Budhni block and was determined to make it ODF using CLTS. Coincidentally, the new WASH specialist in UNICEF MP was willing to initiate the block-focused strategy in the state. Thus, the block CEO and UNICEF MP allied around the **CLTS alternative narrative** and tried to introduce a fully coherent campaign in Budhni.

Analogously to what happened in Khandwa district the interest of other actors involved in the sanitation campaign had the potential to derail their efforts. But the CEO's experience in Khandwa allowed him to steer the **policy process** in Budhni differently, reorienting interests, reducing the power of opposing actors and involving and establish alliances with other actors.

Firstly, instead of making block officers work as master trainers or **facilitators** –which had proved problematic in Khandwa– village level officers and leaders were selected as facilitators. They triggered on a voluntary basis for the first months, in order to ensure they commitment. This prevented hurdles derived of pernicious interests such as technocratic inertia, contradictory professional incentives or competing priorities that favoured the covert narrative. In words of the block CEO, “government people will be related to money and will have many other tasks and excuses not spend a lot of time in the villages”. The interests of the actual facilitators, such as improving their skills, raising their professional profile for future jobs or getting recognition, were compatible with the CLTS narrative. Related to this, the accountability system was also aligned with the narrative: there was no pressure to achieve quick results, ODF was set as the aim –not NGP awards–... Combined with the frequent field visits of the CEO, media and outsiders, over-reporting resulting was strongly reduced.

Moving to the **villagers**, four measures were devised in order to involve them and hand over the stick.

First, a structured plan or exit strategy was made: master trainers would initially support the village monitoring committees created during the triggering, but slowly withdraw. Successful village monitoring committees would be institutionalised and entitled manage funds from related programmes such as solid and liquid waste management. Second, mistrust about the zero-subsidy policy and the empowering discourse coming from a traditionally paternalistic administration was fought. Constant visits and information and latrine construction at education facilities sent a clear message that the administration was willing to play its part in

the sanitation mission. Third, recognition was given to village level actors through frequent field visits, meetings and awards for monitoring committees, ODF celebrations... Fourth, after realising that resistance to the campaign was many times related to politics, caste or personal rivalry, master trainers started identifying those opposing and involving them in the monitoring committees members so that they felt part of the process.

Finally, some relevant actors were lined with the covert narrative. The **district Sehore administration**, interested in a standard implementation of the TSC, wasn't appreciative of the changes introduced in Budhni and pressurised for the disbursement of latrine subsidies and did not provide funds to support master trainers. The involvement of UNICEF MP, however, firstly meant funds to fill the financial gap and secondly gave legitimacy to the heterodox campaign conducted by the CEO Budhni, making him more able to resist the pressures to disburse subsidies.

In these ways, the alliance between the block CEO and UNICEF slowly managed to create a web of committed actors around the CLTS narrative and offset opposite interest that converged in the covert narrative.

The result was a well-planned **intervention** coherent with the CLTS narrative, both in tools and principles. In one of the best performing GP, two months after the triggering 100% toilet coverage had been achieved and regular use reported by 96% of the households (survey, $\pm 6\%$ confidence interval and 95% confidence level), while in the other 4%, toilet use varied according to the family member or to external factors like water availability. Although in other GPs progress was slower or even stagnated. as a whole, the results were very promising, as confirms the fact that 11 of the approximately 25 GPs triggered in the first phase were awarded the NGP in 2011.

7. Discussion

Comparing these cases, several elements are highlighted. Mandi and Khandwa districts, for instance, were part of the same strategy of introduction of CLTS by WSP at a similar point of time, but their policy processes –and the coherence of the resulting interventions– were opposite. This divergence is explained by the strength of the leaders championing sanitation, as well as by the governance quality in the two districts and the states sanitation policies and overall contexts. And what about Khandwa district and Budhni block, also with very different policy processes, but located in the same state and even sharing the sanitation champions?

The main explaining factors here were the administrative level (district or block), the governance quality, the experience of the leaders and the external support received, along with a slightly different state sanitation policy, related to the time elapsed between both interventions. Finally, Budhni block and Mandi district both showed enabling policy processes and coherent interventions, despite their many differences (in scale, state policy, etc.). The common elements were the strong and committed leadership of the sanitation champions at the administration and their 'management' of the policy process through a careful and strategic design of the sanitation campaign.

So how did these elements of the policy processes around the introduction of CLTS shape the resulting sanitation interventions?

From the case studies, it becomes clear that the policy process around the introduction of CLTS is determinant of the sanitation interventions taking place locally. These efforts take place in a setting where there is an already existing sanitation policy, generally with differing perspectives. The process of introduction of CLTS can thus be understood as the contraposition of **narratives** about sanitation. The available policy space will determine the extent to which the CLTS narrative becomes dominant and results in a coherent intervention. The policy space depends in turn on the strength of the agents supporting the different narratives and on the interests of the various actors involved, which can make the space remain small or expand. The cases also show that it is difficult that a pure CLTS narrative becomes totally dominant; some mixture or variation is to be expected as a result of the policy process. This is especially true if the introduction is taking place at some scale, as more actors will be involved: Budhni block, being the only sub-district experience, was the case where the intervention was closest to the CLTS approach. The changes and adaptations of the narrative are however not necessarily negative. It depends on whether they are just the outcome of the accommodation of private interests of powerful actors, or they result of a fair contraposition of perspectives. Khandwa district, where the resulting intervention was a mixture of approaches suiting vested interests, illustrates the first situation. Mandi district, in turn, exemplifies the second situation: its sanitation campaign resulted from a modification of the CLTS narrative aiming to adapt the sensitisation tools to the local sensitivity.

As said, the **interests** of the actors involved play a key role in the policy process around the introduction of CLTS. The most relevant one is the political priority given to sanitation, which is needed at various levels in order to make any sanitation intervention work, even more a

'different' one like CLTS. This need of political priority is partly related to the various interests playing against the CLTS narrative that have to be countered. For instance, contradictory professional incentives and technocratic inertia amongst the government bureaucrats favour quick top-down and supply-led interventions, incompatible with CLTS. Similarly, the corruption and political patronage prevalent in many areas of rural India privilege construction-oriented and subsidy-based campaigns. Khandwa exemplifies how these interests can derail the efforts to introduce the CLTS narrative. Budhni block and Mandi district in turn, show that the interests can be avoided in order to reduce their bearing on the intervention, or even partly realigned so that they favour the new sanitation policy. In both cases, corruption and patronage was countered by eliminating the subsidy and delaying the household incentive. Part of the competing interests from bureaucrats were neutralised by reducing their role in the campaign, engaging an NGO as support organisation in the case of Mandi and training people coming from the grassroots as CLTS facilitators in the case of Budhni, where an NGO such as the one in Mandi was not available. Mandi also managed to set up an institutional framework that made the professional incentives of the involved bureaucrats coherent with the policy.

Whether the interests playing against the CLTS narrative derail the initiative to introduce the approach depends mainly on the power of the **agents** promoting each narrative. When networks formed to promote the CLTS narrative include powerful, experienced and committed champions –and networks supporting other narratives are weaker– it is easier to respond to the negatively affecting interests. High level administrative authorities at the block or district are at the centre of these networks. The states are also very relevant, either strengthening the networks or weakening them. HP (Mandi) illustrates the first option, with a sanitation policy coherent with CLTS, while in MP (Khandwa and Budhni) the state policy is contrary to CLTS. International organisations such as WSP and UNICEF are also relevant components of the network. In Budhni, for instance, the support of UNICEF was useful to counterbalance the negative effects of the state and district sanitation policy. At the end, whatever the configuration of the network, the point is whether they are strong enough to steer the policy process in order to allow a sanitation intervention coherent with the narrative promoted.

But the networks are not pre-existing. At the beginning, there may be just a single agent trying to introduce the CLTS narrative, generally an external organisation. Their advocacy work, trainings and exposure visits are very useful at this stage, when there is a need to legitimise

the new narrative, gain allies and form a network around the CLTS narrative. There is a need however to quickly connect with enthusiastic and powerful champions from within (administration or government), if the policy space is to be expanded. The amplitude of these networks is also important, as the over-reliance of champions involves a risk due to the frequent post transfer in the Indian administration. Khandwa and Mandi, being the two experiences with some years, both witnessed the transfers of the sanitation champions. In Mandi though, the fact that the support organisation and many different people in the administration had become part of the network supporting the new narrative was very useful to diminish the negative consequences.

Obviously, the **context** is also important, be it facilitating or complicating the work of the agents trying to introduce the CLTS narrative. Of the many elements playing a role, the most relevant ones are related to the governance quality. Where corruption is rampant and the relationship between citizens and state is one of mistrust, it is more difficult to introduce the CLTS narrative. On one hand, interests playing against it are reinforced and, on the other hand, a government campaign with a discourse focusing on empowerment and community mobilisation sounds strange both at the grassroots and at the administration. On the contrary, less corruption, a more efficient and trusted government and administration constitute a more enabling environment for the introduction of the CLTS narrative. Himachal Pradesh illustrates the latter, while Madhya Pradesh has a more challenging context. Nevertheless, local context matters, too. In Mandi, for instance, the governance quality was exceptionally good, even for HP, with a historically positive relationship between citizens and the administration (e.g. successful literacy campaigns). In MP, there were also differences between Budhni and Khandwa. Unfairly compensated evictions due to the construction of a dam in Khandwa had left an extremely negative political climate, with little space for honest collaboration. In Budhni, the reputation of strictness of the block CEO and some measures against corruption had left a slightly better governance quality.

8. Conclusions

In Khandwa district (MP), the state policy was not enabling, with top-down pressure to achieve quick results in order to achieve as many NGP awards as possible. In addition, the champions introducing the approach had not powerful enough allies –and were soon transferred anyway– and could thus not counter the many interests converging behind the

covert narrative. The resulting policy pathway had thus to accommodate these interests, resulting in a mixed intervention, combining CLTS tools with principles from the covert narrative.

In Mandi district (HP), the state policy was enabling –embracing the CLTS narrative– and there were sanitation champions in key positions of the district administration, along with an NGO with experience in rural development work. They were able to set up a campaign inspired in the CLTS principles –though without the CLTS facilitation tools, using their traditional sensitisation tools instead– and realign the interests of the main actors involved, making a coherent intervention possible.

In Budhni block (MP), being at a lower administrative level, the strongly committed block CEO and from UNICEF in a supporting role formed a network strong enough to introduce the CLTS as the approach for the rural sanitation campaign, despite an overall contrary state policy (though less intense than at that point of time of Khandwa). The previous experience of the CEO in Khandwa allowed him to design a strategy to offset interfering interests, and the intervention was implemented coherently with the CLTS narrative.

As a whole, this research confirms the idea that **scaling up** CLTS is a difficult task, principally due to the opposition faced, which has been related to vested interests in subsidies, pressure to disburse, technocracy and scepticism (Chambers, 2009; Deak, 2008). The fact that the case of India is especially complicated, due to the political hostility towards CLTS (Kumar & Shukla, 2011), has been corroborated here, too. The decentralised character of the TSC has allowed for space to innovate and try the CLTS approach there where champions within the administration wanted to do so. Apart from confirming these difficulties, the research has also looked into this process in more detail, allowing a more nuanced understanding of it. Instead of just thinking of opposition to CLTS due to scepticism or vested interests, a framework including policy narratives, agents trying to change policies and interests (vested or legitimate ones) of actors involved has been put forward.

The policy process has thus revealed itself as a complex one, taking place at and across multiple levels. In fact, the CLTS narrative entered the Indian policy debate at a time where there was already a tension between the TSC official policy narrative –not very different to the CLTS one– and the covert narrative, heir of the previous top-down supply-led approach. This **covert narrative**, suiting best the interests of many politicians and bureaucrats –political patronage, technocratic inertia, professional incentives, corruption or low priority of

sanitation—, remained dominant and shaped the implementation of the campaign all over the country. Even the creation of the NGP awards, which boosted the profile of sanitation nationally, was not enough to change these dynamics and open up the policy space, partly due to a flawed monitoring system and lax verification.

This is the overall scenario CLTS had to face when introduced in a specific area in India. Understanding the policy process changes the perspective of what needs to be done and how long it might take. It is not (only) about ‘convincing’ the actors about the excellence of CLTS, but also about addressing these competing **interests**, either trying to re-align them (e.g. the professional incentives) or offsetting them (e.g. corruption). This requires the presence of champions from the administration in the centre of a network promoting the CLTS narrative. And this network has to gradually grow strong enough to tackle these interests.

Having a more complete picture of the policy process instead of the more static –and political economy ignorant– idea of the enabling environment (Robinson, 2012) helps understanding this reliance on **champions** from the administration for introducing CLTS, and revisit the tensions they face (Kumar & Shukla, 2011) relating them to the pressures from other actors for an implementation as usual of the sanitation campaign. These pressures are especially effective when they come from superiors, making essential the counterbalancing role of the external agencies such as WSP or UNICEF. Nonetheless, many times there will be compromises, resulting in the use of **mixed approaches**. The deviance from the CLTS orthodoxy is pointed to as a problem in the literature (Kar & Milward, 2011). And it generally is, especially if these compromises are just the result of the transfer of a key champion or of the accommodation of private interests of powerful actors. Nevertheless, there are cases where the mixed approach is an adaptation of the approach propitiated by the contraposition of narratives rooted in local perspectives and the CLTS narrative, and these mixed approaches cannot be considered negative a priori.

To what concerns the different **strategies for introducing CLTS**, on one hand the extensive training strategy seems suited to states where the policy process is more favourable to CLTS. It worked in Himachal Pradesh (HP), where there was a CLTS champion in a high position of the state administration and a state sanitation strategy following CLTS principles was adopted. But it failed in MP (and other states), mainly due to the strong interests converging behind the covert narrative and the lack of strong and stable CLTS champions. On the other hand, the block-focused strategy used later in MP, seems better suited for such cases. It must

be highlighted again that the policy process is not static, so there are no blueprint strategies to apply to certain kind of states. Instead, the 'best' strategy will be to acknowledge the complexity of the evolving policy process, choose the course of action more adequate to it and seize the opportunities that might emerge.

In general, the research has highlighted the importance of taking into account the **policy processes** when analysing sanitation programmes, instead of having a technical perspective, which is the norm in the sanitation sector (WSP Sanitation Global Practice Team, 2011, p.8). The inclusion of discursive elements in the analysis, which differentiates this study from previous ones (Krause, 2007; WSP Sanitation Global Practice Team, 2011), has contributed to highlight the existing diversity of perspectives and how the actors cluster around a legitimising policy story.

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